STUDENT GROUP ADVISING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Paul A. Bloland

American College Personnel Association

Student Personnel Series
No. 8
STUDENT GROUP ADVISING
in
HIGHER EDUCATION

Paul A. Bloland
Dean of Students and Associate Professor of Education
University of Southern California

The American College Personnel Association
Student Personnel Series No. 8

A Division of
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Printed in U.S.A.
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American College Personnel Association
Commission on Student Personnel
Monographs

JOSEPH F. KAUFFMAN, Chairman, Dean of Student Affairs, University of Wisconsin, Madison

FREDERICK G. BROWN, Associate Professor of Psychology, Iowa State University, Ames

BETTY W. COSBY, Dean of Women, University of Florida, Gainesville

JOHN CRITES, Director of University Counseling Service, State University of Iowa, Iowa City

KATHRYN L. HOPWOOD, Dean of Students, Hunter College of the City University of New York, New York City

DOROTHY M. KNOELL, Office of the Executive Dean for Two-Year Colleges, State University of New York at Albany

CLYDE A. PARKER, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

MARGARET RUTH SMITH, Educational Consultant, Atlanta, Georgia

EDMUND G. WILLIAMSON, Dean of Students and Professor of Psychology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
PREFACE

In the too-long interval between the time the idea for this monograph was first conceived and its publication, the world of higher education has had its attention forcibly directed to many manifestations of the potency of the extracurriculum. The Berkeley student revolt, the emergence of the “New Left,” and student demands for greater personal freedoms, have all contributed to a sudden reawakening on the part of education to the influence of student activities upon the collegiate institution. To some this sudden interest has merely underscored a point they have been making for many years—that the educational experience cannot be thought of solely or even primarily as a classroom dominated experience. Research evidence is beginning to accumulate that indicates that much of the educational potency of a particular institution lies in the impact of its environment or climate upon the learning student. It is the totality of the educational experience, formal and informal, curricular and extracurricular, that is influential and it is this totality that requires further examination and assessment if education is to be maximized.

This monograph is concerned with the extracurricular dimension of higher education and specifically with the role of the adult adviser to student activities and organizations. It is not intended to be a scholarly or comprehensive coverage of the student activities field nor a textbook on the extracurriculum. Instead it has been written to serve as a handbook or manual to be utilized by the neophyte or beginner in group advising who would like to know something about the task to which he has committed himself. The reader will note that it is not wholly objective. The author has some prejudices and biases and as a result he's sure that some will contend some of the procedures and conclusions.

Nevertheless, herein is a point of view and an approach to what is believed to be a significant dimension of higher education.

PAUL A. BLOLAND
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the continued interest and support of the members, past and present, of the Commission on Student Personnel Monographs of the American College Personnel Association and make special mention of the encouragement provided by the long-time chairman of the Commission, Dr. Margaret Ruth Smith. Dr. William Martinson, who came out of Commission retirement to see the manuscript through to the printer, deserves special commendation for his very helpful assistance and unflagging determination.

My thanks also to Dr. Alan Johnson and Mr. Clive Grafton of the University of Southern California, who gave the rough manuscript a critical reading, and to my secretary, Mrs. Henry Terzian, who patiently typed many final drafts.

And finally I want to acknowledge the implicit contribution of the man who, for a decade at Minnesota, sat on the other end of the log, Dean E. G. Williamson.

PAUL A. BLOLAND
INTRODUCTION

The out-of-class life of the college student, whether organized, unorganized, or disorganized, represents a rich, often untapped, educational resource. It is rich because it provides a variety of experiences that can put living flesh on the bones of scholarship, to the extent that the student actually practices or lives what he has learned. It is often untapped because educators have not recognized its potentiality for human learning — the extracurriculum has been too long associated with the competing nonintellectual interests of the students and so has lacked academic respectability in the eyes of the faculty. Consequently, leaders in higher education, except for a few student personnel workers and a handful of perceptive faculty members, have never gone about the systematic exploitation of the extracurriculum for educational purposes. As in traditional classroom learning, the key to learning in the extracurriculum lies in the hands of the teachers, be they members of the faculty or members of the student personnel staff.

The teacher is important because his presence and influence in the extracurriculum can make the difference between student activities as random, non-purposeful, pleasant experiences and group participation that is related to educational objectives in a meaningful way. With faculty or staff guidance, an involvement in activities can and should enlarge and extend the student’s horizons, his skills, his value system, his poise, and his actual knowledge — all desirable outcomes.

This monograph is an attempt to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of directing student learning out of the classroom situation — working with the college student on his own ground to achieve basic ends. It is intended to be used as a handbook or manual for advisers to student organizations and committees, providing faculty and staff advisers with a rationale to undergird their work, and to advance techniques for implementing this rationale.

Some Definitions

It would be well at the outset to establish a common understanding of some of the terminology that will be employed in this and succeeding chapters. These are not dictionary-type definitions nor are they technically precise, but they do define the concerns of this monograph and indicate the scope of the presentation.

The term extracurriculum refers to those “organized and informal activities and programs conducted by or for students in the school, the college, or the adjacent community” (Williamson, 1952, p. 232). While these activities are outside of or “extra to” the formal curriculum they are college related to the extent that they are engaged in by students who are formally enrolled in a college or university. They are unquestionably a part of the student’s total experience while he is enrolled whether or not his institution is cognizant of them or even approves of them. The same definition might be applied to the term student activities. In a more restrictive sense, however, both terms may be used to denote the more formal or organized programs engaged in by students with institutional sanction.

The principal vehicles of the extracurriculum are the multitude of student organizations to be found on the typical college campus. The student organization is most often chartered or recognized by the institution and becomes a formal offering listed in the catalog, student handbook, or publicity handouts. It is characterized by a written constitution and by-laws, officers, often an adviser drawn from the faculty or administrative staff, and a program of projects and activities through which it attempts to carry out its objectives.

While student government is a form of student organization, it differs from the collegiate clubs and societies through its representative function. Its members are most often elected or appointed to represent larger constituent groups and to act or speak on their behalf. While the student government is a deliberative body which purports to represent the views and wishes of the entire student body, other student governing groups may be found in the residence halls, the fraternity and sorority system, or the international student community, and may also be thought of as student governments.

Most colleges and universities require as a condition of recognition of a student organization that a member of the staff or faculty serve as a sponsor or adviser. While some adviserships are ex officio, i.e., a dean of
students may serve as the adviser to the student governing body, in most instances the adviser is invited to serve by the organization itself, not assigned to it. The extent to which he involves himself in the activities of the organization will depend upon his time, inclinations, or the needs of the group; but his influence can make the difference between a stereotyped, routine program and one which is educationally purposeful and relevant.

The student personnel division, responsible for the administration of various professional-level services to students on the campus, is usually charged with the overall responsibility for the supervision of the extracurricular program. The relationship of the student organization with the administration of the college or university is most often mediated through the student personnel office as the administrative office designated with that responsibility.

These terms represent the raw material out of which we hope to demonstrate how the extracurriculum can be employed as a genuine educational resource, not only as a supplement or complement to traditional classroom learning, but as a learning experience in its own right, worthy of the attention of the faculty and staff.

A Brief Historical Overview

The role of student organizations and the extracurriculum in the modern academic institution cannot be fully understood unless it can be placed in its proper historical setting. The present-day concern with the educational relevance of student activities is but the latest phase of a broad reform movement in higher education which has seen the unity of the colonial college disappear under the influence of the German university idea in the post-Civil War period and reappear in an attenuated form after the First World War.

Student activities in the colonial colleges reflected the dominance of religion and its concern for the development of moral character. A rigid discipline was instituted by the faculties to ensure that every student observed the highest standards of moral and ethical behavior in preparation for civil or religious leadership. As a consequence, student life in that period was characterized by ceaseless rebellion against a multitude of rules, and student activities were confined primarily to the religious societies which were intended to confirm the piety, not the intellect, of the undergraduate. Later, the literary society dominated student life and provided vigorous exercise of the mind as the participants debated the important political issues of the time.

The period preceding the Civil War saw the development of student activities that were related basically to the general purposes of the higher education of the time. In many ways, the literary societies, in part a student response to the barren classical curriculum, were far more oriented to the life of the mind than the colleges that harbored them and were certainly a more vital force in the student's life than his course of study. However, the introduction of the Greek-letter fraternity in the 1820's and 30's tolled the death knell of the literary society and presaged the growth of a student life that became competitive with the goals of the college rather than supplemental to them.

Following the Civil War a vacuum was created in the social life of the college campus as the faculties gradually began to develop a greater interest in the more impersonal world of research and scholarship and less in the regulation and supervision of student life. To fill this vacuum, students began to improvise their own extracurriculum, and it grew amazingly but without the advice or guidance of the faculty. Inevitably, a "second" college took form — one which paralleled but owed little inspiration or allegiance to its sister institution and its purposes. And inevitably, the attractiveness and drawing power of the second curriculum placed it in direct competition with the college for the loyalties and energies of the students until Woodrow Wilson (1909) was led to make his often-quoted remark, "The side shows are so numerous, in diversity — so important, if you will — that they have swallowed up the circus."

Not only did students want a collegiate life less sterile than was provided by the rigid classical curriculum of the college which seemed impossible of reform, but the faculty members themselves, deeply influenced by those professors who had studied in German universities, devoted themselves increasingly to their own scholarship and research with a consequent neglect of student activities. Germanic impersonalism, with its emphasis upon intellectualism and inquiry, conceived of the student as an adult who needed little supervision or guidance as long as his mind could be rigorously disciplined. The undergraduates, however, were as little interested in Teutonic-style scholarship as they had been in the classical curriculum of an earlier day and, left to their own devices, dedicated themselves to the pursuit of fun and fellowship unhampered by serious academic considerations.

Higher education had become schizoid, and the second curriculum was in fair way of becoming a challenge to the process of education itself. The answer lay not in abolishing the extracurriculum, an impossible task, but in bringing it back into phase with the central purposes of higher education and of reforming these central purposes to include a concern for the relationship between the intellectual and nonintellectual aspects of student learning. Educators began to seek ways of again unifying the campus, not on the old Colonial pattern of total supervision, but by conceiving of the student as a total personality who learns both in and out of the
classroom and whose intellectual progress is affected by his personal development.

The student personnel movement became the chief architect of this holistic approach, buttressed and supported by faculty members whose experience with students had convinced them that learning was not and could not be a segregated function of the classroom only or who had seen that genuine learning could take place in student organizations and activities under faculty guidance.

As Brubacher and Rudy (1958, p. 317) have put it, the solution to the "bifurcated college" lay in "taking positive action to re integrate the curriculum and the extracurriculum. By linking student activities to the basic purposes of the college, classroom and campus could be brought together again."

The "reintegration" process is still under way today. Student programs and projects are more relevant to the educational objectives of the higher learning. Student governmental committees study the curriculum and evaluate courses and, sometimes, professors. Joint student-faculty committees work on academic policy considerations. Student groups sponsor forums, debates, and symposia on a wide variety of intellectually stimulating and controversy-producing topics. Students tutor children in culturally deprived neighborhoods. Faculty advisers provide their experience and expertise to assist student committees, clubs, and societies in organizing educationally meaningful programs. Greek-letter fraternities help bridge the gap with a faculty-fellow program, or with speakers and scholarship advisers from the faculty and staff. Faculty committees on student life are also in operation.

