



# COLLEGE *and* UNIVERSITY

Volume 93 Issue Nº 1

Educating the Modern Higher Education Administration Professional

Changing How We  
Think About Advising  
Online Students:  
One-Stop Student Service  
Advising Model

Latino Students and  
Degree Attainment

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The Slow Professor:  
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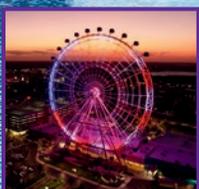
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AACRAO members are especially encouraged to submit articles, but non-members, faculty, graduate students, and members of the corporate sector are also welcome to share their work. Authors will receive copies of the issue in which their article appears, and will be issued an honorarium.

For editorial procedures and manuscript preparation guidelines, visit <[www.aacrao.org/cu/write](http://www.aacrao.org/cu/write)>.

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# Editor's Note

*Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, Ph.D.*  
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I recently attended AACRAO's Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Conference and the annual meeting of the New England Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (NEACRAO). Both conferences had a number of outstanding sessions and provided excellent networking opportunities. I encouraged a few presenters to submit articles for publication in *College & University*. The hardest part, I suggested, was coming up with a topic, refining the idea, and organizing the material. I pointed out that they've already done much of that work in preparing their presentation for the conference. I'm hopeful that some will follow through. You might consider this as well!

This edition includes two feature articles. In "Changing How We Think about Advising Online Students: One-Stop Student Service Advising Model", Rich Simpson examines one university's efforts to service online degree seeking students through a one-stop model.

In "Latino Students and Degree Attainment," Jacquelyn D. Elliott and Rodney Parks examine cultural, social, and financial barriers Latino students face in higher education and provide recommendations for college administrators seeking to assist this population.

We have two research-in-brief articles. Kristi Wold-McCormick summarizes the report of AACRAO's Transcript Disciplinary Notations Working Group and its key recommendations. In "Loosening the Ties That Bind: The Limitations of Youth-centricity in Higher Education Admission, Research, and Practice," Constance Iloh suggests that research focusing primarily on

traditionally-aged students, and ignoring other populations, gets in the way of developing learning environments to serve all students.

The mentorship series continues with: "Mentoring Opportunities" by Margo Landry; "Using Your Mentoring Experiences to Bring Out the Best in Others and Yourself" by Paul Marthers; and "Onward: Reflections on Mentoring" by Kimberley Buster-Williams.

Also included is a commentary, "Workspace: The Final Frontier," by Jesse Parrish and Rodney Parks, and two campus viewpoints, "Transforming the Enrollment Experience using Design Thinking" by Aaron Apel, Phil Hull, Scott Owczarek, and Wren Singer, and "Creating a High-Touch Recruitment Event: Utilizing Faculty to Recruit and Yield Students" by Lindsey R. Freed and Leanne L. Howell.

The edition contains two book reviews by Christopher Tremblay, *Earning Admission: Real Strategies for Getting into Highly Selective Colleges* by Greg Kaplan and *Pathways to Enrollment Management: A Financial Aid Perspective* edited by Linda Conard. It also contains two reviews by Matthew Fifolt, *Organizing Enlightenment. Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University* by Chad Wellman and *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* by Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber.

I hope the variety of articles in this edition gives you, our readers, your own ideas for possible articles! As always, the editors of *C&U* are looking for submissions!

# Changing How We Think About Advising Online Students: One-Stop Student Service Advising Model

This paper explores one private non-profit university's efforts to build a student service advising model that serves online degree-seeking students and offers the support they need to succeed through a single point of contact.

**O**nline degree programs have brought unique challenges for students, faculty, and staff. Colleges and universities must do more to meet these challenges to online students' success. While many institutions adhere to advising practices designed for traditional eighteen-to-22-year-old undergraduate students, some are forging new ground. Changing the way we think about student advising can be challenging. Yet combining fundamental academic advising methods with technological resources and a culture of transparency can provide the kind of service expected from online retail services while still maintaining a relationship characteristic of traditional higher education settings. Studies have shown a strong correlation between students' perceived quality of advising and how they feel about the institution they are attending (Abouchedid and Nasser 2002, Vianden and Barlow 2015, Young-Jones *et al.* 2013). One study, in particular, found that at the most general level, students were frustrated with the registration process, the bureaucracy, faulty scheduling, the fee settlement process, and delays in communication (Abouchedid and Nasser 2002). By contrast, servicing nontraditional college students using a one-stop student service advising model that is both individualized and relevant can support students' success and improve student retention. One-stop student service advisors are responsible for

creating and maintaining relationships with individual students that promote student satisfaction and retention. By meeting the non-classroom support needs of students, advisors provide a significant positive influence on student outcomes beyond persistence and graduation (Vianden and Barlow 2015).

Changing how we think about advising requires a systematic approach. Students come with a broad range of experiences and interact with advisors who typically include professional staff as well as faculty. Students' perceived levels of interaction and support vary even as staff and faculty overlook specific student needs. According to Ruffalo Noel-Levitz (2016), adult learners dread the thought of taking college courses. Even committed students face unique challenges in terms of their reading habits, study skills, math skills, and technology use. Expectations of the advising relationship vary across the student population, so advisors must be able to address students' needs throughout their relationships (Exter 2014). No single model works for all levels of higher education, but certain core principles adopted by this university apply to an advising model. Online students typically are working adults with families. They have many priorities beyond their studies, and for some, years have passed since they were in school (Ruffalo Noel-Levitz 2016). The design and implementation of an advising model designed specifically for online students can help meet these challenges. Execution of an effective advising model begins with training advisors to take a more holistic approach to advising and establishing program-specific best practices (Vianden and Barlow 2015).

A systematic approach to advising online students includes clearly defined roles, expectations, and modes of communication, eliminating inconsistencies in the student-advisor relationship. It determines expectations and guides relationship building. It is vital to align student and advisor expectations and establish a system that clearly defines who initiates contact between student and advisor and who is responsible for the various parts of the advising process (Exter 2014).

## California Baptist University

California Baptist University is a comprehensive liberal arts university in southern California that comprises eleven colleges, schools, and divisions that offer 72 undergraduate degree programs, 25 master's degree programs, and three doctoral programs. Founded in 1950 as California Baptist College in the small town of El Monte, the university has grown from 800 students in 1997 to nearly 10,000 students in Fall 2017. Accredited by the Senior College and University Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, California Baptist University has as its mission to help students understand and engage their purpose by providing a Christ-centered educational experience (Norwood *et al.* 2017).

## Division of Online and Professional Studies

The Division of Online and Professional Studies at California Baptist University was created in 2010 and primarily serves nontraditional students taking courses in a distance-learning environment. Courses are offered in eight-week accelerated sessions and operate independently of the university's traditional, on-campus courses; the division has sole oversight of faculty, curriculum, and administrative staff related to online courses (Norwood *et al.* 2017). Establishing faculty and staff exclusive to Online and Professional Studies was a key part of ensuring that the unique needs of online degree-seeking students were met.

## Online Learning

Online learning continues to be one of the fastest-growing trends in higher education. It is an effective

method of delivering courses at substantially lower cost than traditional face-to-face programs (Means *et al.* 2009). With its establishment of the Division of Online and Professional Studies, California Baptist University allocated resources specific to servicing students enrolled primarily in online or hybrid courses. Offering degree programs online has presented several unique challenges, including serving busy, working adults and ensuring that they remain connected and successful through completion of an accelerated degree program.

## Advising Online Students

At a time when technology has made enrollment a self-service option, it seems regressive in some respects to hire and train staff specifically to advise online students. One can reasonably assume that providing students the means and know-how to complete their classes would be enough. However, real data do not bear out these assumptions. For online students to be successful in this model, they would need to take the initiative and the responsibility to ensure that they enrolled in the right courses and stayed on track to complete a degree with little to no person-to-person interaction. Yet it is often evident that students do not take initiative—even though the advising relationship creates a supportive institutional environment for students, including helping them develop skills and knowledge to succeed well beyond the classroom (Young-Jones *et al.* 2013).

Unlike their peers who enroll at institutions that offer more traditional learning environments, online students have little opportunity to interact with faculty and staff. In the traditional model of higher education, advising is face to face at students' request or during impromptu meetings with faculty or staff (Exter 2014). One cannot assume that online students will request help or proactively seek advising assistance. College and university administrators must commit to improving advising methods by focusing on "strong interpersonal relationships, trust, mutual commitment, and student satisfaction" (Vianden and Barlow 2015, 25).

California Baptist University's Division of Online and Professional Studies (OPS) approached advising as a one-stop student service method and applied it to the new and vibrant context of an online degree program. One-stop student service advisors serve as the hub for students' online learning experience. Faculty deliver the course content and are a resource throughout a student's

education. By contrast, advisors manage and oversee students' educational progress and provide a variety of services focused on student success. California Baptist University's model is designed specifically for the online working student but applies to a range of educational settings. The design delivers effective, high-quality advising that is both personal and timely. After students complete the admission process and are accepted and enrolled, each is assigned an advisor; the expectation is that this relationship will continue throughout each student's enrollment at California Baptist University.

In the first few weeks of the first term, advisors contact their new students at least once via e-mail and phone to schedule an initial appointment. The appointment encompasses a review of transfer work and a check on how the student's current courses are going. At the conclusion of the appointment, a degree plan is finalized, and the student is enrolled in all future-term courses through degree completion. From the outset, the advisor establishes a clear end goal and the steps needed to accomplish the goal. After the appointment, the advisor follows up to quickly resolve any unanswered questions. Follow-up may also be necessary if the student plans to transfer additional coursework from another institution or if there is any question about a student's ability to successfully manage a full-time course load. Regardless of the need for follow-up, regular and timely contact with the advisor is key to the one-stop student service advising model. Students are contacted frequently—usually two or three times during an eight-week session.

Four main components guide the one-stop student service model:

- ◆ Centralized communication from the advisor maintains a clear message that is both individualized and relevant.
- ◆ Problem solving that involves assisting students with issues and complaints is the advisor's primary responsibility.
- ◆ Relationship management ensures that personalized guidance is provided so that students are satisfied and successful.
- ◆ Administrative processing and tracking are also the responsibility of advisors, ensuring that tasks are completed on time and accurately.