While the classroom and campus are not yet fully integrated, and it would be useful to debate the pros and cons of that proposal, out-of-class activities have moved closer to the mainstream of academic concern and are no longer neglected or ignored by the administration and the faculty. It is when viewed against this background that the function of the adviser to student organizations comes into focus as an important aspect of a broad educational reform movement which is still under way today.

Current and Future Status

What of student group life today? Is there less student interest in activities or has the direction simply changed? Any attempt to characterize all of student life in this country in a few succinct phrases and without pertinent supporting data is bound to be presumptuous and probably misleading. The same may be true of student activities at a particular college or university, although several significant studies of student activities on a single campus have been made (Williamson, Layton & Snode, 1954; Heiningsen, Moss, & Rogers, 1956).

For example, what is our evidence for saying that students are more concerned today about the cultural life of the community than earlier? Do we have available data which show that a higher percentage of students attend plays, concerts, and art exhibitions today than they did 10 years ago? Or do we base our opinion on the fact that we recognized 12 students while wandering through the art gallery last Sunday instead of the two or three previously seen?

Or, are students today more politically active and concerned than they were in the "apathetic fifties"? The appropriate answer, of course, would be, "some are." It may be that fewer students are engaged in more visible activity set as it is against the backdrop of the nationwide civil rights movement. It may be that magazines, newspapers, and television have given the "New Left" publicity far beyond that warranted by its numbers and actual impact. It may also be true that we tend to characterize the campus and students in general on the basis of the most visible and voluble groups, the extremists, the frantically active, and the "true believers" while ignoring the fact that the other 90 per cent of the student body remains essentially aloof and uninvolved.

Despite these many limitations on informed conjecture, it may still be possible to discern some broad directions in the extracurriculum.

1. It seems clear that the process of reintegration of campus and classroom is continuing. As better prepared and more able students enter our colleges, they show less patience with the collegiate fun-culture and gravitate toward academically related activities which stimulate their thought and emotional commitment.

2. At the same time, the increasing estrangement of the faculty member from student life has been identified and concern has been expressed by educational authorities about the effects of this estrangement. The "flight from teaching," "publish or perish," research grants, and consultanthips have all contributed, at least in the major institutions, to a belief that the student has become the forgotten man in higher education.

Perhaps we are witnessing a student revolution roughly analogous to the growth of the "second curriculum" under German impersonalism after the Civil War left student activities without faculty guidance or direction. It may be that the off-campus orientation of the faculty is again leaving a campus vacuum which the students themselves will try to fill through their own devices. If there is a direction, however, it would seem to evolve about the students' attempt to bring the faculty back to the campus, to demand better teaching, to force curricular reform, and to insist that the faculty notice them.
3. The increasing demand for student freedoms on and off campus is not a new phenomenon. The length to which activist student leaders will go to enforce their demands is new. The use of such coercive techniques as the sit-in, the strike, work stoppage, boycott, and picket lines creates pressures and counter Pressures with which we have not yet learned to deal effectively.

4. Pruitt, in a discussion with leaders of the United States National Student Association in 1963, reported current trends as this group perceived them.

a. “There is a movement . . . from big group activities and all-college extravaganzas to the smaller occasion or function where personal identity is possible.

b. “. . . there is evidence of a growing revolt from and disdain for established organizations whose primary purpose is simply self-perpetuation.

c. “. . . accompanying these trends is a move toward the pluralistic in organizations and informal groups.

d. “. . . interest in student activities is becoming more polarized. A certain group of students is becoming less and less involved while the active ones become more and more active, and more and more involved in a variety of interests.

e. “The strongest tendency is toward the establishment of independent social action and political action groups on campus, often affiliated formally with similar groups in the state or nation” (Pruitt, 1966).

5. Reich, in 1961, suggested that changes in student interest and participation may be more apparent on the larger campuses while small colleges see less breaking from traditional patterns. Her data did not support a conclusion that there is a reaction against student activities.

6. Zander, in 1963, noted several factors working against organized student activities such as increasing numbers of older students, a greater proportion of married students, a larger proportion of students from lower-income brackets, more commuting from home, and more transfers from campus to campus. He also mentioned the negative effect of over-organization since childhood, the apathy of faculty members toward organized activities, and the increasing number of vocationally oriented students for whom activities must have occupational relevance. While he did not feel that organized campus life would disappear, he saw new programs and organizations continually developing, some directly related to the students’ interest in academic pursuits.

7. Student personnel workers, with increasing numbers of academically and professionally qualified members in their ranks, will play a more important role in providing the mediating leadership to the many vectors impinging on student life. Not all of the influences and trends in higher education today are for the good of either the student or the institution, and not all are good education. Acting as a restraining influence in some areas and as a stimulator and guide in other areas, the faculty adviser and the personnel professional can play a decisive role in the way the college or university will look in the future.

References


Chapter 2

A Rationale for the Extracurriculum

For many, the term "student activities" brings to mind a whirl of aimless but frenzied motion engaged in by that element of the student body regarded by the faculty scholar as being in college under false pretenses. In actuality, the term embraces a wide range of interests and programs including those involving cheerleaders, beauty queens, and football players, and civil rights militants, embryonic poets, and research assistants in chemistry.

The intellectually superior nature of the college community ensures that a bewildering array of interests in vocations, avocations, and hobbies can be found and identified in the faculty and student body. Thrown together in close proximity on the campus, small interest groupings coalesce informally as friendship units or formally as structured organizations to exchange information, proselyte for a cause, inform others, or practice a skill. A program emerges, and it is around this program that the richness and variety of the formal extracurriculum takes form and shape.

There is a certain inevitability about the emergence of student activities, and the question that faces each college or university is "how can we relate to them?"—not "should we have student activities?" There are options open to the institution: all interest in student group life can be disclaimed; the college can deal with the extracurriculum as it exists; student group life can be viewed as an educational resource to be utilized to complement the curriculum. There are other options, of course, but the critical issue in each is the accepted distance between the student organization and the formal structure of the university. The resolution of this issue, in turn, is related to each college's educational philosophy or to its perceived mission in society.

By the term, "student activities," is meant the programs and projects sponsored by organized groups although actually it subsumes non-organized pursuits as well. In considering participation in student activities as a learning experience, room must be made for both organized and non-organized activities in the same tent, since the influence of both upon the individual's learning experience must be recognized. The sum total of curricular and extracurricular experience, organized and non-organized, constitutes the life of the campus, and it is the way in which this life is ordered or marshaled that helps to determine the nature and impact of the campus environment.

While educators have been talking about the educational merit of student activities for many years, the rationale for thus describing them has been justly criticized for lacking focus, direction, or purpose. To identify activity, per se, as learning may be accurate because undoubtedly learning does take place through trial-and-error behavior, the interaction of personalities, and the incorporation of campus norms. This concept, however, is not sufficiently rigorous or purposeful to permit the college or university to say that because they have an extensive and busy program of student activities, a great deal of supplementary education is taking place on the campus. Such activities may be diverting and good fun but they may not contribute much to the participants that is relevant to the overall mission of higher education.

At the same time, it seems equally inaccurate to state, as do many critics of the extracurriculum, that because an activity is not carefully planned, supervised, and evaluated or because it does not take place in the controlled environment of the traditional classroom, that it is not educational and is therefore beneath the notice of the educator. This criticism leaves out the importance of the transposition of knowledge, its application in practice, and its significance within the value system of the learner.

What then is the justification for claiming that learning is taking place in the extracurriculum or for speaking of student activities as education?

Student Activities As Learning

It may be helpful to examine briefly the nature of the learning process. Hilgard (1956, p. 3) has offered a provisional definition of learning which will suffice for our purposes: "Learning is the process by which an activity originates or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation, provided that the characteristics of the change in activity cannot be explained on the basis of native-response tendencies, maturation, or temporary states of the organism (e.g., fatigue, drugs, etc.)."
The definition implies that the "encountered situation" which originates or changes an activity can be encountered deliberately and hence deliberately introduced. The academic learning process, then introduces "encountered situations" that modify existing behavior or elicit new behavior on the part of the learner or student. The instructor establishes his goals and plans experiences that are then implemented through a series of devices such as lectures, laboratory experiments, written exercises, outside reading, field trips, examinations, and the like that are intended to originate or change student behavior intellectually or physically.

For learning to take place in the extracurriculum, much the same process would be involved. The faculty adviser or the personnel worker would decide upon his goals or outcomes and then plan "encountered situations" for or with his students that are designed to modify the behavior of the participants in the direction of the predetermined goals. If this process is consciously followed and the goals to be achieved are also the goals of the faculty or college, learning would be taking place in the extracurriculum differing very little in essence from classroom learning. True, the arena would be different, the techniques unorthodox, the content unique, and the student's perception of the two would vary, but the fundamental process would be the same. Learning under these circumstances would no longer be adventurous but would be instead the result of purposive instructional action.

Thus, the basic principles of learning, even though applied in the extracurricular situation, ought to result in learning. However, students are not going to sit back and wait for the adviser to outline the course of study for the Pre-Law Association. The whole force of student tradition is in the direction of the independent operation of student affairs without adult supervision and control, perhaps as a historical inheritance from the period when the second curriculum flourished independent of the college. When this historical tradition is combined with the natural tendency of the adolescent to resist adult supervision, the lingering influence of Germanic impersonalism, and the educational philosophy of pure intellectualism, the application of the learning process in its pure form to out-of-class activities is inhibited if not resented. Yet, as Williamson (1952) has said, "to utilize the extracurriculum as a teaching device to achieve educational, as opposed to sheer recreational enjoyment, we must rid ourselves of the dictum of the sanctity of the students' complete and autonomous control of their own affairs." In view of the nature of the teaching process, a conscious and deliberate manipulation of experience, the college must either enter this arena with an intent to teach or abandon it as a means of education.

This statement is not intended to argue a case for complete authoritarianism or the inhibiting, stifling control of student life. This would be as destructive of educational growth as would the unrestricted operation of a "laissez faire" philosophy. However, for faculty advisers and student personnel workers to view student activities as educational, they must work with student leaders and student organizations as teachers, applying the principles of learning psychology to informal group situations so that educational goals are furthered. This can and should be accomplished without paternalism or authoritarianism, but the teacher must be willing to influence students and exercise his extracurricular leadership in educationally desirable directions.

The primary technique of extracurricular teaching is student group advising, whether by the student personnel staff, faculty sponsor, or perhaps even by the students themselves. The adviser-group relationship provides the structure within which the teacher can use his influence to affect organizational programming, institute new goals, or modify existing ones, encourage individual growth and initiative, and inculcate desirable attitudes and values. The student organization is his classroom. Both the interaction between the adviser and the members, and the effect of the group's program upon the participants or audiences, can be educationally productive. It is this interaction or effect which represents, "the process by which an activity originates or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation . . ." in Hilgard's terms.

Higher Education And The Extracurriculum

For the extracurriculum to be viewed as a learning resource, it must be consistent with and contribute to the goals of education. What do we mean when we talk about the goals of education, or specifically, the goals of higher education? At one pole of the philosophical continuum are those who, with Hutchins, feel that the university is, or should be wholly intellectual—that its only goal is the cultivation of the mind. The student is often conceived of as a "disembodied intellect." At the other pole are those who feel that the total collegiate experience has an effect upon the whole individual and that this total experience is educative.

However, definition is not a substitute for reality, and the nature and scope of higher education is in actuality not defined by social philosophy but by tradition and practice growing out of societal expectations. For years American higher education has been concerned with the development of the "whole person" or the informed citizen who is capable of sustaining the democratic form of government. For example, in 1948 the President's Commission on Higher Education
(1948, p. 8) defined the principal goals of higher education as these:

Education for a fuller realization of democracy in every phase of living.

Education directly and explicitly for international understanding and cooperation.

Education for the application of creative imagination and trained intelligence to the solution of social problems and to the administration of public affairs.

Higher education was thus seen as a means of achieving social change and of realizing the aims of democracy rather than simply as a repository of knowledge. It is in that form of liberal education that has been called "general education" that a possible role for the extracurriculum can best be identified. The President's Commission (1948, p. 49) went on to state that, "General education should give to the student the values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills that will equip him to live rightly and well in a free society. It should enable him to identify, interpret, select, and build into his own life those components of his cultural heritage that contribute richly to understanding and appreciation of the world in which he lives. It should therefore embrace ethical values, scientific generalizations, and aesthetic conceptions, as well as an understanding of the purposes and character of the political, economic, and social institutions that men have devised."

If we accept these or similar goals as embodying the present purposes of American higher education, it becomes clear that intellectual growth and personal growth are not opposites or mutually exclusive objectives, but are part and parcel of the same total process. The end to be achieved can be understood in terms, not of the mastery of subject matter, but of resultant behavior. We are interested not so much in what the college student knows as in what he is becoming.

Viewed in this broad perspective, the curriculum and the extracurriculum become, not competitors, but differing aspects of the same collegiate learning experience—each contributing something unique to the education of students. The extracurriculum is as much a part of the life of the college student as the curriculum, and its impact cannot be divorced from the student's collegiate experience. If higher education is to be concerned with resultant behavior, then the student should exhibit the effects of education in his everyday life—on, off, and after campus.

Wilson (1956, p. 27), arguing for the integration of the curriculum and extracurriculum, states it this way: "The point to be emphasized is that those who stress intellectual growth as the primary goal of higher education and those who stress character growth as a goal will alike gain from a valid reintegration in college life. Intelligence is not a negation of collegiate life but, when that collegiate life is at its best, is a quality of it. The way to raise the intellectual level of the college is to develop collegiate mores which accord 'beauties of the mind and spirit' high prestige."

Acceptance of this concept of the purposes of higher education and the consequent view of the total university experience should lead to a careful re-examination of the ways in which the various segments of the campus can or do contribute to the intellectual and personal growth of students. What learning is implicit in the writing of editorials for the campus newspaper? What is the nature of undergraduate life in the residence halls? How do the sociology class and the off-campus tutoring programs in disadvantaged areas inter-relate—if at all? Does student government reflect the best teaching of political science or is it derived from the principles inherent in the discipline? What does the student engineer learn of the obligations of his future profession through participation in the engineering society? Does life on fraternity row reinforce or contradict the goals of the college? What does the curriculm in philosophy or industrial management contribute to personal growth?

While the teacher and the group adviser may see the student in segments, the student from his perspective sees the class and the student group as a part of his total campus experience. However, he will not necessarily relate or integrate them unless he can perceive commonality, an integrating thread of experience. If an interrelationship or commonality exists and is perceived, the quality of the student's intellectual and personal growth is enhanced beyond the impact of the class or the group alone. Learning can and does take place in either or both. By seeking a valid combination of the two, even in the broadest of terms, the value of each is augmented.

To define a role for the extracurriculum in higher education, therefore, depends upon what we conceive the function of higher education to be. We may limit ourselves to intellectual training, in which case student activities become a distraction and an interference to be de-emphasized or abolished. Or we may attempt to utilize the total life of the campus to facilitate learning and be educational in its own right. This does not mean that we thereby minimize or denigrate the cultivation of the intellect, but it does mean that our philosophy of education can encompass the life of the mind while at the same time we exploit the full resources of the campus to extend imaginatively the ways in which learning may occur.

Logan Wilson (1966, pp. 60-61), the President of the American Council on Education, has stated the argument in this fashion:

Obviously, the first order of business in a college is learning. Yet we know that this cannot be truly fruitful
if it takes place only—and grudgingly—in the classroom and laboratory. A student spends most of his time outside of the periods of formal instruction. Therefore, what happens during this time may well be crucial in reinforcing or obstructing the goals of the college. The desire to learn, the cultivation of the mind or of individuality, the acquisition of literary judgment, aesthetic taste, and spiritual identity are goals for students that should pervade the atmosphere of the entire campus, not just the classroom. Several factors affect this issue; extracurricular activities, faculty and administrative values, and the climate and environment of the campus.

The Adviser As A Teacher

In this chapter, we have attempted to establish a concept of learning as a dynamic process that need not be confined in our thinking to the traditional classroom approach, but as one that is also applicable to the more informal situations characteristic of student group life. The relationship between the generally accepted goals of higher education and the goals of the extracurriculum was explored, and it was shown that student activities need not conflict with the basic purposes of higher education, but can be utilized to expand and complement the collegiate experience in ways that are educationally meaningful.

How, then, is the integration of the campus and the classroom to take place when the forces of student tradition on the one hand and scholarly interests on the other tend to preserve the schism? One answer in an educational institution, of course, is to employ teaching as the catalytic activity and the student organization adviser as the teacher.

The adviser generally is a member of the college who has been assigned to the role or who has answered an invitation to serve as the adult leader of a voluntary student organization or activity program. While by no means the rule, members of the various faculties most often serve as advisers of groups organized about a particular discipline or interest area. Members of the administrative staff, usually personnel officers, serve as advisers to campus-wide student governmental units or to those connected with residences such as the councils of Greek-letter organizations or the residence hall student governing groups.

While the techniques involved in classroom teaching are familiar to every faculty member and student, i.e., the lecture, seminar, discussion group, laboratory experiments, the quiz, and examination, the concept of teaching through student group activity is likely to be a complete mystery to most advisers. And yet, group advising is not dissimilar. In simple terms, the adviser influences the group members to structure experiences that contribute to their intellectual or personal growth or that contribute to the intellectual growth of others. For example:

Professor Allison, the faculty adviser to the Forum Committee of the All-Student Congress, suggested to Bill Preston, the student chairman, in a conversation outside of the library, that the Committee steal a march on the campus political action groups by sponsoring a teach-in on the Viet Nam issue which would be a model of the way in which an academic community could utilize the tools of scholarship and free inquiry to examine a current issue. Bill liked the idea and called a special meeting of the Committee in the Student Union to discuss it.

After a heated discussion in which more time was spent on the issue of American involvement than on the details of planning, the Forum Committee threw its energies into the organization of a panel of speakers, both pro and con, with the sub-chairman delegated to obtain the hall, plan the publicity, talk with the proposed participants, and handle administrative details. Professor Allison's only contribution at this stage was a strong suggestion that they clearly establish in advance, certain ground rules for the conduct of the meeting itself and the question period.

This brief case illustrates several elements of good teaching in the extracurriculum. Professor Allison had identified considerable interest, and, in fact, anxiety on the part of many students with whom he had talked concerning the question of Viet Nam. Some student reaction was inevitable, and he felt that a balanced Forum presentation would clarify the issues, bring out important facts and opinions on both sides of the question, and stimulate a broader consideration of the issues on the part of students whose opinions had been formed on emotional grounds. Campus and outside experts were used for the program and brought in perspectives that were new to the audience. The student committee learned how to plan a program on a controversial issue that would inform rather than confuse and they also learned how to carry out those organizational and administrative responsibilities that would ensure that the event took place as scheduled. The students who attended the so-called "teach-in" learned something about the issues from men who brought their scholarly talents to the discussion and saw a dramatic demonstration of the way an academic community could use its unique capabilities in the analysis of a problem. Professor Allison's past experience with this type of program led to his suggestion that ground rules be established for the conduct of the meeting to prevent its disintegration into name-calling and irrelevancies. During the planning stage, Professor Allison was called upon many times by the various student chairmen for his opinions and ideas and in fact made several suggestions which had not been solicited. On the day before the program he had spent an hour coaching the student moderator who had never handled this type of responsibility before and had luncheon with a colleague who felt the whole idea was subversive and would put wrong ideas into young heads.

Professor Allison had, indeed, been teaching. His methods and classroom were unorthodox by conven-
tional standards, but he had several objectives in mind that were shared by the group he was advising and had planned, with the students, a learning situation that was consistent with the basic purposes of his own particular college and of higher education in general. He used his understanding of the campus situation and of the student organizations to introduce intellectual content into the group's programming and set into motion a series of activities that resulted in learning on the part of a number of people, not all of them students.

This simple case example does not by any means illustrate all of the functions and responsibilities of the group adviser, but it does indicate one way in which the intellectual level of student group programming can be raised through the influence of an alert and dedicated adviser. There are other approaches and other techniques, some of which will be covered in a later chapter, but the principle is the same—the adviser, as a teacher, introduces content and direction that results in new learning.

References


An Approach to the Adviser’s Role

Just as classroom teaching is a form of leadership behavior, so group advising is leadership operating within the unique setting of the college student organization. The adviser, as is the teacher, is an adult faculty or staff member generally carrying high status within the social setting of the student group. As such, he has some measure of influence within the group that he can use to run it, dominate it, stimulate it, introject new ideas or perspectives into it, manipulate it, stultify it, vitalize it, or take all the fun out of it. His influence can be such that if he ignores the organization and its program, it may flounder. If he dedicates himself to making membership in it a memorable educational experience, it may flourish. The adviser’s continuing leadership over the years and the way in which he exercises this responsibility can make the difference between a mediocre, stereotyped program and a vigorous, meaningful one.

In discussing the function of the adviser as a group leader, it is important to bear in mind the distinction between the adult leader and the student leader. The faculty adviser is not the elected leader of the group. His authority comes from the college or from his status as a faculty member, while the student leader’s authority derives from the group which has selected him for an office. The adviser is most often affiliated with the group because of his personal interest and because the college requires that each organization have an adviser before it can be chartered and operated on the campus. The student leader has the attainment of group goals as his primary task while the adult adviser must be concerned with the goals of the college, professional responsibilities, and the educational relevance of the program as well.

Advising—Active Or Permissive?

While there are as many styles of leadership as there are leaders and no one style will work for everyone, the adviser-leader must decide to what extent he intends to use his influence within the group. One school of thought would say, “The adviser should be seen but not heard. He should be available if the students turn to him for advice but should keep out of their affairs otherwise.” Adherents of this laissez-faire position feel that it is undemocratic and manipulative for the adviser to exert any influence upon the group, that the student participants are being denied their democratic rights if all activities do not originate within the group as the result of student needs and student creativity. To work toward adviser-originated or stimulated goals is felt to be inconsistent with the philosophy of democratic leadership. While some advisers adopt this position because of lack of time and others out of sheer apathy, it is also a strongly held credo with many advisers who feel that because the group belongs to the students, they should use the adviser only as a resource when they feel the need for consultation.