### Centralized Communication

Communication is individualized, relevant, and comes exclusively from the advisor. Various departments con-

tribute, as appropriate, but the advisor is the primary gatherer and distributor of information communicated to the student. There are several advantages to the advisor being the one source of communication: First, it builds trust between the student and the advisor. Relationship growth is built into the system. As advisors build rapport with their advisees, they better understand students' needs. In addition, students consistently hear the same message from the same source, with no overlap between or among departments. This prevents students from being inundated with so much information that they ignore it. In the one-stop model, students quickly learn that information received from their advisor is important and worthy of their attention. Both the advisor and the student learn each other's communication styles and can make their interactions fruitful and rewarding.

Much of the communication that takes place is not prompted by the student but by the advisor doing regular check-ins and proactively informing the student of upcoming deadlines. It is inaccurate to assume that communication modes utilized for traditional students will be as effective with online students (Exter 2014). Confusion and isolation can quickly characterize online students. Proactive communication at the start of each term and contact throughout the term are fundamental to a strategic communication plan. Traditional hallway or classroom conversations with staff or faculty must be replaced with intentional communication that keeps online students informed. Advisors communicate expectations in practical terms and help online students navigate the path to degree completion (Young-Jones *et al.* 2013).

### Problem Solving

One of the key roles of the student service advisor is to provide direct solutions to student problems. Advisors are required to possess at least low-level knowledge of the various academic, financial, and student service-related areas. Low-level knowledge ensures that advisors can assist students in all areas related to their educational experience. Further, the advisor can know when higher-level expertise is needed and serve as a liaison between the student and other functional areas of the organization. The one-stop student service advisor does not always have the answers, but she does always know how to find solutions.

Because advisors train to have a generalist's understanding of student accounts, financial aid, and registrar

functions, they gain a breadth of knowledge that allows them to offer students options. And because advisors are the single point of contact, they serve as students' representatives, facilitating communication with other offices. Students rarely have direct contact with representatives from other areas (*e.g.*, the student accounts office, financial aid, registrar, and student services).

Because students are not moving (physically or virtually) from department to department to find answers or complete tasks, advisors, in one capacity or another, serve as advocates for students. At times, representation means that advisors must ask the right questions and push the limits to not only ensure that students are receiving the best possible service but also to understand and explain to students the reasoning for decisions. Appropriate responsibility is given to student service advisors to ensure that information shared with students is accurate and prompt.

### **Relationship Management**

Student service advisors act as relationship managers (Vianden 2016). Students possess unique characteristics and bring a complexity of situations. Online students can easily become disconnected from the institution, and balancing student and personal or family lives can be challenging. Ultimately, advisors are resources for all of life's challenges and so must identify strategies to help students balance expectations in class with demands outside of class (Ruffalo Noel-Levitz 2016).

It is important for online students to understand and navigate within the culture of the institution (Exter 2014). Student service advisors connect students to the entire institution—well beyond typical advisor-advisee relationships. Advisors serve as messengers, student advocates, and institutional representatives. This helps students feel they are part of the university, not outside it. Advisors help students connect with the culture in tangible ways. Regular and consistent contacts are important; equally important is that students feel connected and a part of something bigger than themselves. A strong bond between institution and student positively affects students' success (Vianden and Barlow 2015).

Student service advisors contribute significantly to students' positive experience with the university. Vianden (2016) found that advising encounters that were perceived positively by students enhanced their overall satisfaction as well as their feelings about the institu-

tion. Conversely, unsatisfactory advising interactions not only harmed the well-being of students but also generated doubts about their significance as students and about the institution (Vianden 2016). Institutions that build strong relationships with students increase the likelihood not only that students will persist through graduation but also that they will become loyal alumni and donors (Ackerman and Schibrowsky 2007).

### **Administrative Processing and Tracking**

Advisors handle all administrative processing on behalf of students. Many students completing online programs do not have time to manage additional administrative tasks such as determining what courses they need, when they should take them, and actually enrolling in them. They want a service that provides them with a clear pathway to successful degree completion. Providing a one-stop student service that is both responsive and accurate is important. Students expect accurate knowledge and responsiveness (Vianden 2016).

The use of technology to manage and track processes has helped advisors provide accurate and timely responses. Phone and email are widely utilized tools for communication between online students and advisors. Professional training and the use of technology contribute to the quality of advising services (Abouchedid and Nasser 2002). While technology is one of the major advantages and drivers of organizational restructuring in the online division at California Baptist University, it is also the backbone of daily operations. Adaptation of technological advances is a fundamental component of offering degree programs online and supporting students enrolled in those programs.

At the core of California Baptist University's Division of Online and Professional Studies' advising model is a commitment by the university's other functional areas to collaborate and cooperate to establish and maintain procedures that fit within the one-stop student service advising model. Administrative offices leave a lasting impression on students (Abouchedid and Nasser 2002); each is vital to the success of the one-stop student service advisor. Procedures are supported by communication and process-tracking tools used to assist and manage advisor-student interactions: They help advisors monitor communications and complete processes. The system also prompts advisors to contact students, and it monitors their response times (critical in any advisor role).



## Strategic Enrollment Management Endorsement Program

AACRAO's Strategic Enrollment Management Endorsement Program (SEM-EP) is designed to provide a well-defined professional development program and career advancement track for enrollment service professionals. For the individual, completion of the program is a valuable addition to a resume and a formal recognition by AACRAO regarding professional readiness to conquer current and future challenges in the field. For the institution, the program will offer a better way to evaluate the preparedness of prospective employees for SEM positions.

### How long is the program?

The SEM-EP is tied to the most recent SEM material and trends in the field. The program is designed to be completed in 12 to 18 months.

### What do I receive when I complete the program?

AACRAO will provide you with official documentation to verify your successful completion of the SEM-EP professional development curriculum. Graduates will be listed on the AACRAO SEM-EP national web registry.

### Program Eligibility

- Five years experience in the field of SEM (Registrar, Admissions, Recruitment, Financial Aid or related fields as determined by the SEM-EP program committee).
- Individual must be employed (full or part time) by an "accredited" post-secondary institution.
- Provide a one page vita or resume reflecting career experience, professional accomplishments and education.
- Hold a minimum of an earned baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.

### Curriculum

The SEM-EP faculty are drawn from highly experienced professionals in the field of enrollment service.

#### 1. SEM 101 Online Course

A four week course to develop a baseline understanding of SEM.

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Three pre-recorded webinars on topics focused on key components of SEM.

#### 3. Field Visits

Visits to three approved institutions of distinct types followed by a written report guided by prescribed questions. In addition, **attendance at the AACRAO Annual Meeting or AACRAO SEM Conference will fulfill one of the field visit requirements.**

#### 4. Capstone Research Experience

All SEM-EP candidates are expected to conduct a brief research capstone project during the course of the curriculum. The assignment focuses on tracking and analyzing a local population of students from the candidate's institution and concludes by reporting conversion outcomes or conducting an annotated literature research project.

[Learn more at aacrao.org/SEM-EP](http://aacrao.org/SEM-EP)

For more information on this and other professional development opportunities, visit: [aacrao.org](http://aacrao.org)



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## Lessons Learned

Services provided by advisors can materialize as hand holding and promote an entitled mentality when it comes to students' completion of course requirements. Because it relies on faculty availability and administrative initiatives, course planning—essential to student success—typically is outside of student service advisors' control. Further, because advisors have full control of administrative planning and processing, they also have a substantial amount of responsibility to ensure that students are enrolled in the correct courses and remain on track to complete their degrees. This requires constant oversight and maintenance.

There is a self-service alternative to the one-stop student service advising model: Placing students in control of their own educational advising and planning has served higher education institutions well. It gives students power to determine their paths and can relieve institutional resources. A self-service model can prove effective and economical because it puts the burden on the student to communicate and complete administrative procedures. However, many students—especially online students—can easily become disoriented, disconnected, and even drop out. Technology drives many of the services that institutions traditionally offered in person to the Internet, apps, and social media. These can be useful as an overall advising plan, but technology can quickly become impersonal and cumbersome to students who just want to know what courses to take to complete their degrees. Rawlins and Rawlins (2005) state, “The more we rely on technology in this increasingly bureaucratic world, the more we need truly interpersonal communication conveying the feeling of belonging, of being recognized and treated as a unique individual” (18).

## Results

Through its one-stop student service advising model, the Division of Online and Professional Studies at California Baptist University has streamlined processes, increased retention, and improved the overall success of online degree-seeking students. As processes were streamlined, communications between students and university representatives were improved and advisor-advisee relationships were strengthened. Interde-

partmental communications were optimized, and the sharing of knowledge was broadened. Retaining students is built into the model. Advisors' regular check-ins with students and their expertise to guide students through issues in and outside the online classroom have helped with this effort. Finally, the one-stop student service advising model offers the potential for increased graduation success. Advisors and support from all functional student service areas of the university provide students with clear pathways to degree completion.

One significant question remains: As the university and division continue to grow, how sustainable is the one-stop student service advising model? Because success depends on advisors to establish relationships, solve problems, process administrative tasks, and communicate regularly with students, there is a limit; no more than a few students could be assigned to each advisor before it would become unmanageable. While increases in the use of technology and efficiencies can mitigate this problem, the risk is a loss in critical relationship growth.

## Conclusion

Servicing online degree-seeking students using a one-stop student service advising model that is both individualized and relevant contributes significantly to students' positive experience with the university and supports overall student success. Through its development of a new advising dimension, the Division of Online and Professional Studies at California Baptist University offers online students the support they expect and need to be successful. Four main segments guide the one-stop student service model: centralized communication, problem solving, relationship management, and administrative processing. These segments create an advising process that works to students' advantage, increasing the likelihood of student and institutional success. One-stop student service advisors are the hub of students' online learning experience, managing and overseeing students' educational progress and providing a variety of services focused on student success. This student advising model was designed specifically for the online working student but could be applied to a range of educational settings, streamlining processes, increasing retention efforts, and improving students' overall success.