While there is an appeal to this laissez-faire position, it has little educational or logical merit if we conceive of the extracurriculum as having educational potentiality and if we see the teacher’s classroom role as an active one. If we take this position it then follows that this educational potentiality can be exploited for the benefit of the participants and that this exploitation connotes conscious and deliberate activity on the adviser’s part. The student group exists by virtue of the presence of the college and the raison d’etre of the college is education. Time is too short and resources too limited for the college to foster or promote activities and programs that are irrelevant to its basic mission. The teacher who feels a responsibility for what happens in his classroom and then adopts a laissez-faire philosophy when working with student organizations, has in effect, abandoned his academic responsibilities in that situation.

Authorities in the field of social group work have come to grips with and rejected the theory that all decisions must come from the group with no influence or help from the adviser. Klein (1953, p. 28), for example, speaks of the group worker as being “engaged to direct the group process consciously toward specific destinations” and goes on to say that group workers should see themselves as “social workers and educators

who use democratic methods to achieve defined ends, rather than as democratic leaders who fear that they may be guilty of superimposition when they seek to help groups to reach specific goals." The goals themselves, however, may be defined internally by the members of the organization, externally by the adviser, or by mutual agreement of the group and the adviser.

Advisory Functions

Instead of contrasting the permissive or laissez-faire role and the active or teaching role of the student group adviser as opposites or characterizing them in political terms as "democratic" versus "authoritarian," it may be more profitable to look analytically and positively at the adviser's duties and functions.

It may be helpful to think of the adviser's role in terms of three major areas: (1) maintenance or custodial functions; (2) group growth functions; and (3) program content functions. Within each of these broad areas, the group adviser may perform certain duties that call for considerable activity on his part in some specific situations and instances, or none at all.

1. Maintenance Functions. Here are subsumed those advisory activities that serve merely to maintain the existence of the student organization and to keep it out of difficulty, i.e., providing continuity with the history and tradition of past years, heading off situations that might give rise to poor public relations for the organization or the institution, preventing the group from breaking the college's rules, serving as an exemplar of intellectual virtue, arbitrating intra-group disputes, and providing advice when called upon.

In general, these are responsibilities that require little initiative on the part of the adviser until or unless the demands of the situation call for him to respond. These maintenance or custodial functions may be regarded as minimal requirements of the staff adviser. Even if he subscribes wholeheartedly to a laissez-faire philosophy, he may find it necessary to respond to a particular situation with one or more of these advisory activities, as when members turn to him for technical advice in his field of scholarly competence.

In addition to these maintenance and custodial responsibilities, there are a number of areas in which the group adviser can take a more active leadership role, whatever techniques he may employ. Given a set of objectives, whether those of the group, the college, the academic discipline, or his own, the adviser assumes some responsibility for the achievement of these objectives and actively seeks ways of using his relationship with the group to promote them. These functions may be classified as growth and content functions.

2. Group Growth Functions. Those advisory activi-
ing upon his own interests, the quality of student leadership and ideation, the specificity of his institutional responsibilities, and the interests and abilities of the members of the group.

Dr. Anderson had for several years been faculty adviser to the honorary society in Biology, his own field. During his first year as adviser, he had been pleased to find that the group's leadership was imaginative and aggressive. The members had been active and interested. For most of that year, the need for his participation had been minimal. He and his wife had acted as chaperones at the society's annual awards dinner-dance; he had made a few suggestions about the guest speaker program when called upon; and had reminded them of a college rule on the reservation of meeting rooms, but other than attend meetings, he had not needed to be very active. The officers and members took the initiative in planning and organizing both the activities traditionally engaged in by the honorary and several new programs including an undergraduate research award in Biology.

The following year was a different story entirely. The officers were inexperienced and had only a vague understanding of their responsibilities. Dr. Anderson found that he was spending long hours with the president, teaching him how to conduct meetings, plan events, and lending him moral support. When the group found itself bogged down in petty wrangling and indecisive meetings, he invited a colleague from the Sociology Department to meet with members of the society to give them some insight into the reasons for their own ineffectiveness. Because few ideas were coming from either the leadership or membership, he found himself throwing out suggestions at every executive session, and nearly every meeting found him on his feet explaining the long-term objectives of the society, correcting misinformation on college regulations, or simply backing up the organization president on occasion. He had been pleased to see, however, that his efforts began to bear fruit in the spring semester. The officers began to display greater poise and assurance. The meetings were more interesting, and some of the members who had dropped out began to participate again. And, most encouraging, several of the younger members showed considerable growth and maturity as they were given more responsibility and were elected to office for the following year.

Because of the quality of the leadership and the interest of the members during the first year, Dr. Anderson found that he was required to perform what we have called maintenance functions. The situation was different the next year, and Dr. Anderson found himself involved in growth and content functions as well as group maintenance. The amount of direct participation required of him decreased as the organization began to find itself and prospects for the subsequent year looked bright because new leadership had been developed.

This case example suggests that the adviser may be engaged in the process of eliminating the need for his presence. In some respects, this is true. If college is designed to fit the sometimes intellectually and socially immature adolescent to take his place in the society of men as a mature, responsible, effective, and reasoning individual, then as the student progresses toward this idealized state the college should permit him sufficient scope and elbowroom to grow. In the same way, the student organization adviser must recognize the progressive growth of the group and, if anything, err on the side of giving the group less guidance, provided that he has correctly assessed the possible consequences of error and that the organization is moving towards its goals, however derived.

Klein (1953, p. 31), in defining his concept of democracy in group work, states that the group worker “permits the greatest amount of group control a group can accept at a given time and exercises the quantity of (group) worker control that it needs, consistent with all of the goals.” As the organization assumes the growth and content functions, the adviser may begin to withdraw his direct participation or influence. The group will in a sense begin to internalize these functions and assume them for its own, becoming self-directing or self-starting to a greater degree and hence becoming more democratic as a result of the leadership and guidance of the adviser. The adviser must never be reluctant to participate and to contribute his ideas, and he will never be entirely free of maintenance and custodial functions; but he must be alert for signs of responsibility and then encourage them.

In practice, the skilled and experienced adviser in all probability will be performing maintenance, growth, and content functions as they seem appropriate to specific situations and not in any particular sequence. It is at this point that student group advising becomes an art or an applied science, since the adviser must bring into play his experience, imagination, and whatever he has learned about individual and group psychology in his efforts to make membership in the organization an educationally meaningful experience. If we believe that good advising is much like good teaching, then the student organization adviser must go beyond the role of the passive bystander and be prepared to provide active and on-going academic leadership to his student group.

Reference

General Responsibilities of the Adviser

Although his specific responsibilities may vary from college to college depending upon local tradition or policy it is possible to list a number of general expectations of the student organization adviser. Some institutions have issued instructions or policy statements describing the adviser's duties but in most instances his task will be whatever he is able or willing to make of it. The general responsibilities outlined in this chapter constitute a form of job description for the adviser but should not be regarded as all-inclusive or limiting in any way.

Certain responsibilities are characteristic of most advisory roles while other responsibilities will depend upon the policies of the college or university. The following listing is concerned with those expectations which are inherent in the role:

1. Teaching or Coaching Functions. It is in this activity that the adviser's staff or professional capabilities can be most useful. He can serve as a resource expert in his area of scholarly competence, introduce new program ideas with greater intellectual content, help members apply principles and skills learned in the classroom, point out new perspectives and directions to the group, assist group members in the development of insight into their problems, point out additional resources within the college or the outside community, coach individuals in their duties as discussion leaders or officers, assist in the identification and development of new leadership, and insist on high standards of programming and individual performance worthy of a collegiate-level institution.

Throughout his advisory relationship with the organization the adviser should be alert to opportunities to create or capitalize upon experiences and situations that will tend to maximize the learning potentiality of the activity. To teach effectively in an extracurricular situation the adviser must participate actively, not waiting to be called upon but making a contribution when he feels it is called for by the circumstances. As advocated in an earlier chapter the adviser should conceive of his role as active rather than passive or much of his real value to the group as a teacher will be lost.

2. Consultation on Programs. The adviser should expect that he will be consulted regularly by the officers or chairmen concerning their plans for group activities or programs. He should know what projects or events are being planned and should offer his ideas and suggestions freely but should be careful not to dominate program planning. If he is not being consulted he should insist that it be done. At the same time he should avoid becoming involved in clearing or approving every detail.

3. Providing Continuity. The turnover of officers and members in a student organization is continual and often the only link with even the immediate past is through the adviser. Student organizations often possess a rich history of accomplishment, ritual, or traditional programs and responsibilities that endure from year to year because they are meaningful to the members. The adviser can orient new officers and members to this history and help them to build on it.

The group should not be handicapped in its creativity by confining itself to traditional activities, but there is little need for it to repeat past mistakes or errors in judgment if the adviser can point out the pitfalls and blind alleys his experience indicates do exist.

In addition to serving as the group's memory, the adviser should see that the organization's officers and committee members make written reports on projects and activities and that these records are filed or stored in an easily accessible location. The long-term activities of some organizations form a significant aspect of the history of the institution and a set of written records may become a significant contribution to the archives of the college.

Continuity also implies a link with the future and the adviser can play an important role in helping to develop long-term plans for the future of the organization and communicating these plans to succeeding generations of members.

4. Counseling Individual Students. Because he knows the members of his group as they interact in an informal setting, the adviser has a unique opportunity to identify the student who is having problems in his personal life that seem to be affecting his work or his
effectiveness in the group. He should find some opportunity to speak with the student privately to see if a problem really exists and what might be done about it. Perhaps a few words of encouragement are all that is needed; perhaps the student just needs an adult to listen sympathetically; or it may be that the problem is serious enough to warrant consultation with the college counseling center, the student health clinic, or the dean’s office.

The sympathetic interest in an individual student of a faculty or staff adviser is a traditional role of the college teacher and one that has had a long and proud history in higher education. With colleges and classes burgeoning in numbers, the relationship between a group adviser and the members of the organization he advises may provide one of the few personal links between these students and their school.

5. Interpretation of Policy. As a representative of the college to the organization the adviser is constantly in the position of interpreting the institution’s policies and regulations pertaining to student organizations. He should see that his group and its officers know what the policies are, why they exist, and the channels to be followed to obtain exceptions to or revisions of these policies. If the adviser has any questions concerning the interpretation or application of policies or regulations he or the officers should consult the appropriate administrative office.

6. Supervision. Although his major responsibility is not regulatory or disciplinary, the adviser, as a member of the college staff, has a responsibility to both the institution and to the organization to keep their best interests in mind. In a well-run organization, his supervisory role may be minimal or nonexistent but he may need to remind the group of appropriate college regulations or, on occasion, actually step in to prevent the organization from violating public or institutional policies. He may be required to chaperone or be present to supervise some group activities or public programs. Some colleges or universities will expect him to ensure that policies and regulations are observed although most will simply assume that he will use his influence in the group to prevent embarrassing or damaging incidents. Certainly the adviser can never be placed in the position of condoning or winking at violations of institutional policy even though his relationship with the organization may thereby be temporarily jeopardized if he does not.

Whenever possible the adviser should work with and through the responsible officers of the organization to maintain standards and control individual misbehavior. Incipient or current problems can be identified for the officers to handle and procedures established to deal with them. Responsibility for self-discipline and internal regulation is in itself a learning experience for the officers and the organization and an important step in maturation for many.

7. Meeting Emergencies. Occasionally some emergency situation will occur within the group or involve an individual member and the adviser will be called upon by the college administration or by members of the group to lend his assistance. If the emergency situations can be anticipated by the nature of the activity, the adviser should have in mind the steps he can and should take in each type of situation. He can also help to train the officers to react to an emergency whether it be an auto accident on a field trip, an epileptic seizure, an emotional disturbance, or a personal crisis.

Although the general responsibilities listed above are characteristic of the adviser’s role in most colleges and universities, a particular institution may, in addition, ask the adviser to perform some of the following specific responsibilities:

1. Financial Supervision. While each organization should elect its own treasurer, the adviser will probably need to spend some time in supervising the financial records and the treasurer’s work. He may find it necessary to teach the treasurer the elements of simple bookkeeping or the intricacies of the organization’s record system. The adviser should be aware of the nature, extent, and pattern of the group’s expenditures and income and introduce corrective measures when necessary. Particular attention should be paid to the accounts receivable, the current balance, and the prompt payment of bills. Some colleges require that the adviser approve all expenditures or countersign all checks. It is good financial practice to have the financial records audited at least once a year. Quite often the college business office will be happy to provide the service free of charge.

When a group is no longer active or has gone out of existence, arrangements must be made to dispose of the remaining funds, usually by transferring them to another student organization, to the college scholarship fund, or to a campus charity.

2. Social Activities. Ordinarily the adviser need not attend all group social functions if they are held frequently but it would be well to attend as many as is convenient. By participating he can help to set the social “tone” of the occasion, be available to deal with problems, and demonstrate his continuing interest in the organization’s activities. He should remind the social chairman of pertinent college rules on chaperonage and registration of social events.

3. Organization Meetings. The adviser should attend all regular and special meetings of the organization in order to keep himself informed and to be available for consultation or to introduce ideas and suggestions.

4. Scholastic Eligibility. In most colleges and universities, officers and committee chairmen are required to be in good academic standing (not on scholastic pro-
bation) in order to continue their participation. All members should be making satisfactory progress toward a degree.

The adviser should have a general idea of the scholastic achievement of the members of his group and should know the specific standing of those members who carry time-consuming responsibilities. He might advise those with academic problems that seem to be affected by their membership to curtail their activity in the group and perhaps to seek assistance from their academic adviser, the dean of their college, the student counseling center, or the reading and study skills clinic if such remedial help is available.

5. Organizational Records. The adviser should see that at least the treasurer and the secretary maintain adequate records and minutes of the group's activities and that the files and records of the organization are located in a central, easily accessible area such as his office, the college office, or the student activity office. Because committee reports and other group records are an important part of the organization's history on the campus as well as containing information of value to future officers, they should be protected from loss.

It would be well to have the files culled every two or three years and important documents transferred to the central file on organizations which is usually maintained in the student activity office. If possible the financial records should be audited every year at the time new officers take over group leadership.

5. Institutional Requirements. Most colleges and universities have certain reporting requirements for student organizations such as annual registration of groups, annual audit of financial records, reporting constitutional or by-law changes, submitting the names of newly elected officers, lists of members, etc. The adviser should consult with the student activity office concerning these and check to make certain that the officers have complied.

Both general and specific responsibilities of the adviser have been listed above. Actually the adviser may do as much or as little as the group and the situation appears to require. He should remember, however, that the group he is advising is not his personal fief, it does not belong to him. The adviser cannot and should not assume the entire responsibility for the group's program of activities. His function is not to manage the organization but to see that the members, and hopefully the campus, learn from the program and associated activities.

The advisory function is at least as complex as any other type of teaching and is further complicated by the fact that the student participants have affiliated with the group voluntarily. The adviser should therefore remember that it is basically their group with which he is working. Should he inadvertently or deliberately dominate its activities, aside from supervisory necessities, the students have the right to withdraw their participation, physically or psychologically, and may do so.

As noted previously there may be times when the organization is proceeding in a direction that the adviser believes to be wrong. If he finds that his influence and status in the group is not sufficient to enable him to rectify the situation through his advice and counsel, he should consult the student personnel office. Of course, he too has the right to withdraw his participation as an adviser but this step should be taken only as a last resort.
Some Advisory Techniques

As true with other forms of teaching, the advisement of student organizations could better be characterized as an art rather than a science. The skillful teacher draws from his formally or informally acquired knowledge of learning psychology, student behavior, instructional technology, and mastery of the subject for his approach to the learning process. This can itself be taught. But the way in which he combines or integrates these disparate disciplines into his teaching will be unique to him and he may have a great deal of difficulty in communicating to others the techniques that make him skillful. Often he will describe it merely as a “feel” for the material and for the class.

So it is with the teacher in the extracurriculum. He may have an extensive background in individual psychology, the sociology of student groups, or group dynamics and still fail as a group adviser. Or he may have none of these and succeed admirably because of an almost intuitive approach to his task.

To outline or describe a series of techniques that will guarantee the success of an indifferent teacher would be presumptuous or utterly impossible. However, it is safe to say that a good teacher can improve his presentation by utilizing certain practices that may facilitate student learning when combined with his unique personality or rapport with his students. It is to this end that a discussion of advising techniques is relevant—to enable an adequate adviser become better.

The stereotyped picture of the adviser depicts him sitting in the rear of the room while a group meeting is in progress. At times he rises to his feet and makes a sage remark or contributes a telling point that clarifies the muddled thinking of the student participants. Or he may sit quietly, puffing on his pipe, waiting patiently for the chairman to call on him for a morsel of adult wisdom.

In reality the group adviser will do most of his teaching and be most effective in private consultation with individual officers or members. The adviser is more likely to be effective as a counselor or tutor than as a group worker or lecturer although both the individual and group settings may be important.

The Individual Setting

Some ways in which the group adviser can work with individual officers and members are given below. Whether he schedules regular conferences, office hours, or just meets with students over a cup of coffee in the college grill, the adviser will find that much of his responsibility as an adviser will be discharged in the one-to-one setting.

The Weekly Conferences. Perhaps the key technique in group advising is the use of the regularly scheduled individual conference. When a student officer, be he the president or a committee chairman, and the adviser can both count on an opportunity to exchange news and ideas at a certain time each week, communication not only improves but ideas can be tested before being publicly advanced. In addition, the time of both the adviser and student officer is conserved. But undoubtedly the principal benefit is incidental to the stated purposes of such conferences—the staff adviser and the student, adult and young person, get to know each other very well. Roughly analogous to the academic tutorial, the weekly conference enables each to learn from the other in the exchange or clash of ideas and perspectives. Like Mark Hopkins at the end of the log and the student on the other, it is a form of one-to-one education that takes place in the extracurriculum.

Since the weekly conference will often prove to be the only time between meetings when the president or chairman and the adviser will see each other, it is well for both to prepare for it in advance. The agenda for the next meeting of the organization can provide a useful point of departure for a mutual exploration of current concerns.

Counseling. As a member of a college faculty or staff the adviser has a responsibility to facilitate the personal and intellectual development of students. The problems of individual members of the group will inevitably come to his attention and he must be prepared to give some of his time to them. These problems may or may not relate to the program and purposes of the organization itself but his involvement in them will stem from his advisory relationship.
Recognizing that he is probably not a counseling psychologist or a skilled psychotherapist, the adviser can refer difficult problems to the appropriate campus agencies while dealing with less severe problems himself through good listening and the imparting of sympathetically applied common sense.

Referral. In some instances, the resolution of certain group or individual problems is beyond the competence of the adviser and he will need to recommend that other agencies or persons be consulted. If he does not know what resources exist within the college or community the student personnel division can often be of assistance, particularly with reference to personal, financial, vocational, or academic problems.

Referral can also become a vehicle for additional learning on the part of the members of the organization. The typical college campus has a wide variety of experts on almost every conceivable subject or professional skill, many of whom are in demand as consultants to business, industry, or community agencies. When students consult with faculty experts they can not only upgrade the quality of their programs but can also learn something of the expert’s discipline and its principles as applied to a practical problem.

When the Academic Affairs Committee decided to do a survey of student opinion concerning proposed curriculum changes, the faculty adviser referred them to Dr. Kirk, of the Journalism Department who was an authority on public opinion polling. Dr. Kirk helped the committee members phrase the questions, planned the sampling procedures, set up a brief training program for interviews, and gave some suggestions in the interpretation of the results. The result was not only a valid sampling of student opinion but, as one committee member put it, “I’ll never again read about a survey in the newspapers without raising a lot of questions about how it was done. I’m much more critical of polls and surveys than I was before.”

Coaching or Tutoring. The adviser should not assume that because a student holds an important office or chairmanship he is therefore capable of fulfilling all of the specific demands of that responsibility. The adviser may find it necessary on occasion to spend some time with a student teaching him how to perform in a role or to accomplish a new or difficult task. For example, he may help a student master-of-ceremonies plan his program, assist a student body president in the preparation of a public speech, tutor a chairman in basic parliamentary procedure, or coach the moderator of a student panel discussion in his duties.

Availability. Without leaving himself open to exploitation by some students, the adviser should give group members some idea of when he will be available to them outside of the regular meeting or scheduled conferences. Problems and emergencies arise, in spite of the best planning, and often the adviser is called upon for his help or advice.

“The Coffee-Cup Conference.” The informality of conferring over a cup of coffee in the college cafeteria, grill or campus hang-out can be overdone but as a convenient and friendly means of doing business it is difficult to improve upon.

The Group Setting

In addition to meeting with the group president, chairman, or other individual members the adviser may be attending meetings of the executive council, subcommittees, or the entire group. Listed below are some ways in which the adviser can improve the operation of the organization and his own effectiveness in the group situation.

“. . . to speak or not to speak . . .” While the adviser should not feel that he is an outsider or a junior partner who makes a contribution only when called upon, if he is on his feet too often during a meeting he will find himself dominating the proceedings and the interest and attention of the members waning. He should remember that the meeting probably was not called to give him a platform and that the more he talks, the less experience the members get in group participation. Some organizations save some time at the end of each meeting for the adviser to speak out while others have an agenda item for the adviser’s comments. If he has met with the chairman or executive committee before the meeting and discussed his views and concerns with them there will be less need to respond continually to ill-considered or impractical proposals that occasionally arise during the meeting.

The Critique. Used quite widely by advisers to student publications, the critique is a teaching device that could well be employed to a greater extent by other advisers and student leaders. In its simplest form the critique might consist of a post-mortem of a recent program or project. The participants, with the help of the adviser, evaluate the program and their performance, identifying their mistakes and suggesting ways the task may have been improved. If the program is to be repeated at a later date, notes should be kept for future guidance.