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# Latino Students and Degree Attainment

Latinos are the largest growing population in America, and thus, have the potential to have the greatest impact on our nation's economy. However, Latinos also graduate college at a lower rate than their counterparts. This article focuses on the various cultural, social, and financial barriers Latino students face and provides recommendations for college administrators in terms of helping this population gain access, be admitted, and retrain to graduation.

The United States is experiencing a momentous shift in its population. Within the coming century, for the first time in its history, the United States will become a nation in which the “minority population exceeds the Caucasian population” (Kotkin 2010, 2). Within the overall minority population, Hispanics are projected to experience the greatest population increases: by 2060 this population is projected to number approximately 129 million (Berstien 2012). Latinos are one of the largest and fastest-growing minority groups in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

On average, Latinos have less schooling than almost any other racial group in the nation. While whites average 13.3 years and blacks average 12.2 years of education, Latinos average only 10.6 (Smith 2001). Data indicate that Latinos are less likely to graduate from high school, and therefore, are also less likely to pursue higher education. When Latinos do seek advanced degrees, they graduate at a lower rate: Only 46.2 percent of Hispanic students completed their four-year degrees within six years, compared to 59.3 percent of their white peers (Knapp *et al.* 2011).

Higher education attainment for Latinos is complex, in terms both of gaining acceptance to higher education institutions and persisting in college until graduation. Smaller percentages of Latinos who are between the ages of 24 and 34 years (19.2 percent) than of whites (48.7 percent), Asian Americans (69.1 percent), or

blacks (29.4 percent) have completed some higher education (Lee *et al.* 2011). Data also indicate that because of financial, cultural/social, and academic barriers, Latinos do not gain access to college at the same rate as whites or Asian Americans. Language, demographics, and politics are three additional factors that often hinder Latinos from pursuing higher education.

Bilingual undergraduates who speak Spanish at home are more likely to perceive hostility (real or imagined) from English-only speakers (Hurtado and Ponjuan 2005). This may relate to slang phrases, speech patterns, accents, general misunderstanding, or personal lack of confidence speaking English. A perceived lack of fluency in English may hinder integration into the college community as students may encounter peers (and even faculty and staff) who are unsympathetic to the challenges of mastering multiple languages.

The demography of the Latino population also plays a role in college access. Immigrant families of all ethnic and racial types tend to live in districts where schools lack the resources—including classroom space, technology, and other educational materials—to provide a high-quality K–12 education (Károly and Gonzalez 2011). This adversely affects students’ ability to access higher education (particularly four-year institutions).

The situation is even more complex for undocumented immigrants, whose ability to access education is significantly affected by politics. The Dream Act was intended to help undocumented students gain access to college, benefit from conditional residency, and, eventually, provide a pathway to citizenship. Ultimately, the bill was not passed. Only fifteen states have passed versions of the Dream Act. Even students fortunate

enough to qualify under their state's version encounter significant legal and administrative hurdles to their enrollment and persistence in higher education.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), enacted under former President Obama, grants permission to work to undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children (prior to age sixteen). (The bill is essentially a watered-down Dream Act that does not provide a pathway to citizenship.) Under the Trump administration, DACA's status is uncertain, leaving many non-U.S.-born Latino students with little hope. Without DACA, or comparable legislation, undocumented immigrants face significant obstacles to obtaining a college degree. To gain admission to college, undocumented students often forge documents; those who enroll at public institutions may fail to qualify for in-state tuition. Perez and colleagues (2009) studied the retention rates of undocumented students and found that issues related to legality weighed heavily on them, creating a psychological stressor that had a negative impact on their persistence.

As a result of the projected increase in the Latino population as a percentage of the overall U.S. population, and the barriers to higher education that Latinos encounter, there is a risk that even more students may be inadequately prepared for the demands of a post-industrial, skills-oriented economy. Yet the size and youth of the Latino population suggest that it has the potential to become a cornerstone of tomorrow's workforce. Certainly it should help mitigate some of the consequences of an increased number of retirees nationwide (Kotkin 2010, Lee *et al.* 2011). Refusing to address the disparity this ethnic group faces in terms of access to higher education does a disservice not only to Latinos, but also, to the United States. If this group is unable to maximize its potential contributions to the workforce, or to contribute fully to the nation's economic well-being, then the United States must confront the very real prospect of its falling irrecoverably behind in the global marketplace.

While the situation of Latino students who aspire to attend college is challenging, it is far from hopeless. If the decreased enrollment of Latino students in higher education is to be countered, college administrators, K-12 educators, policy makers, and advocacy groups will need to cooperate in more intentional ways. The remainder of this article focuses on understanding the additional obstacles this population faces along the path to higher education and on strategies and recom-

mendations for assisting students in achieving college enrollment and degree completion.

## Obstacles

It is important to understand some of the other obstacles to Latino college student enrollment. Many view the choice to attend college as an economic decision—as though students pursue higher education primarily for financial benefit. In many cases, the economic advantage of earning a college degree does play a significant role in a student's decision to go to college. However, college is a life experience that nets rewards related not only to finances, but also, to academics, peer relationships, maturity, and personal self-discovery.

Students' persistence in higher education is strongly influenced by the cultural climate of the campus and their ability to feel they are a part of it (Hurtado and Ponjain 2005). The importance of Latino students' need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance from one's peers, faculty, and administrators should not be underestimated. Latino undergraduates, like all students, arrive on campus with a set of cultural expectations and behaviors already in place. Going to college is incredibly challenging; to succeed, students need to feel they can express themselves and be comfortable on campus. Latino students' ability to express a sense of self is important in understanding their social, cultural, and academic connectedness. Those who are unable to do so may feel less able to connect with campus and eventually may withdraw from higher education entirely.

Ongoing social influences from outside the institution—primarily from a student's family and community—can form either a base of support or an obstacle to be overcome. Students whose home communities support their decision to pursue higher education are more likely to enroll and persist until graduation; families that disapprove of the choice, or draw their students' time and attention away from their education, may hinder, delay, or even end their college aspirations.

## Latin Culture

Latin culture often affects students' college aspirations, choices, and persistence. To understand why, it is helpful to first understand Latin culture. For brevity's sake, this discussion of "Latin" culture is simplistic, focusing on the most generalized and relevant features. In fact,

“Latin” refers to a wide range of cultures, nationalities, and ethnicities spanning throughout Central and South America and beyond.

One of the key tenets of Latin culture is religion. Spirituality is infused throughout much of daily life—particularly holiday traditions. Gender roles also weigh heavily in Latin cultural identity. Traditionally, men are the primary breadwinners, and this has a strong influence on the identity formation of young Latin men. *Machismo* requires that men keep their word, act with honor, and protect their name, even if they have to fight for it (Office of Diversity and Inclusion 2014). Conversely, the prevailing cultural expectation of women is that they be subservient. They are expected to cook, clean, and perform other domestic chores for men. Gender roles inform Latin family culture, which is of paramount importance to Latin individuals. Latino families include a large extended familial network, which creates an inner support system rarely seen in Caucasian cultures. It is not uncommon to find three generations (grandparents, parents, and children) living in the same household (Office of Diversity and Inclusion 2014). Cooperation is central to the family dynamic, and individuals often are expected to put the needs of the family first. This can affect a student’s persistence in college.

Family is a tremendously important influence on the retention of Latino college students. Latino students often prioritize approval by, and continued interaction with, their families. Sometimes, they sacrifice their personal ambitions for their families’ benefit. Braxton *et al.* (2004) note that “racial or ethnic minority students often feel pressured to spend more time with family, or to oversee family matters, which decreases the amount of time available to engage the academic and social aspects of the institution” (49). Braxton *et al.* (2004) further note that what is critical for minority students is “how they negotiate these conflicts and how much support students receive from significant others for college attendance” (49–50).

An example of how this cultural value may influence college achievement can be found among Mexican-American women, who in traditional Latino households are expected to focus on family life. Nieman, Romero, and Arbona (2000) found that Mexican-American women who pursued degrees often reported difficulty in their personal relationships, specifically with romantic partners. The primary issue was that Latin men were “turned off” by more highly educated women. Latin

women encountered issues when dating Latino men who were less well educated (Latino men may view a woman’s education as undermining their traditional gender roles) (Nieman, Romero and Arbona 2000).

Conversely, white students are more likely to be concerned with achieving their personal goals than societal goals (Hamedani *et al.* 2013). Achievement of personal goals requires a focus on self rather than others. Students need time to devote to their personal pursuits, but Latino students’ strong sense of family and community can prevent them from devoting adequate time to academic activities. For example, Latino students are more likely than their black or white peers to spend seventeen or more hours per week fulfilling family obligations (Baker and Robnett 2012). This represents a significant portion of each week spent on activities other than studying, participating in extracurricular activities, social interaction, and others related to school. Familial ties can be detrimental when they interfere with a student’s ability to focus on academics and maintain connections to campus. The key for Latino students is to find a balance between familial responsibilities and academic pursuits so their needs for support and resources are met even as they prepare adequately for class work.

Structurally, a Latino undergraduate’s family may be under-equipped for the rigors of college. Latinos are disproportionately represented at lower socioeconomic levels (Massey *et al.* 2003). Latino students are also twice as likely as members of other ethnicities to come from households headed by single women (Ventura *et al.* 2012). In such households, financial resources are often strained. Typically, single mothers are the sole providers of household income. Latin families headed by two parents also often have minimal financial resources. To compensate for budgetary shortfalls, children (typically the eldest) may be expected to contribute to the family’s income (Fry and Lowell 2002). Latin families also may feel they have to ask other family members (grandparents or other dependents, for example) to contribute as well. In Latino culture, financial burdens are not the parents’ sole responsibility but rather that of the entire family.