The Weekend Retreat. Growing in popularity at many colleges and universities is the weekend retreat. The organization, or a sub-group, leaves the campus to spend several days away from telephones, social activities, and other distractions to focus its full attention on a topic, a problem, or in planning. Weekend camps or retreats have been used to plan the coming year’s activities, to evaluate the purpose and function of the organization, to orient new members, to consider approaches to a serious group problem, to examine a
campus issue in depth, to train new officers and chairmen, to conduct workshops, or to study intellectually oriented issues and topics.

Other values, in addition to the stated purpose, are apparent. The interaction of students and faculty or staff members in an informal setting, all dressed in casual clothing, and with few barriers to communication, can create a bond of understanding and community of interest that would otherwise be difficult to achieve. The organization itself can develop a cohesion and solidarity that will be productive back on campus.

The Planning Session. Some of the values of a weekend retreat can be obtained with less expenditure of time and money by setting aside a regular meeting or calling a special meeting at which routine business is suspended. The meeting can then be devoted to long-term planning or any other objective that may require more intensive consideration than a routine agenda item usually receives. Too, the tendency of student organizations to be captured by parliamentary procedure can be counteracted and free discussion facilitated.

The Adviser's Home. Some advisers open their homes to their group for off-campus planning sessions, one-day or evening retreats, or a beginning-of-the-year or an end-of-the-year social gathering. On a residential campus, in particular, the students appreciate the opportunity of being at home again after weeks or months of dormitory or fraternity house living and of seeing the adviser and meeting his family in their home surroundings. Members of the organization are usually quite willing to help in the preparation of a buffet or picnic dinner and in the inevitable post-meeting clean-up.

Leadership Development. The long-term effectiveness of the organization and its value to individual members will be greatly improved if the adviser and the group can devote some attention to the development of new leadership. If each year officers and committee chairmen are elected or appointed who understand something of the history and purposes of the organization, its program, and the requirements of their particular jobs, more attention can be given to creative program content and less tojust getting started.

Techniques for leadership development may range from the use of a weekend training retreat or a systematic in-service training program to something as simple as the preparation of a series of one-paragraph job descriptions for each office or chairmanship. Officers should be encouraged to delegate responsibility to members, assistant or deputy chairmen can be appointed, reports and records utilized, or the technique of the critique employed with junior members sitting in.

Guests and Resource People. Member interest and the educational value of a meeting can be enhanced by the occasional use of guests and resource people. The adviser can suggest the names of faculty colleagues or community leaders who could be invited to a meeting to provide expert advice or a new approach to an issue or problem facing the organization. Perhaps faculty consultants can be drafted by the group to bring their professional specialty or expertise to upgrade the quality of ideation, program content, or problem-solving.

While every experienced adviser will develop his own methods for working with the students in the organization he is advising, the above listing illustrates the nature and complexity of teaching through the medium of voluntary student organizations. The techniques seem unorthodox, but most successful classroom teachers have employed some or many of the same techniques or methods in their formal classes, seminars, or in counseling. The effective adviser is teaching. Whether or not his students grow and learn will depend on his understanding of his role as a teacher-leader in the organization.
Some Problem Areas

The student organization adviser, working closely as he does with intelligent but complex young people, will find that each year with the same organization brings with it a new set of problems. And yet, he will begin to see in them a certain likeness and pattern, or perhaps they are simply recurring—the same old problem in new garb. The experienced adviser will also recognize that his approach to the same problem will vary from year to year, depending upon the people involved, the student leadership, the campus climate of opinion that year; and factors he can only sense through experience.

This chapter identifies several special advisory situations and some common problem areas. Solutions are not presented—only approaches that at the very least may suggest a way to think about resolving the problem.

Special Advisory Opportunities

Certainly categories of student organizations on the campus possess all the vices and virtues of other student groups, but, in addition, present special advisory opportunities and problems that appear to be inherent in their purpose or membership. The adviser should seek to understand the unique qualities of such organizations and the ways in which these qualities can be related through activity and program to the institution’s educational purpose.

Foreign Student Organizations. The student from abroad has become a very familiar sight on the American college campus since World War II with more than 82,000 foreign students enrolled in 1,859 colleges and universities in 1964-65 (Institute of International Education, 1965). Inevitably and quite naturally those students from a certain country or area of the world, sharing a common language and cultural background, will group together informally and formally. Some will form organizations and petition for institutional recognition.

The campus with a sizeable number of students from abroad is fortunate because they can provide a rich resource for learning about other peoples and other cultures, and for the development of greater international understanding. Wilson (1965, p. 187), in his useful study on “education in world outlook,” sees informal campus activities as being of special importance to one who is concerned with international affairs.

Not only may they bulwark and enrich classroom instruction about national cultures and international relations for those students who enroll for such instruction, but they may also reach large numbers of students who are not now touched at all by specific courses in international relations. If one assumes that no student should graduate from college or university whose mind and spirit have not been quickened and enlightened in their grasp of international relations, it becomes essential to develop the extracurriculum and the co-curriculum as well as the curriculum to that end.

Not only can American students benefit from the presence of foreign students in their midst, but the foreign students themselves can profit from a greater understanding of American culture, particularly if the college makes a special effort to attain these ends. However, because of the problems of coping with a strange and new culture, foreign students tend to associate themselves in national enclaves that by their isolation tend to negate many of the positive effects of living abroad. And American students, busy with their own concerns and problems, often do not make the extra effort required to become acquainted with students from other countries. As a result, many of the purported advantages of international exchange and visitation are never realized to their fullest extent.

Most student organizations can and should be stimulated to introduce an international emphasis in their programs. Even departmental or special-interest organizations can seek to recruit members from among the foreign students who show similar interests and who can bring an international dimension to club activities and programs.

The adviser who serves a foreign student group can search for ways of relating that organization and its activities to the mainstream of campus life. Inviting American students to membership; participating in a council of international organizations; providing speakers and panels for programs open to the university community; participating as a group in campus-wide activities; maintaining communication with alumni; showing travel films; advising American students going abroad;
organizing a speakers bureau to serve classes, student
groups, and community organizations—all can bring an international flavor to the richness and variety of campus life.

Because his work with a foreign student group involves both a campus activity and students from abroad, the adviser should seek to maintain a cooperative relationship with both the foreign student office and the student activities office. He will need to be familiar with the institutional policies and requirements governing student organizations and activities. Because his work with foreign students will inevitably involve him in their personal problems, he should be acquainted with the resources and expertise available in the foreign student office. And he will find it helpful at times to consult with the advisers to other foreign student organizations to compare approaches and problems.

Political Action Groups. The political or social action group is a common and exciting phenomenon of the college campus. Organized to advocate a particular political point-of-view or a social reform, it can quickly become the storm-center of controversy as partisans and their opponents swirl in a cloud of charges, countercharges, and not always rational debate.

There is little question but that most well-run political action groups contribute to the political sophistication and education of the students who participate or those who only watch and listen. In a democracy, where an aware and knowledgeable citizenry is indispensable, education in political theory and practice is vital, and this is an educational responsibility in which both the curriculum and extracurriculum can play significant roles.

However important the learning involved in campus political activity may be, the price to the institution may sometimes be high and the adviser and the administration may wonder at the end of a long and trying year whether it is not too high. The problems center in two major areas: (1) students, discovering the world for the first time and flushed with youthful enthusiasm, are prone to advocate causes or points-of-view that the majority opinion of the surrounding community finds repugnant or intolerable. A democracy, by definition, ought to be able to accommodate many points of view without strain or excessive risk to itself or it will cease to be a democracy. Left to its own devices, the college could utilize reason and logic to destroy irrational and emotional argumentation. But the college exists in a culture that places a high value on higher education and its activities, campus or classroom, will be and should be critically scrutinized by the public. Student-created political pressures, usually minimal, will be met by counter-pressures and the institution finds itself in the middle of the resulting controversy; (2) student political and social action groups, with access to campus facilities and a concentration of young audiences, are prime targets for off-campus direction and exploitation. The campus political group can be used for recruiting, to create publicity for the cause, to raise money, and to provide the prestige of a college platform for visiting speakers. In some instances, a student organization with very few members becomes simply a funnel into the campus for an off-campus cause. The students themselves may welcome, even seek out, this type of exploitation while keeping a weather eye open for administrative interference.

The problem for the educator is not simply that a few students advocate far-out causes or that outside interests attempt to exploit the campus, because both phenomena have been characteristic of higher education for many years, and both students and institutions have survived them. Rather, it is that in neither instance are the protagonists interested in the nature and the quality of the learning experience involved. The focus is on partisanship and exploitation—not the education of the young people involved.

The only response the college can make is to define and redefine what it is attempting to do in the extracurriculum and then continually communicate and interpret this purpose to the outside community and to its own students. The institution cannot become identified with a particular viewpoint or involved in partisanship if it is to retain the freedom to search for truth. To concentrate on educational purpose in the extracurriculum would seem to be the college's best offensive posture and its best defense against unwarranted outside pressures.

Student Government. While the subject of student government is too extensive to be dealt with satisfactorily within the limited scope of this monograph, the faculty or staff member who serves as an adviser to the student governing board should be aware of some of the opportunities and pitfalls involved.

The student governing body is not just another one of many campus organizations. Because of its representative quality, its press coverage, the prestige of its leadership corps, the scope of its programs, and often the size of its budget it is in a unique position to influence the climate of the campus as well as administrative policies and decisions. In spite of the frequent complaints of campus politicians that student government lacks support because the administration won't give it any "power," it should be clear to even the casual observer that it can and often does exercise considerable influence which is its real power.

Because student government represents but one segment of the campus community it cannot be delegated actual legislative or administrative authority over those areas of campus life that concern more than students
alone. To take a common source of conflict, the student governing body cannot be given the authority to administer the policies governing campus parking any more than can the sociology department be delegated authority over parking. If students alone used college parking space it might make sense to turn its administration over to student government. However, parking is generally available to staff and faculty as well and, like most other all-college concerns, must therefore be administered by delegation to an all-campus agency from the president's office. The nature of policies and regulations governing parking is amenable to the influence of the staff, faculty, and student body and may be revised and amended as a result of that influence but the decision to amend is made by an all-university authority—not by one of the affected groups to the exclusion of the others.

The authority of the student governing body is thus somewhat circumscribed in most areas of its concern because other segments of the campus community also have a stake in the very areas in which student government wishes to have "power." Final authority for policy and decision making can reside only where these various interest groups converge, generally in the president's office or in the university's governing board.

Even the governance of student affairs cannot be the exclusive province of student government since the conduct of most so-called student activities is inextricably intertwined with the academic program, the use of campus facilities, institutional public relations, the rights of other student organizations, and the long-range development of the college.

The real power of a student government lies in its ability to influence the course of events, not only because of the campus-wide support it is able to muster, but particularly by virtue of the sheer cogency of the arguments it presents. Facts and logic carry their own influence. The adviser to the student governing body should be devoting much of his time to teaching student government leaders how to study a problem, assemble the relevant data, and present a forceful argument rather than engaging in fruitless and energy-wasting skirmishes over student government's lack of real "power." An alert and responsible student governing body, exercising the scholarly techniques involved in problem-solving, can have a significant effect upon the college decision-making process and the college will be a better place because of its voice.

This role requires a high level of leadership performance and the adviser will inevitably be involved in programs which recruit and train students for the assumption of responsibility. A good student government attracts the participation of good students who not only gain in personal effectiveness but, more important, give leadership to programs that affect the total educational climate of the campus and give the student body at large an influential voice in those areas which materially affect it.