## Recommendations

Given Latinos’ relatively high levels of poverty, finances are one of the most significant obstacles to their success in higher education. Studies have found significant differences in college attainment between students in

the highest and lowest socioeconomic quartiles (Haveman and Wilson 2007). Increasing aid to Latino students, as proposed by Contreras *et al.* (2011), would have a threefold effect: it would increase the pool of Latino college students able to afford college; it would decrease Latino students' reliance on full- or part-time work to fund their college education; and it would make these students less reliant on two-year institutions. (Research shows that Latino students graduate at higher rates when they begin at four-year institutions [Abona and Nora 2007].) These outcomes would positively affect student achievement and retention rates, as well, as students would be free to focus on their studies without the stresses and interference of work, financial woes, or obstacles related to transferring from a two- to a four-year institution (Arbona and Nora 2007, Engle and Tinto 2008, Gladieux and Perna 2005).

Contreras (2011) suggests that financial aid opportunities could be expanded by redefining merit in a manner that acknowledges the challenges that Latino undergraduates face. Factors such as first-generation status, lack of adequate K–12 education, and other bar-

riers should be taken into account. Contreras (2011) proposes additional measures, including putting more tax dollars toward higher education funding. Zusman (2004) notes that trends in state spending have resulted in students paying exponentially more for higher education. To increase accessibility, colleges should support policies that increase state funding for public institutions. Colleges must do their part to convince state legislatures that higher education is a worthwhile and necessary part of the state budget. Such measures would ease the financial burden on low-income students who otherwise may be excluded from higher education.

The admission process is a critical step in the pursuit of a college degree. For students who lack college-educated parents to guide them, the admission process may seem confusing, comprising a baffling array of forms, applications, and deadlines. Academic knowledge—not admission knowledge—should be the only determining factor in the admission process. Yet Latino students often are hindered in their college ambitions by their own inexperience and their parents' lack of familiarity with the process.



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE REGISTRARS AND ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

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Correcting these inequalities begins with ensuring that students have adequate access to college information through interaction with college admission counselors. Admission counselors are an important source of information for Latino students, who often cannot obtain the necessary guidance from their parents to navigate the college admission process (Aud, Fox and KewalRamani 2010; Contreras *et al.* 2008). High school counselors are unevenly distributed across school districts, and populations consisting largely of minority students are typically underserved (NCES 2002). To compensate for this critical deficit, colleges can ensure that their representatives are knowledgeable and helpful in the admission process. When recruiting at local high schools, representatives should clearly communicate what students can expect from the admission process and which high school courses they need to take to qualify for admission.

Latino students' knowledge of the admission process would increase significantly if colleges were to partner with local high schools to increase students' exposure to such knowledge. Contreras (2011) offers further recommendations, including engaging parents in the application process so they can act as partners with their students; being culturally sensitive to the needs of individual students; expanding the application process so it is easily accessible; providing marketing materials in Spanish; and making translation services available for the application process. Such actions would make a world of difference for bright, capable students who otherwise might be left behind because of a lack of knowledge of or assistance with the college application process.

While the proportion of Latino students who graduate from a four-year institution within eight years of first enrolling at a two-year college is significantly lower than that of those who enroll initially at a four-year institution (7 percent compared to 44 percent), transferring from a two- to a four-year institution is a common theme in Latino students' journey to obtain a bachelor's degree (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). If the two- to four-year path were more viable, Latino students would have greater opportunities to obtain bachelor's degrees. Because they are likely to be nontraditional students (Contreras 2011), Latinos tend to find two-year institutions' flexible class schedules very appealing. For example, North Carolina's two-plus-two articulation agreement permits students to transfer to a state university if they have earned 60 credit hours after enrolling for two years

in an arts program at a community college (Bautsch and Williams 2010). Other such programs that would permit students to complete some of their credit-bearing coursework at less expensive community colleges would greatly increase access by students who otherwise could not complete a college degree.

Other studies have demonstrated that concentrated efforts by four-year colleges to cooperate with two-year institutions yield marked increases in students' ability to persist in college (Aborna and Nora 2007; Habley *et al.* 2010). Excellencia in Education (2012), an advocacy group for Latino students, publishes a yearly review that highlights examples of outstanding college programs. One such program is DirectConnect, in which the University of Central Florida partners with local community colleges Valencia College, Brevard and Lake-Sumter Community Colleges, and Seminole State College. Since the program's inception, the University of Central Florida has experienced a marked increase in the number of Latino transfer students it enrolls; Latinos comprised 12 percent of its total transfer population over the past ten years. This group of students was also noted to have high graduation rates: 95 percent completed a bachelor's degree within four years of transferring.

In addition to easing the transfer process as a means of increasing Latino students' college success, another theme is evident in the research literature: making classes more accessible by offering them online. Online courses give students a measure of flexibility that traditional classes cannot provide. This increased flexibility allows Latino students—particularly those who work full or part time or have family obligations—to incorporate class schedules into lives that otherwise would be too demanding (Baker and Robnett 2012; Horn, Neville and Griffin 2006). A study of colleges that enroll a population that is 20 percent or more Latino found that 49 percent offered at least some online classes (Habley *et al.* 2010).

One of the key factors limiting Latino students' college enrollment is that by the time they graduate from high school, many have not reached the level of scholastic achievement necessary for college admission. Fixing problems within the K–12 education system is beyond the scope of any college's work, but solutions can be implemented. One is to offer developmental courses that enable provisionally admitted students to resolve any academic deficits. Developmental courses offer newly

enrolled college students the opportunity to become familiar with the college environment while learning course material at a level accessible to them.

Contreras and colleagues (2008) indicate that developmental course taking is a common part of the Latino college experience. Across all colleges, 18.6 percent of Latino students required remedial coursework in the 2011–12 school year (U.S. Department of Education 2014). Several changes can also be made to the high school preparatory system to better prepare students for college. High schools need to educate their students so they do not require remedial work when they enroll in college. Even if they do not need developmental work, issues may still emerge. Latino students often need to enroll in remedial English classes; this is especially important for bilingual students who have not been exposed to writing instruction at the college level. As such, the college admission process should take care not to fault students who were unable to gain the same competitive edge as their peers but rather should strive to create an even playing field for such students.

Latinos' lower (on average) socioeconomic status may mean that they do not have access to advanced coursework. College administrators should be considerate of students' differential access to higher-level high school courses (such as AP/IB). If the opportunity to participate in AP/IB courses was not readily available to students in high school, then the evaluation of their college application should take this information into account. College administrators should also focus on increasing the availability of such courses and fostering greater acceptance of students into these kinds of programs.

Other opportunities that could help students are summer bridge programs such as those described by Excelencia in Education (2012). Math Jam, created by Pasadena City College, is one such program. Math Jam introduces Latino students to college-level math, Intermediate Algebra 131, while keeping them engaged with the campus community through competitions, guest speakers, and out-of-classroom activities. By engaging students before the fall of their freshman year, the institution offers a taste of college life, introduces various support structures on campus, and provides opportunities to interact with teachers, advisors, and peers.

Students derive several benefits from Math Jam, including improved attitudes toward mathematics, increased learning rates, and better preparation for math classes. The program also requires students to take Eng-

lish IA (the standard freshman English course). Like Math Jam, the Transitional Bilingual Learning Community (TBLC) at Harry S. Truman College prepares bilingual Latino students for college by transitioning them into college-level courses while improving their English skills and cultural competence. One notable outcome of the TBLC program is a 70 percent college graduation rate, compared to the national graduation rate for Latinos of 46.2 percent (Knapp *et al.* 2011).

These programs demonstrate how colleges and universities can help prepare Latino students for success; one or two semesters of developmental preparation can have an enormous impact on graduation rates. The need to prepare some Latino students for college-level English courses should not be overlooked, as both programs incorporate such preparation. Programs modeled on these initiatives should maintain a focus on English preparation and cultural competence while appropriately challenging students and monitoring their progress throughout their enrollment.

As important as it is to increase the number of Latino students admitted to college, an equally important challenge is keeping students enrolled. A letter of college acceptance is of little value if the student does not ultimately earn a degree. Factors that affect student persistence vary from those beyond the administrator's reach (such as personal, health, or family issues) to solutions fairly easy to implement, such as peer mentoring, free tutoring, and early alert systems.

The campus environment plays a significant role in a student's ability to persist (Aud, Fox and KewalRamanani 2010; Saenz and Ponjuan 2009). Environments in which Latinos are all but absent from the student population, and prejudice and even discrimination are persistent, inevitably hinder their retention. Students must know that prejudicial acts and attitudes are not tolerated and that their safety and well-being are safeguarded by the administration. Creating a campus environment that is welcoming to diverse groups requires the successful recruitment of students, faculty, and staff who represent a variety of backgrounds and who share the value of promoting multiculturalism.

Habley *et al.* (2010) reported that Hispanic students who are enrolled at colleges and universities with a Hispanic population of 20 percent or more have a 73 percent retention rate for the first two years. These data suggest that having a larger number of peers from one's own ethnic group enables students to adapt to

college more easily, increasing their academic success. Alternatively, creating student centers tailored to the needs of Latino students could have a similar effect. Providing an enclave in which Latino students could share common problems, give voice to their stress, and more easily engage in community would provide the support necessary to foster feelings of belonging on campus. A student center would serve as common ground, enhancing social interaction and student satisfaction. Arbona and Nora's (2007) research found that when pre-college characteristics were held constant, college-related factors (*e.g.*, enrolled in college full time, completed attempted hours, remained continuously enrolled, enrolled immediately after high school, and performed well academically during their first year) were the strongest predictors of degree attainment for Latino students.

Another solution is to engage all students in an extended orientation program in which they have the opportunity to experience the many facets of campus life. This program could take the form of a class students must complete during their freshman year, or it could be an extension of current orientation efforts (Bautsch and Williams 2010; Excelencia in Education 2012; Habley *et al.* 2010; Swail *et al.* 2004; Torres 2006). The literature offers additional recommendations for increasing retention rates, including offering personalized mentoring for students, enabling easy access to

internships and undergraduate research opportunities, providing tutoring, and creating programs that monitor students' academic well-being. These measures, while applicable to all students, would greatly benefit Latino college students, in particular.