Greek-Letter Organizations. Few campus organizations engender such strong feelings, pro and con, as fraternities and sororities. At their best they provide the organizational muscle that contributes greatly to successful campus activities while providing a small group, face-to-face, living situation. The small residential group such as the fraternity can be an antidote to the numbers problem in the large institution for those fortunate enough to belong and may provide needed peer group support for academic achievement.

However, the principal function of fraternities and sororities is, as Scott (1965, pp. 90-91) puts it, "The establishment and maintenance of friendships. They provide a home-away-from-home for students, a group to which they belong, a place where they are fairly sure to find sympathy and understanding, to find people who will accept and support them under any circumstances. It does not take a high level of performance to elicit friendly responses from one's fellow members. These primary groups then provide a welcome contrast to the impersonal, achievement-oriented academic institution, and it is hardly surprising that many students seek their principal gratification here rather than in the classroom."

For the faculty member who undertakes to advise a local fraternity chapter both the problems and the rewards can be great. Some of the fraternities and sororities tend to give more lip-service than actual performance to the academic aims of the institution and are frequently havens of non- or anti-intelectuality. They may tend to perpetuate the more superficial aspects of personal relationships through rushing, discriminatory practices, and the personal attributes that they appear to value. Fraternities, particularly, have a propensity for constantly being in hot water for delinquencies centering around hazing, alcohol, and sex.

And yet there is a great potentiality in the fraternity-sorority system for the development of individuals who can accept responsibility and set worthwhile group standards that can in turn influence the climate of the total campus. The adviser will often find that his principal role is to identify and cultivate potential leaders in the chapter and to support those who attain office. Education for leadership and responsibility should begin with the pledge class and the adviser should work closely with the pledge-trainer, supervising the content and intent of the pledge-program and conducting some of the lessons himself.

If possible, the adviser should be one of a team of adult advisers, each assuming responsibility for advising a major chapter committee, elected officer, or specific function. Because many of the chapter officers and committee chairmen will be quite inexperienced they can
benefit greatly from the increased attention an adviser specializing in their particular jobs can give them on a continuing basis.

The faculty member who advises a chapter can often make his greatest impact in the initiation of an educational program that includes but goes beyond the traditional emphasis on scholarship.

Speakers from the faculty and the community can be invited to the chapter house for dinner and discussion; the chapter can be encouraged to support the college's artistic and cultural offerings; worthwhile social service and civic projects should be a feature of the fraternity's activity program; a chapter reference and study library can be assembled; special training in the techniques of study can be arranged; even the art on the walls of the chapter house and the magazine subscription list can help to elevate standards of taste and conversation.

While this model admittedly is a far cry from the usual chapterhouse fare, many observers believe that the fraternities of the future will need to demonstrate greater relevancy to the educational objectives of the institutions of which they are a part or find that the serious students of tomorrow's campus will consider them as quite irrelevant to their goals and interests. On the other hand, if the fraternity can be seen to supplement or complement the values already held by the more serious and responsible student, its ability to attract a high quality of undergraduate man or woman will be enhanced and both the organization and the institution will benefit.

_Student Publications._ Most universities and colleges have a variety of publications that students manage, edit, and to which they contribute. The campus newspaper and the yearbook or annual are to be found on almost every campus. The larger institutions may also support a literary magazine, professional school publications such as an engineering journal or the _Law Review_, newsletters, and the vanishing but unmourned humor magazine.

Unlike many student activities and programs where the mistakes are quickly buried and forgotten the student publication, when issued, becomes a permanent part of the college's history for all to see, both in the campus grill and the bound volumes to be found in the library. The newspaper is read, not only by the students, but by the faculty, the staff, the trustees, many of the alumni, and the local press. It has an indisputable public relations function and makes its contribution, positive or negative, to the perception of the college which is held by the public.

And yet the student publication is generally not a house organ for the public relations office and it jealously guards its tradition of freedom from administrative control. Mueller (1961, p. 346) feels that "the problem of freedom of speech for any campus newspaper is in three ways more complicated than in any other situation: (1) it concerns juveniles in a learning situation; (2) those in the highest positions of responsibility are in office only a few months and will have left the campus within the year; and (3) the public may not fully understand the attitudes expressed by student editors."

The problems of the publications adviser are not easily, if ever, solved. Being without pre-publication review, he is often as surprised and appalled at what appears the next morning as is the casual reader and it is usually his telephone, not the editor's, that begins to ring as the paper hits the streets.

As is so often the case in student groups, a partial answer lies in the quality of the student staff. A training program related to the department of journalism can impart a sense of journalistic ethics and responsibility to editors who are still learning the profession. A board of control, widely representative of the departments and agencies with a stake in the quality of student publications, may serve as publisher and make appointments to major positions. The business office can supervise the extensive financial operations of the various publications.

But in the final analysis it is the publications adviser who must communicate in some way the critical difference between freedom and license, the reality of a newspaper that owes its allegiance to the student body but also serves the whole university in many ways, the difference between informing the reader and manipulating him ("Agitation Through the Press," 1956), the ethics involved in using the editorial columns for personal vendettas, and a host of related questions.

The most commonly used advising technique is the post-publication critique in which the publications adviser and the editor review the publication after it is issued and discuss its contents. Some advisers limit themselves to a critique of the technical errors but, if the review is to be an educational experience for the editor or the staff, the adviser must also discuss the implications of what has been written, particularly if questions of journalistic ethics, libel, or slanted treatment are involved. The adviser must not only be a technical resource; he must function as a teacher, as one who is concerned with what is being learned and what is to be learned.

**Common Problems**

In addition to the special advisory situations outlined above, most student organizations and their advisers face a variety of problems, many of which recur in various guises year after year. The group adviser should be aware of these problems and be prepared to deal with them on the basis of his experience, expert knowledge, and relationship with the organization. Some problems have been considered in previous chapters as
an aspect of the day-to-day routine responsibility of the advisers. Others are common indeed, but sufficiently unique as to justify special treatment.

There are no prescriptions or formulas to be found that guarantee solution; there are too many institutional and human variables involved. But the ability to identify the existence of a problem and the willingness to tackle its resolution will provide part of the solution, if indeed a solution is to be found.

Behavior Problems. Occasionally, a few members of the group will, through youthful exuberance or deliberate maliciousness, be involved in misbehavior that is disruptive of the group or of the college community. Generally, it is not the responsibility of the adviser to serve a policing role in the organization but, on the other hand, he cannot ignore disruptive behavior. Whenever possible, behavior problems should be dealt with at the group level by the officers, the adviser, or by both. The adviser should call the attention of the officers to the problem, suggest an approach, and back them in their efforts to resolve the situation. Sometimes the executive committee of the organization can be informally constituted as a judicial body to consider the case and recommend a solution. In other instances, particularly when the behavior appears to be the outward manifestation of a personal problem, the adviser can see the offending student privately, giving him some insight into the effect of his behavior on others and counseling him on corrective measures. At times the only solution is to have the student withdraw from the organization or to have him dropped from membership. In some cases, the adviser, and perhaps the officers, should consult the student personnel office.

Financial Irregularities. Cases of misappropriation, misuse, or embezzlement of organization funds are not uncommon. The adviser should insist upon well-kept financial records, receipts for income, prompt payment of all obligations, and an audit at the end of each year and/or when a treasurer leaves office. Some formal or informal training of new treasurers is important. If these measures are incorporated as routine operating procedure, no student treasurer need feel that his personal integrity is being impugned. The adviser should also keep himself informed about the condition of the group's financial situation and records. If irregularities are uncovered despite the reasonable precautions, the adviser is faced with a dilemma. Should the problem be handled quietly within the organization itself, or should it be reported to the appropriate college authorities?

Should Misbehavior Be Reported? In most instances of minor misbehavior, the situation can be best handled within the organization through group sanctions and penalties and with the adviser counseling with the students involved. In other instances, not covered by existing procedures or policies, the adviser must use his best judgment, referring or reporting serious cases of misbehavior or maladjustment to the appropriate college office.

Keeping in mind his responsibilities to the welfare of the individual student, the organization, and the institution, the adviser will also need to consider such other factors as these:

1. Does the type of misbehavior cast a serious doubt on the individual's fitness for his objective? For example, the accounting major who embezzles money from the group treasury.

2. Can an otherwise worthwhile young person be deterred from other and more serious misbehavior by firm action and rehabilitative counseling at this stage?

3. Does the misbehavior constitute a criminal act for which the adviser's failure to report may result in his being implicated?

4. Are there serious implications for the institution's public posture or relationship with the community?

5. Is the misbehavior symptomatic of possible psychological disturbance on the part of the student which could require professional attention? The counseling office or dean's office may know of other similar incidents which, with the adviser's report, may indicate a disturbed student who needs assistance.

The responsibility of the adviser to the student is a real one but he must not assume that referral to the student personnel office will necessarily work to the student's disadvantage or result in his dismissal. If the adviser is in doubt as to the correct action, he should consult the dean's office on a confidential basis or at least by describing the situation as a hypothetical case.

Cliques and Factions. Inevitably, cliques and factions will develop in a student organization and sometimes result in unproductive or disruptive controversy. At the very least, the presence of factionalism engenders a feeling of resentment and isolation on the part of those left out and may result in their withdrawing from the organization or losing interest in it.

The problem can sometimes be resolved by facing it squarely, with the adviser initiating group discussions aimed at developing insight and remedies by group members. The advisers might also talk to some of the individuals involved and enlist their cooperation in reducing the effect of cliquishness and factionalism.

Stimulating Participation. While it is primarily the responsibility of the organization's officers to maintain participation and interest, the adviser is often in position to view the organization and its activities from a broader perspective. It may be that the activities are just plain boring and need to be reexamined. An authoritarian leader can take the enjoyment out of participation as can the leader who will not delegate jobs and responsi-
bility. The goals of the group should be examined. Are they too easily attained or too difficult or remote for the group realistically to achieve them? An off-campus retreat or a planning session focused on this very problem may result in better programming and greater participation. A faculty expert on group interaction or human relations might provide valuable insight into the organization’s problems.

"The Freedom to Make Mistakes." The battle-cry of student and faculty members against perceived interference by administrators or of students against adviser domination, this concept should be examined because it is popular and carries with it all the connotations of student freedom from paternalistic authority. Every teacher knows that students are going to make mistakes and it is part of the teaching function to correct and eliminate those errors. But the psychology of learning also teaches us that trial-and-error learning is inefficient and time-consuming. There is little need for the chemistry laboratory instructor to insist that the students painfully explore all of the blind alleys that led to the discovery of a principle or process when the replication of a successful experiment can effectively teach the same principle in a fraction of the time.

The adviser, too, can and should teach his students how to anticipate problems, which errors to avoid, and techniques for accomplishing the goal that have proved effective in the past. He should permit mistakes, not only because they are impossible to avoid, but also because they may in certain circumstances provide the best or most lasting learning. In other circumstances, however, the adviser may have to step in and direct or actually take over a student project to prevent failure.

Not all student leaders are efficient or responsible and where the consequences of failure outweigh the learning values of the failure, the adviser has a responsibility to remedy the situation.