Such activities not only enhance students' academic achievement, but also, have a positive impact on student retention. When students are provided with such services, they develop a greater commitment to the institution. Administrators wishing to implement similar measures should do so with an eye to increasing students' presence on campus, linking them more closely to the classroom and to the institution as a whole.

Institutions must seek to be responsive to students' needs. They should show students they care about their well-being and that they have shared goals—namely, for the student to graduate. Latino students respond well when they are supported academically, enter a campus environment they can navigate socially, and have financial resources made available to them. Overall, Latino students and institutions should function as teams working together to overcome the obstacles that may hinder Latino students' success. As the largest-growing U.S. population, Latinos must gain access to, and persist in, higher education. By helping Latinos do so, our country can maximize its workforce and help ensure its economic well-being.

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# Disciplinary Notations: Where Do We Go From Here?

By Kristi Wold-McCormick

Few higher education topics have garnered as much interest in recent years as behavioral misconduct and disciplinary notifications. Academic, student affairs, and enrollment management professionals along with legislators and the general public have all had an interest in and voice on these issues. An AACRAO work group charged with developing guidance for members on disciplinary notations published its report in June 2017. It has been disseminated to the AACRAO membership via distribution lists, the Web, and conference presentations, and it has been picked up by some media outlets. AACRAO staff members have shared the report with other national higher education organizations that have taken stances on this topic as well as with select legislators interested in proposing related bills. Some institutions and state systems have sought further clarification or guidance from AACRAO and/or work-group members.

Embarking on the task of developing guidance on transcript disciplinary notations for the AACRAO membership in early 2016 brought with it the realization that association members had wildly varying viewpoints on the matter. What was not initially realized, however, was that the profession has a decades-long history of debate and vacillation on this topic. These ever-changing stances may be attributed, in part, to societal pressures, political climates, and/or professional leadership. Now that the most recent AACRAO initiative is formalized, the challenge lies in how registrars and admission professionals should work together to promote and adopt the recommendations of the work group.

This article provides a brief historical framework of the changing levels of support for disciplinary notations on transcripts; summarizes the 2017 recommendations of the work group; and focuses on next steps and options for moving forward as a profession. It is hoped that the report will not simply be archived with past reports, resulting in little change in or attention to current or future practices. Rather, the goal is to minimize the historical pattern of changing stances on this issue, a pattern that has perpetuated member confusion and inconsistent practices.

## Past: Historical Framework<sup>1</sup>

Increased mobility of students along with the expansion and diversification of colleges and universities have broadened opportunities for individuals seeking the degree program and institution that are the best fit for them. This also has resulted in a larger proportion of students transferring between institutions in recent decades. The transcript has long served as the primary record of a student's academic history, progress, and standing, and it also serves as the main form of currency to facilitate transfer.

AACRAO publications dating to the mid-20th century have addressed best practices regarding student disciplinary records. *A Guide to Good Practices in the Recording and Reporting of Student Disciplinary Records*

<sup>1</sup> A more complete historical overview is available in the work group's report (see <[www.aacrao.org/resources/trending-topics/disciplinary-notations](http://www.aacrao.org/resources/trending-topics/disciplinary-notations)>).

was jointly published in 1953 by AACRAO, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), the National Association of Deans of Women (NADW), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). *The Guide* introduced common practice for noting disciplinary actions on transcripts, with discretion given to the registrar regarding including or withholding them. Support for this recordation practice appeared in subsequent publications of the association for approximately the next two decades.

The 1965 *Record and Transcript Guide* differentiated among a student's primary disciplinary file, the official educational record, and the transcript. "Entries on the official education record showing currently effective disciplinary actions which suspend or dismiss the student or restrict, limit, or condition the student's eligibility to return or re-enroll in the college, automatically become a part of the transcript" (19–20). It was pointed out then—and is still upheld today—that employer inquiries are separate and distinct from official transcripts and need not comply with transcript specifications.

Similar to contemporary research and recommendations, the authors advocated for standardizing transcript terminology, including "good standing," "dismissal," "suspension," and "probation." For example, a recommendation was that academic status signifying low standing with unsatisfactory grades be labeled "academic," *e.g.*, "academic dismissal." By contrast, "When the same status is the result of conduct disciplinary action taken, the status should be labeled "disciplinary dismissal."

A gradual shift away from this guidance was evident in the 1969 *Record and Transcript Guide*. It stated that each institution of higher education

*should have a carefully considered policy regarding the information which becomes a part of a student's permanent education record and governing the conditions of its disclosure. This policy should reflect a reasonable balance between the obligation of the institution for the growth and welfare of the student and its responsibilities to society* (18).

It further clarified that transcripts should contain only information about academic status, except for disciplinary actions that affect a student's eligibility to re-register, if in accordance with institutional policy.

By 1977, three years after the passage of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, as amended,

the *AR&T Guide* reflected significant changes: The only references to dismissal and suspension focused on academic separations for student failure to maintain academic standards. By 1984, the *AR&T Guide* stated simply, "Disciplinary actions should not be a part of the academic record or transcript" (8).

The 1996 edition of the *AR&T Guide* included an entire chapter on "not recording disciplinary actions on transcripts." The authors claimed that since the publication of the 1984 statement, "a number of questions have been raised regarding the shift in social behaviors and the responsibility that institutions have to document and report those behaviors.... Divergent views about recording aberrant behavior has created an environment for inconsistent and subjective practices" (25). They cited case law, including *Schulman v. Franklin and Marshall College*, in which the courts ruled that each college is unique and must self-govern because of different standards, attitudes, and values concerning misconduct.

To counter this guidance, in 1997, Quann and Ratcliff published "An Argument for and a Case Study of Recording Significant Disciplinary Actions on Student Transcripts" in AACRAO's *College & University*. They contended, "Disciplinary suspension or dismissal relates precisely to a student's ability to reenroll, and it is here that the distinction between 'academic' and 'disciplinary' record fades" (6). The authors recommended that AACRAO, the Association of Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA), ACPA, and NASPA appoint a joint task force to study the issues and formulate a uniform policy on the notation of disciplinary suspension and dismissals on student transcripts.

In 1999, the task force formed; in February 2001, it published "Position Paper of the Inter-association Task Force on Disciplinary Dismissals and Student Transcript." The task force's recommendation was "the student's academic transcript should include a notation indicating that student is ineligible to return to the institution when the student may not be re-enrolled at the institution" (9).

Through its 2011 edition of the *AR&T Guide*, however, AACRAO remained consistent in its recommendation *against* recording disciplinary actions on the official transcript, even those that resulted in a period of separation from an institution. This stance was based on member support and prevailing industry cultural norms. Diverging uses of terminology, inconsistent institutional policies, insufficient information in tran-

script notations, and varying interpretations and applications of sanctions for behavioral misconduct across colleges and universities reinforced the recommendation against noting disciplinary infractions.

However, professional consensus evolved, and with high-profile cases of student misconduct leading to increased pressure for accountability, transparency, and student safety, AACRAO changed its recommendation in the 2016 update of the *AR&T Guide*. “Disciplinary suspension” and “ineligibility to re-enroll” are now components listed by AACRAO as “essential” in the database and “optional” on the transcript, unless otherwise mandated by state law.

Comparison of AACRAO member surveys between 2010 and 2015 demonstrates that while practices changed little during this period, more registrars came to favor recording disciplinary ineligibility to re-enroll on transcripts (60 percent in 2015 compared to 43 percent in 2010). Full survey results on official transcript practices and opinions on best transcript practices are included in the 2016 *AR&T Guide* (71–79).

## Current: AACRAO Recommendations

AACRAO established the Transcript Disciplinary Notations Work Group in April 2016 in response to growing interest from its members, new and proposed state legislation, and the increasing public accountability of colleges and universities. The group was charged with developing guidance regarding the use of disciplinary notations on transcripts. The recommendations of the work group and AACRAO are comprehensive yet advisory: AACRAO is not a regulatory body, and decisions about policy and practices related to disciplinary notations or notifications rest with each individual institution, its governing bodies, or its state legislative body.

The work group considered the pros and cons regarding notations, the development of institutional policies and practices, the types of disciplinary infractions that might be noted, the wording of disciplinary notations, the retention and removal of transcript notations, alternatives for providing notifications of disciplinary misconduct to transfer institutions, and FERPA/legal considerations related to disclosures.

The guidance and recommendations provided by the AACRAO work group focus primarily on student behav-

ioral misconduct. They are intended to enhance transparency, help standardize practices among institutions, and promote consistency and fairness for all students involved, victims and offenders alike.

While the work group focused on disciplinary notations on transcripts, it quickly recognized that this decision is embedded in the larger question of whether institutions have a responsibility to notify other institutions of potential threats to their communities from students they have suspended or expelled for serious misconduct. It is important to note that the recommendations generally apply to all instances of misconduct suspension/expulsion, though most public scrutiny and attention are paid to sexual misconduct and other violent acts involving students.

Key recommendations of the work group are as follows:

- ◆ Recognizing that the most egregious acts of misconduct may result in the involuntary separation of the student from an institution and may indicate a pattern of behavior that might be repeated at a subsequent institution, some form of notice should be provided to a receiving institution when a student has committed serious behavioral misconduct (*e.g.*, including, but not limited to, that defined by the Clery Act).
- ◆ The academic transcript is an appropriate means to support communication about serious student misconduct but may not be the only means of notification. A student’s standing that impacts his or her eligibility to continuously enroll at an institution affects academic progress and, for this reason, is deemed transcript appropriate.
- ◆ If a college or university decides not to record disciplinary notations on official transcripts, it might consider alternatives, including (but not limited to) student conduct transcripts, dean’s certification letters, and transcript inserts.
- ◆ As with academic probation and warnings, disciplinary probation and warnings for minor violations that don’t result in a mandatory separation from an institution should not be noted on official transcripts or otherwise disclosed to another institution.
- ◆ Institutions should align as closely as possible in their use of standardized terms and definitions for various student sanctions or penalties for misconduct. Such separations are generally denoted by commonly used and understood language, including *expulsion*

or *dismissal* (permanent separation from the institution) and *suspension* (temporary separation from the institution, often for a specific period of time, with the option of a possible future return).

- ◆ In cases of suspension, dismissal, and expulsion (or the equivalent), transcript notations should include the general type of infraction (academic or behavioral/disciplinary), the department responsible for issuing the student separation from the institution (*e.g.*, Office of Student Conduct), and effective dates or date/term ranges of student separation from the institution, if applicable.
- ◆ Institutions may record a “pending conduct” statement on transcripts while an investigation or hearing is planned or underway. The use of a hold to block the release of an official transcript until the investigation concludes may be preferable but may impact service to students.
- ◆ A special notation may be placed on the transcript when a student is permitted to withdraw while an investigation is underway. The standard suspension/expulsion notation should replace this special notation if the student is found in violation of the code, and that special notation should be removed if the student is found to not be in violation. The use of a hold to block the release of a transcript until the investigation concludes may be preferable but may impact service to students.
- ◆ Transcript notations should be placed at the end of the semester/term in which the sanction occurs. Transcript legends (keys) should offer further explanation, as needed, and provide the reader with instructions on how/where to obtain additional information.
- ◆ All institutions should have comprehensive policies and business processes that clearly document expected codes of student conduct, infractions, institutional review panels, sanctions, due process (appeal hearings), recordation and disclosure practices, and specific verbiage related to the retention and removal of transcript notations.
- ◆ Education institutions that receive transcripts with disciplinary notations should have comprehensive and consistent admission procedures in place to handle applicants with active sanctions at other institutions. No institution should apply negative consequences to a student whose record includes a disciplinary notation on his/her transcript without seeking or considering additional information.

## Future: Where do we go from here?

The work group has concluded its research. Numerous presentations have been conducted and rounds of member feedback collected. AACRAO has published the report and distributed it to members and sister associations. So, what happens next?

Responses to inquiries suggest that discussions are taking place on some campuses. These discussions may have been prompted by the report or by proposed legislation at various system or state levels. The goal is that by having a stronger and clearer stance on this issue, AACRAO will be able to have a prominent role and voice in proposed legislation at the state or federal levels. In addition, more transparent and consistent practices across the profession and institutions may minimize public scrutiny and lead ultimately to fewer legislative mandates.

A concern is that the profession or institutions do nothing further with these recommendations. At the very least, the authors of the report hope that it prompts deeper discussions and regular reviews of institutional or system-level policies and procedures, including holistic conversations about institutional values, comprehensive reviews of student codes of conduct, and agreement on notification (via a transcript or alternate means) as well as retention and disclosure practices. The rights of students on both sides of a violation must be given serious and fair consideration in both the adjudication process and in the short- and long-term impacts that result from the outcome.

Having these discussions requires commitment, collaboration, and open minds among key campus stakeholders, including registrars, admission officers, and student conduct officials. Such meetings may begin on a small institutional scale, but registrars and others should seek opportunities to scale them up across a system or at the state level (particularly for public institutions). Continuing to have too many disparate policies and practices will perpetuate the perception that higher education officials don't have control of this issue and require legislative mandates.

This conversation must continue at institutional, state, and national levels, especially in light of pending changes to federal guidance on investigating campus sexual assault. Secretary of Education DeVos recently issued new interim instructions allowing universities to



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decide which standard of evidence to use when handling complaints of sexual assault (either preponderance of the evidence or higher standards of evidence). DeVos rescinded Obama-era rules claiming that they

were unfairly skewed against students accused of assault and that a higher standard of evidence would help ensure that those accused are treated fairly.

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**Kristi Wold-McCormick** has served as University Registrar of the University of Colorado Boulder since June 2014. In her leadership role, Kristi focuses on student privacy, data security and stewardship, academic policy, scheduling, student academic services, academic record exchange and access, staff development, collaboration and communication. She serves on numerous campus and university system initiatives and committees focusing on academic and space planning, system implementations, policy development and data management. Prior to her role at Colorado, Kristi served as registrar of North Dakota State University (Fargo) for twelve years. She also has worked and held leadership positions in the field of admissions and enrollment services. Wold-McCormick is involved at the state, regional and national levels of AACRAO, including serving on the Nominations and Elections Committee, chairing a Professional Activities Committee and coordinating Group IV on the AACRAO Program Committee. She also recently chaired the AACRAO work group on Disciplinary Notations on Transcripts. At the regional level, she is a past president of the Upper Midwest Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, and currently is an active member of the Rocky Mountain Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. Wold-McCormick earned a bachelor's and master's degree from North Dakota State University and a Ph.D. from the University of North Dakota.

# Loosening the Ties That Bind: The Limitations of Youth-Centricity in Higher Education Admissions, Research, and Practice

By Constance Iloh

Much of what we know about college access, admissions, and student experiences is largely a result of studies and practices focused on “traditional-aged” college students. While these studies and efforts have provided substantial information to guide our field, they are inherently limited by their intentional and narrow focus on younger student populations with traditional educational trajectories. This article suggests that a continued focus on traditional-aged college students will only cripple our ability to advance 21st-century higher education research, teaching, and admissions practice.

## Youth-Centricity in Higher Education Research

Every time we call college students “kids,” we reinforce a subtle and problematic depiction. The minimized presence of post-traditional students in general and of adult learners in particular is rooted in the historic youth-centricity of postsecondary education (Chen 2017). College is usually assumed to be a phase of life for young persons and a milestone for those leaving adolescence and entering into young adulthood (Kasworm 2005, 2010). Research on higher education has been based predominantly in historical perspectives, beliefs, and curricula of people between eighteen and 22 years old who do not have other major responsibilities and roles that compete

with their studies (*e.g.*, full-time employment, parenting, and community responsibilities) (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991, 2005). Yet contemporary higher education is more diverse and distant from this stereotypical student profile (Iloh 2017; Iloh and Tierney 2014).

College is not just a phase of life for younger adults; increasingly, it is the pursuit of older students seeking postsecondary credentials and degrees. The financially dependent eighteen-year-old high school graduate who enrolls full time is no longer the “typical college student (Soares 2013).” This text underscores the importance of making room for more evidence-based practice that is attentive to the growing number of ‘post-traditional’ students entering higher education (Soares 2013). (Post-traditional students, usually defined as age 25 years and older, also include those younger than 25 who have characteristics indicative of adult responsibilities, such as working full time, being financially dependent, having non-spousal dependents, being a single parent, and having a nontraditional educational trajectory, such as delayed enrollment into higher education or not having completed high school [Chen 2017].) Post-traditional students represent approximately 38 percent of the postsecondary education population in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics 2009).

Post-traditional students—and adult learners, specifically—are largely invisible to higher education, particularly first-tier universities (Coulter and Mandell

2012). An American Council on Education (ACE) survey found that more than 40 percent of institutional respondents indicated that they “did not identify older adult students for purposes of outreach, programs and services, or financial aid” (Lakin *et al.* 2008). When they do, the prevailing view of post-traditional students is that they are “one-dimensional” and focused predominantly on lifelong learning (Lakin 2009).

For categorical reasons, but also to challenge problematic terminology, students typically referred to as “nontraditional” are referred to in this text as “post-traditional (Soares 2013).” The term “nontraditional student” is somewhat of a misnomer, as today’s college student population includes many adult learners with jobs, families, and responsibilities outside of school (Education Advisory Board 2016). The continued and frequent labeling of the majority of college students as nontraditional is also a form of “othering” that has an adverse impact on these students’ ability to persist in many educational settings (Yancey Gully 2016). Using such language suggests, “We are going out on a limb

by letting you attend college because this place is not really designed for you, and you really should not be here” (Yancey Gully 2016). Usage of the term “nontraditional” will not bring us closer to better understanding and supporting the post-traditional population in general or adult learners in particular (Iloh 2017).

Colleges and universities usually define adult learners as age 25 years or older in addition to factors such as delayed postsecondary enrollment, part-time attendance, full-time work while enrolled, financial independence, single parenthood, military service, and lack of a standard high school diploma (Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence 2007). Four in ten undergraduate students are 25 years or older—a four-percentage-point increase from 2008 (Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success 2015). From 2012 to 2022, the “nontraditional”-aged student enrollment in college is projected to grow more than twice as fast as the traditional-aged student enrollment (21.7 percent and 8.7 percent, respectively) (Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success 2015).

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Overall, there is a paucity of research and data on adult learners (Cruce and Hillman 2011); research that has been conducted has been primarily descriptive analyses in policy reports (Irvine and Kevan 2017). Between 1990 and 2003, only one percent of articles in seven widely circulated peer-reviewed higher education journals focused on adult learners (Donaldson and Townsend 2007). Understanding the unique needs of adult learners is critical to designing higher education systems, practices, and policies that support this population and promote their success. Even the dearth of large-scale research and multivariate analyses provides little for higher education institutions to consider in terms of changes to address adult learners' needs.

Adults bring a great deal of background experience and prior learning to any new educational process. Thus, acknowledging their understanding and experiences validates them as competent and capable learners. It is important that educators and practitioners help adult learners see the connections between earlier learning experiences and new information (Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence 2007).

## Different Students, Different Needs

Post-traditional students typically have different motivations for enrolling in classes: securing a job and income, advancing their career, and being able to provide for themselves and family (Mott 2008). For these reasons, support for post-traditional students in college should differ from that for traditional eighteen- to 24-year-olds who enter higher education immediately after graduating from high school (Chen 2017). Post-traditional students might also experience different challenges, including unfamiliarity with college; lower education levels; financial insecurity; family responsibilities; and distance, inadequate transportation, and housing (Nikolay 2016). Although more adults are enrolling in college (motivated primarily by potential economic mobility), they must overcome many economic, personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional obstacles in order to do so.