The Undergraduate Economics Club had invited a distinguished economist from a nearby university to speak to the college community on the economic development of emerging nations. The day before the lecture was to take place, Dr. Appleton, the faculty adviser, discovered to his horror that the arrangements chairman, Jack Smith, despite repeated reminders, had neglected to reserve a hotel room for their guest, provide for his transportation from the hotel to the college, and order microphones for the stage; and to top it off, the Club president hadn’t been checking on Smith. "I ought to let them stew in their own juice," Dr. Appleton thought grimly to himself as he reached for the phone and began calling hotels.

References


Chapter 7

The Student Personnel Function in Activities—
The Student Personnel Point of View

Occupying a central role in the administration of most extracurricular programs is the student personnel division which, in a coordinated or centralized administrative structure, embraces most of the specialized professional-level agencies serving student out-of-class life. In 1958, the American Council on Education (Feder, et al., 1958) published the following list of functions which is still indicative of the scope of student personnel work.

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<th>Selection for admission</th>
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<td>Registration and records</td>
<td>Remedial reading</td>
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<td>Counseling</td>
<td>Study habits</td>
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<td>Health service</td>
<td>Speech and hearing</td>
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<td>Housing and food service</td>
<td>Special services</td>
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<td>Student activities</td>
<td>Student orientation</td>
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<td>Financial aid</td>
<td>Veteran's advisory services</td>
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<td>Placement</td>
<td>Foreign student programs</td>
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<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Marriage counseling</td>
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<td>Religious activities and counseling</td>
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Underlying these varied functions of the student personnel field is a philosophy of education that is in essence a philosophy of higher education as well. The so-called “student personnel point-of-view,” first articulated in 1937 and again in 1949 in a publication of the American Council on Education (Williamson, et al., 1949, p. 1), stated that, “The development of students as whole persons interacting in social situations is the central concern of student personnel work and of other agencies of education.”

The student personnel point of view encompasses the student as a whole. The concept of education is broadened to include attention to the student’s well-rounded development—physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually, as well as intellectually. The student is thought of as a responsible participant in his own development and not a passive recipient of an impressed economic, political, or religious doctrine, or vocational skill. As a responsible participant in the societal processes of our American democracy, his full and balanced maturity is viewed as a major end-goal of education and, as well, a necessary means to the fullest development of his fellow citizens. From the personnel point of view any lesser goal falls short of the desired objective of democratic educational processes, and is a real drain and strain on the self-realization of other developing individuals in our society (Williamson, et al., 1949, pp. 1-2).

It should be clear that, contrary to the criticism of some, the intellectual or academic growth of the student is not neglected or improperly subordinated in the student personnel point-of-view. On the contrary, the view expressed in these statements not only fully accepts intellectual growth as a fundamental goal of higher education, but extends this central concept to include other aspects of the student’s development as being important. This, then, becomes not just a student personnel point-of-view but an attitude toward the whole purpose of higher education as it relates to the student. And it is in this context that the role of the extracurriculum, as an agency not only of extending classroom learning but of implementing the corollary educative goals, becomes meaningful.

The Student Activities Adviser

The proliferation of student activities after the Civil War led to the appointment of college officials to supervise them and see that they did not get out of hand. After World War I, specialized personnel officers began to devote professional attention to the various aspects of the non-academic life of students. Certain of these officers were assigned the task of attempting to divert the burgeoning extracurriculum into constructive channels, and today these officers carry such titles as Dean of Students, Dean of Men, Dean of Women, Dean of Student Affairs, Director of Student Personnel, Director or Coordinator of Student Activities, Director of the Student Union, Fraternity Adviser, etc. Regardless of title, these staff members usually carry some responsibility for student organizational life on the campus whether at the administrative or coordinating level, or as advisers to student groups, or both.

Note: This chapter is based in part on the author’s article, “The Personnel Worker as a Student Group Adviser,” *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 1961, Vol. 2, pp. 43-47.
Since both the faculty members and the professional student personnel workers may serve as advisers to student organizations, it would be well to examine the ways in which the advisory roles of the two differ. The personnel worker is a member of the personnel staff who has been employed by the college to work with student organizations and who brings to his role a certain amount of professional training and experience. The faculty adviser, on the other hand, is a member of the teaching staff who has accepted the responsibility of working with a student group but whose competencies are most often in an academic discipline. The faculty adviser may advise no more than one or two groups, often related to his scholarly interests, while the personnel worker may be administratively responsible for all chartered groups, including those advised by a faculty member, but usually works more closely with campus-wide or residential student governing bodies.

The Strategy of Student Life. There is another important difference between the approach of the student personnel worker and the faculty member to advising student groups. As he works with individual student organizations, the professional worker is concerned with the implementation of an overall strategy of student life. He should view each group he advises in a context that falls between that provided by the group's own program and the broadly stated purposes of higher education. He or his department should have some general objectives to be achieved through the extracurriculum and each advisory relationship is employed to forward these objectives.

For example, the personnel office may feel that the college is not making sufficient educational capital of the presence of foreign students on the campus. As each personnel staff member advises the student groups to which he is assigned, he will find ways of emphasizing this objective to the student leaders, suggesting program possibilities or related projects that forward this strategy while remaining consistent with the group's own purposes. Other strategic objectives may have been determined by the personnel staff such as the development of greater student responsibility through the organization of a judiciary system or the stimulation of a greater campus concern for human welfare through charitable giving programs. The student personnel worker actually seeks to change the prevailing campus climate through an emphasis upon these objectives as he advises student groups. The personnel office will enlist, where possible, the assistance of the faculty advisers in developing and implementing the elements of a strategy for student life, but the leadership or impetus will be the responsibility of the professional worker.

Responsibilities of the Professional Worker. The advisory relationship maintained between the student personnel adviser and any student organization is mediated by four major responsibilities of the professional worker: research, counseling, education, and supervision. The manner in which he performs these responsibilities also tends to differentiate his staff advisory role from that of the faculty adviser.

1. Research Responsibilities. As a member of a college staff and of a profession, the professional worker has an obligation to utilize and to contribute to research findings that will improve the services he renders. While the adviser must usually give primary consideration to his service role, his day-to-day relationship with student leaders and group programs may suggest problems that can be best solved by a systematic research approach. In describing several ways in which a college student personnel worker can be involved in research, Smith (1959) has pointed out that "he can keep records essential for research if nothing more."

2. Personal Counseling. The professional worker will inevitably find himself performing the personal counseling function, not only because his professional background will often include graduate training in counseling but also because he is in a unique position to observe individuals as they operate in a group context. Ptacek (1957) has pointed out some of the stresses and strains to which student leaders are subject and has suggested that particular attention be given to the problems of student leaders, many of whom are reluctant because of status feelings to seek counseling assistance from the personnel services. The professional worker may find that he will be providing counseling assistance to student leaders on personal problems that have little to do with the organization itself. Students in the group may turn to the adviser or a sympathetic interested adult who is known or readily accessible to them. He may undertake to counsel them himself if he has had the necessary training and experience, or he may use his relationship with these individuals to refer them to appropriate professional assistance.

3. Education. While many agents are involved in the effort of the college to bridge the gap between the campus and the classroom, the student personnel worker is the standard bearer. He, too, has an educational function but it is implemented in the counseling session or in the student organization meeting rather than in the formal structured classroom situation. The techniques used are those of the counselor and the group worker while the content of the extracurriculum may relate to academic objectives or focus on personal growth and development.

Educational authorities have for years cited the educational value of student activities in the secondary school or college but have tended to stress gains in social adjustment and good citizenship rather than cultural and intellectual development. Without minimizing
the importance of social adjustment or the development of citizenship and democratic values as legitimate objectives well suited to extracurricular facilitation, it would seem that objectives with greater academic relevance might also be achieved through the advisory services of staff workers as well as faculty advisers.

4. Administration or Supervision. A great deal of attention is devoted in the literature of student personnel work to the educational potentiality of the extracurriculum and to the role of the student personnel worker in facilitating the educational process, but little reference is made to his administrative responsibilities. He may wish to minimize or ignore this sometimes unpleasant chore, but his group advisory responsibilities include a hard core of minimal expectations his college may have for him. He may possibly be forgiven for not successfully developing a strong, educationally viable program, but if an organization should embarrass the institution or flaunt the regulations, he may expect to hear about it.

The professional student activities staff member generally finds that he is more than an adviser to his organization. He is a supervisor as well, with the responsibility of making certain that each student organization conducts its program within the limitations of college policy and good sense. The faculty adviser has this same general responsibility, but the student personnel worker, administratively responsible for the enforcement of college policies and hired for that purpose as well as others, feels the supervisory responsibility even more keenly. At times, the personnel worker may find himself in direct opposition to a faculty member's indulgent, "Oh, well, boys will be boys," and have to take an unpopular stand for law and order. He may on occasion find that administrative exigencies will preclude his desire to be seen by student groups solely as a helpful and friendly counselor.

As an administrative officer of the college, the personnel worker is expected to supervise student activities to prevent the disastrous lapses of good judgment, violation of college policy, or good taste that are an inevitable aspect of working with an adolescent society. He arbitrates conflicts and disagreements between groups, sees that the educational climate of the campus is not unduly disrupted, handles off-campus complaints about student organizations and, in many other ways, performs functions that can be described as educational only in the most generous terms. But through all the multiplicity of details he handles, and amid the sometimes harassing crises of the day, the student personnel worker must keep his educational strategy in mind and seek ways of implementing this strategy in even the most baffling or emotion-wrought situations. Williamson (1957) has stated the thesis as follows:

Without abandoning any of the functions and services presently performed, the staff of the office of the dean of students should continually appraise each service function and seek to perform it in such a way as to increase the likelihood that some educational gain will follow for students.

It should be recognized that these four major functions are not mutually exclusive nor are they necessarily performed in sequence. An interfraternity council meeting or an interview with a student body president may find the adviser performing several of these functions in varying degrees depending upon his analysis of the situation and the needs of the group or its leaders.

Williamson (1961, p. 223) has listed five roles which the student personnel worker may be called upon to play in his relationship with student organizations:

1. He may be asked to advise when asked by students regarding their own voluntary activities.

2. He may serve as a joint partner with students concerning programs and activities which are both voluntary student activities and also an organized part of the university's program.

3. He may serve as a consultant in determining what suggestions and reactions students may have to the institution's own program, such as the establishment of costs and rates for dormitory occupancy.

4. He may serve a leadership role, suggesting and urging adoption of new objectives by an organization.

5. He may serve as a technical consultant, having expertise superior to that possessed by students and helpful in improving programs geared to their own objectives and achieved through their own activities.

The student personnel worker and the faculty adviser should share responsibility with student leaders for the organization of an extracurriculum that has learning potency. The students themselves are much concerned with the adequacy of their college experience and its effect upon their own education. The student is not only the raison d'etre of the academic enterprise but, as history has amply demonstrated, he can become the agent for change and reform in both curricular and extracurricular matters. It is only when a partnership is achieved with students, faculty, and staff together that a true educational community and climate can be created and grow. Each participant can thus bring to the academic enterprise specialized knowledge or a unique perspective; this common pursuit of better education is then more likely to be productive of an improved climate for learning.

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