A report by the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2012) identifies three areas of challenge encountered by (post-traditional) students:

- ◆ *Situational* barriers refer to conditions at a given time that limit a student's ability to access and pursue higher education. Cost and lack of time are the most commonly cited. Other conditions, such as lack of child care (for single parents) and transportation issues (for low-income students), also limit the ability of students to engage in postsecondary activities.
- ◆ *Institutional* barriers consist of practices and procedures that may discourage or exclude students from pursuing postsecondary education. Such barriers include problems with scheduling or transportation, courses that lack relevance or practicality, bureaucratic issues and the number of course requirements.
- ◆ *Dispositional* barriers refer to student perceptions of their ability to access and complete learning activities. Many adults returning to college experience anxiety and fear because they have not engaged in postsecondary study for a period of time.

## Conclusion

With radical shifts and changes to our postsecondary education landscape, new and inclusive practices and means of improving admission and learning conditions are essential (Iloh 2016). The growth of the post-traditional student population necessitates asking the fundamental question of who is the 21st century student. Answering that question demands changes in admission, pedagogy, scheduling, and other areas within the academy. Further, the complex identities and potentially unique needs and challenges of these students must be reflected in the ways in which we envision, cultivate, and design the college experience. This article highlights the limitations of youth-centered work, but it is also intended to be an expansive and attentive call for change in postsecondary education practice. By confronting the youth-centricity of higher education research and practice, we can work to develop learning environments that are not negligent of but rather proactive about the present and inevitable future of higher education.

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### About the Author

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**Constance Iloh, Ph.D.**, is an Assistant Professor at the University of California, Irvine. Iloh's research on college access, opportunity, and educational stratification has been published in journals such as *Teachers College Record*, the *American Educational Research Journal*, and the *Journal of Negro Education*; with her forthcoming new model of college-going and college 'choice' in the *Harvard Educational Review*. One of Iloh's most recent articles, "Exploring the For-Profit Experience: An Ethnography of a For-Profit College" was the *American Educational Research Journal's* second most read article for the year 2016. She has been invited to share her work with the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, the Hammer Museum, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Telemundo, NBC Universal, and Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Campaign. Iloh is one of the only academics ever named to the change-agents and break-out stars of the Forbes 30 under 30 list.

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## Mentoring Opportunities

*By Margo Landy*

I first met Daniel when I was applying for a job. I was professionally aimless, having just relocated to the area for my husband's job. I had no plans and no direction about what I wanted to do, except for a vague idea to pursue something in education. I had decided to leave my graduate program, which I had begun with the goal of becoming an academic. All of my work over the previous years had been based on the assumption that I would pursue an academic track with the goal of eventually becoming a tenured faculty member. Even though that path had not felt like the right fit for me, I felt at sea when I decided to leave it.

I applied to many jobs at local colleges and universities, including an administrative assistant position. Daniel interviewed and ultimately hired me. At the time (the beginning of the recession), I considered myself lucky to have gotten a job at all, much less one in a good department and school.

Still, adapting to the new professional environment was quite an adjustment. Studying philosophy in graduate school had shaped me for a different kind of working environment, where very different traits are valued. For example, in graduate school, intelligence and the ability to argue and defend one's position are valued, but (surprisingly), in administrative positions, getting along with people and making progress without angering others are more valuable. Philosophy as a discipline is highly principled and rigid, and I approached administration in the same way. Looking back, I am surprised that Daniel had the patience to work with me

and to explain his thinking (over and over again) when he could have reasonably concluded that I was a lost cause. I don't mean that I wasn't capable of doing the work my job required but rather that I might not have seemed a good candidate for becoming a registrar. We never clashed overtly, but it certainly took his willingness to share his thinking—on many occasions over the first couple of years—for me to begin to understand that a different approach was needed.

At the beginning, of course, the focus was on my learning the basics: processing transcript orders, entering grades, answering questions when students visited the office. And some of the mentoring he did was probably typical—for example, asking me what I thought rather than just giving me the answers and progressively giving me more responsibility for work related to my area. I don't mean to diminish the value of that mentoring (it is critical) but rather to contrast it with what I imagine were far more challenging steps that he also took. He was not afraid to offer honest criticism in areas that might have caused other supervisors to cringe, such as my receptivity to feedback or discussing the importance of maintaining an orderly workspace given what it communicates to visitors about our department and its ability to administer services. Reflecting on those conversations now that I am a supervisor myself, I am sure it was not comfortable feedback for him to give. Nonetheless, it was crucial to helping me become more effective at my job.

As time went on, Daniel was thoughtful about providing more opportunities for learning, development,

growth, and research. Each type of opportunity had its own acronym: L.O., D.O., G.O., R.O. (and so on). I have so many memories of him walking out of his office, suppressing a smile, and handing me one of these “opportunities.” Some of them I welcomed eagerly, because I could readily appreciate how interesting they were or what I would learn from them; others I undertook reluctantly. But to his credit, he almost always took the time to help connect the dots between what I was doing and what it would prepare me to do.

A lot happened over the next several years: Working nearly full time, I finished my degree program (which only seemed possible with Daniel’s support and willingness to allow me to adjust my schedule); he advocated for my promotion to a job that provided a clear professional path; I became pregnant and was nearly incapacitated with illness, yet Daniel was willing, once again, to allow me to make significant adjustments to my schedule in order to cope; and when I returned from my parental leave, he allowed me to return to my projects right away yet also supported my requests for workplace flexibility. Eventually he encouraged me to look for development opportunities that exceeded those available to me at that institution.

While it has not been long since I worked with Daniel, I have had time to look back at some of what he did as a mentor and to appreciate how novel and successful some of his approaches were. I share them here because I think my experience is evidence that broadening the boundaries of what we think of as mentoring can have a significant positive impact on those who are mentored.

- ◆ He was willing to mentor me without being asked to and even though I hadn’t yet identified a career path.

I am sure I was not the most appealing candidate for mentoring: while I was competent and reliable, I doubt I seemed ambitious or committed to career development. Yet he did not wait for me to have a career plan to offer me projects and opportunities that would help me learn; those projects in fact helped me learn more about my skills and interests. It was he who suggested that becoming a registrar would be a good fit for me: “I know no one grows up wanting to be a registrar...” That conversation turned out to be life changing: I knew I was relatively smart and competent, but I had no idea how to channel my skills professionally. I had lamented to family for so many years that I just had no idea how to decide on a career or choose a profession. It took having someone

who had seen me at work and who had a sense of my strengths and weaknesses to share his perspective.

Thereafter, he would often discuss with me how projects and experiences I was assigned or working on related to professional goals and development in the field. He helped me connect the dots between the work I was doing and the work I hoped to do. We would also discuss skills that I wouldn’t have the opportunity to develop in that position and alternative steps I could take to develop them.

- ◆ My mentor was open about occasional struggles to get along with some personalities.

When someone was difficult or unpleasant to work with, he would say so privately; his honesty helped me maintain my sanity. The job and the institution were new to me, and without his openness, it could have been difficult for me to react calmly to the ups and downs of working with others. Especially given my background in philosophy, I found it challenging at first to work through disagreements with others when I perceived them to be ignoring the balance of reasons. Now that I again find myself at a new institution, I can cast my ups and downs with some new strong personalities into perspective. There are days when I want to tear my hair out, but I try to remember that these kinds of clashes just happen in the workplace. What’s important is to move on from my initial reaction and figure out how to work with the person in a productive and effective way (that is, after all, so much of what a registrar’s office needs to do).

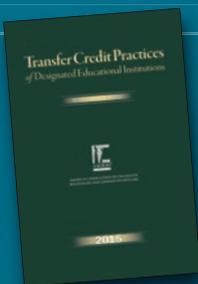
- ◆ My mentor was open about how he saw me: he would offer both praise and criticism intended to help me develop professionally. This feedback was not just a means by which to improve my performance in work-based tasks but also to help me grow into future, larger roles.

My mentor’s feedback was formative—and sometimes surprising. It helped me begin to understand some of the traits and skills that were important in the workplace. I learned that being right or having reasons in support of an argument will only get you so far when your job requires working effectively with other groups. Similarly, although in school I had perceived my output (*e.g.*, papers, teaching) as more important than communicating confidence in ideas and abilities, I began to understand how the way in which I project myself can shape how other

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people perceive me. On several occasions, my mentor shared positive feedback that just did not match my self-perception, so I had to work to understand how what he was saying could possibly be true. That process, too, was critical because I learned more about how to leverage strengths and grow into my professional role.

- ◆ My mentor was often transparent in how and why he made one decision rather than another.

This helped shape my understanding of how decisions are made in higher education. My background did not include much experience of the administrative side of higher education, and those values (as communicated to me as a student preparing to become an academic and not necessarily representative of faculty beliefs in general) are distinctly different from those on the administrative side. Years of conversations in which we discussed the most minute details of administrative decisions helped me recalibrate my approaches to service, working with faculty and students, and decision making in general. Those conversations were a generous gift of my mentor's time and effort. The resulting recalibration and reshaping (on my part, at least) was necessary for me to adapt to working in administration. Other supervisors might have reacted very differently, throwing their hands up in frustration. It would not have been unreasonable to have concluded that I had the wrong mindset and that I could never learn to approach things differently. I am lucky that my mentor was patient and tireless in sorting out the rationales and likely reactions of those with whom we worked, thus allowing me to learn.

- ◆ After my mentor and I had worked together for several years, he encouraged me to apply to other jobs, even going so far as to bring in position postings.

The first time my mentor suggested that I apply for another job, I was shocked: I had never heard of a boss doing that, and it had never occurred to me that I was ready to apply for a job at a higher level. I applied for the job but didn't get it (I didn't even get an interview), but it was a pivotal moment nonetheless. It forced me to look at myself, my experiences, and my skills in a different light. I spent a lot of time thinking about it (incredulously at first), but eventually working to understand what he was saying and to bridge the gap between how I perceived myself and how he perceived me. A few months later, he suggested I apply for another, similar job. Again, I was caught off guard, but as previously, I applied. This time, I was invited to a first and a second interview. I still didn't get the job, but I was learning more and more about the process as well as how to communicate with prospective employers.

Now that I have taken another job, I have a new perspective from which to appreciate all that I learned from working with my mentor. I am even working on developing my own mentoring skills (a D.O.). Uncomfortable conversations can be difficult, but part of what I learned from my mentor is that conversations that are not comfortable can still have an important and positive impact on others. Perhaps the most important lesson I learned is that to be a great mentor means being proactive in finding ways to enable those one oversees to develop their strengths, improve upon their weaknesses, and find a path forward for growth.

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### *About the Author*

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**Margo Landy** is University Registrar at University of the Pacific. New to the position, she has only recently begun to venture from being mentored to being a mentor. She holds a B.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, respectively.

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## Using Your Mentoring Experiences to Bring Out the Best in Others and Yourself

by Paul Marthers

Some of us have an idealized version of the kind of mentor we would like to have giving us at-the-ready expert career advice. Imagine a mentoring service like those roadside assistance people who show up when your car breaks down or gets a flat tire: “Hello, at-your-service mentors, I have to decide between two potential career paths. Can you help me?” Given that I know of no such service in higher education, let’s stick with a mentor model that many of us have witnessed: the devoted and generous advisor who is always there for you.

Your idealized version of this type of mentor (if it is like my version) goes something like this: A professional advisor guides you along the pathway of your career. The mentor listens, observes, and offers sage advice based on what seems best for your professional progress. The mentor has a generous spirit and balances constructive criticism with motivational praise. The mentor is a supervisor or a professional superior committed to grooming you for higher levels of responsibility—that is, someone who might want to bring you along as a key player if given the opportunity to lead an institution. Although this is my own idealized vision of a mentor, it is no polka-dotted unicorn. I have seen such mentors help my colleagues in higher education. Regrettably, no such mentor has materialized in my own career. And I suspect that I am not alone in wishing for something rare and elusive that I know exists.

That said, taking the self-pitying approach is not a productive strategy (nor is it an appealing message in a career advice essay). So, over the years, I have asked

myself many times to consider that perhaps because no mentor has appeared as if divinely summoned to help me, it might be more productive for me to try to find “situational mentors” wherever possible. This leads me to my first bit of advice: *Recognize and make the best of the likely reality that the mentor you wish for may not be the mentor you get.* In other words, do not hold out for the idealized mentor or give up on being mentored if that dreamed-of sage does not appear. Instead, shift your focus to skill-by-skill or job-by-job mentoring opportunities that might be right in front of you just waiting to be activated.

Here are some examples of career wisdom and professional guidance that have shaped me over the course of my career. They are from supervisors who would never claim to have mentored me but whom I took it upon myself to turn into situational or transient mentors.

*Keep your resume up-to-date at all times.* I was surprised to see the resume of one of my earliest supervisors on his secretary’s typewriter less than a year after he joined the college. When I jokingly asked if he was planning to leave soon for another job, he told me that he needed to supply a resume for a volunteer board position for which he had been nominated. He then advised me that it was always a good idea to have an updated resume ready in case I were asked to serve on a board, give a presentation, or write an article. Until that time, I had never thought it necessary to have my resume always at the ready. Now I do, and it is always updated, no matter how long I have held a given position.

*To advance professionally, it is critical to realize that on the job or in professional settings related to it, you are always managing perceptions of you—perceptions based on a combination of substance and style.* The situational mentor mentioned above frequently emphasized the need to appear “impressive” to others who might be in positions to evaluate or recommend you. I watched him move into successively more prestigious positions because he masterfully cultivated the perception that he was one of the rising stars in his field. In short, he projected strength in the substance and style of his work. At the same time, I saw other very substantive people (but who were less skilled at appearing impressive) stagnate or backslide due to deficits in perception management.

*Never underestimate the importance of thorough internal communication with stakeholders and key contacts around campus.* One office I worked in coordinated foundation fundraising efforts at a decentralized research university in the south that had strong and autonomous deans of its numerous academic units. My supervisor assiduously reinforced her view that administrators are able to be much more effective if their actions indicate that they are there to serve faculty and have nothing but respect for the sometimes byzantine ways of shared governance. This supervisor learned how to achieve success in large part because she started in higher education as an overqualified, master’s-degree-holding departmental secretary. Over the years, I watched her ascend to a vice presidency as the result of her consummate relationship management skills joined to a Kansas prairie work ethic. I learned that to succeed—especially when others outrank you or have tenure—you must work with people, not through or around them.

*Be the leader who hears uncomfortable truths from people rather than the one who stifles internal communication and thus fails to hear information that needs to be heard.* When I became the dean of admission at a small liberal arts college in the Pacific Northwest, I reported to an acting president who led the college in a transparent, ask-me-anything, challenge-my-ideas-and-I-will-not-hold-it-against-you way. This approach cultivated a participatory leadership cabinet, where during weekly meetings everyone felt empowered to contribute. Because this was my first experience on a president’s cabinet, I thought that this was how all college presidents ran cabinet meetings. (Since then I have learned how naïve I was.) Still, in running meetings of my own groups of direct reports, I have adopted the style I learned from that situational mentor.

I have had other situational mentors, such as the former provost of an institution where I served as vice president for enrollment. He and I worked for an especially demanding and frequently punishing president. We bonded during that trying experience and have kept in close touch despite having moved on to new positions at different institutions. We know that we can call each other every few weeks to seek advice when career challenges emerge, when we are in job searches, and when we need someone to help us make sense of things on our respective campuses.

To everyone who has not been mentored in the classic sense, I offer another bit of advice: *Just because you have not had the classic mentor does not mean that you are not capable of serving as a mentor yourself.* Allow me to use an example involving that species (cats) frequently featured in colloquialisms about being hard to move to consensus (“herding cats”), hesitant to speak out (“cat got your tongue”), or resourceful and innovative (“more than one way to skin a cat”). During the past twenty years, my wife, daughter, and I have been cat foster parents in the various cities where we have lived; we have probably fostered 1,000 cats. Those that were feral in their first year of life tended to have such under-developed vocal cords that the meow they made sounded like a tiny squeak. This is because cats that grew up feral do not have the kinds of interactions with humans or other cats that enable them to learn how to use their meow to communicate their needs. By contrast, people who have never been mentored in more than a haphazard, situational way have more agency, which means they do not have to carry forward adverse effects from their experience. In fact, having a mentoring deficit might lead some of us to be even better mentors because we want to mentor others the way we wish we had been mentored.

What might this look like? *To be an effective mentor, it is necessary to see oneself as a servant leader*—that is, as one who puts the needs of the institution above those of self and who teaches and coaches those they supervise in ways that develop each team member’s strengths. Good mentors need to be able to put the needs of their mentees above their own needs, even when it is not easy to do so.

Once, I found myself in a situation where someone I had mentored for many years was being considered for a position I myself had been invited to consider. Both of us considered the position as perhaps attractive enough



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to investigate but not a “dream job.” A complicating fact was that when I was contacted, I knew my mentee had already completed a first-round interview for the position. (I had been contacted because the college, while still interested in my mentee’s candidacy, was looking for another strong candidate or two to round out the applicant pool.) I listened through the initial call, but said I felt duty bound to disclose my potential interest in the position to my mentee, which I did, making clear that I would step aside if my mentee disapproved of my presence in the search. Ultimately, my mentee was advanced to the finalist stage, and I did not pursue the position (which ultimately went to someone else).

*Best and ideal practices are instructive and the stuff of conferences and webinars, but bad examples can be equally instructive.* In fact, I have found much to learn from what could be called worst practices. This has been especially true when work environments have been rife with bad examples and bereft of the good ones. So to those who have been searching in vain for a front-row seat to best mentoring practices, I offer the following “how not to mentor advice”:

- ◆ Rarely make yourself available for one-on-one meetings with your direct reports, and discourage open-door drop-ins to discuss what is happening around the office or division. Fail to acknowledge that those unplanned and impromptu drop-in meetings can provide very effective supervisory and mentoring moments.
- ◆ Make it clear through your words or actions that you value staff who act like mirror images or clones

of you. Promote and mentor staff according to be-like-me criteria.

- ◆ Insist on acting as if you are the smartest person in every room you enter, and actively leave little space for evidence to the contrary. Be pleased when most meetings become echo chambers of your views.
- ◆ In interactions with people below you in the hierarchy, stay on “broadcast mode,” and only switch to listening mode when managing up to superiors.
- ◆ Make it clear to the people in your division that you place higher value on the opinions of outside experts—especially former associates from previous institutions—than on those of veteran staffers at your current institution.
- ◆ Approach every issue from the disciplinary or professional frame in which you received your training at the earlier stages of your career. Devalue perspectives from outside your academic or administrative comfort zone.

I regret that my professional experience has shown me even more bad examples I could add to this list. Please understand that good mentors do the opposite. If, like me, you aspire to be a good mentor to others, then do not let these bad practices characterize your mentoring. As for my own need for mentoring, I still hope someday to have a direct supervisor who demonstrates the behaviors and qualities I associate with the ideal mentor. Until then, I will continue to look for situational mentors, and I will keep mentoring others in the ways that I would like to be mentored.

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### *About the Author*

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**Paul Marthers** is Vice Provost for Enrollment Management at Emory University. Marthers has worked in higher education for institutions including the State University of New York system, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Reed College, Oberlin College, Boston College, Vassar College and Duke University. He has written numerous journal articles and two books. He holds degrees from Oberlin College, Boston University, Reed College and the University of Pennsylvania.

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## Onward: Reflections on Mentoring

*By Kimberley Buster Williams*

I've been blessed with great mentors throughout my career. So when I was invited to participate in Leadership UMW, a mentoring program at my institution, I didn't hesitate to say yes.

### Mme. Marta-Spoel and Allan Wentt

When I think of mentoring, I think first of my dad's career as an opera singer and of his unique mentor, Mme. Marta-Spoel. My dad, Allan R. Wentt, was born in Kingston, Jamaica. His family moved to Panama when he was four years old. In 1956, he graduated from Berkeley Divinity School (now part of Yale University) in New Haven, Connecticut and was ordained a priest.

Soon after his ordination, he was assigned to a mission church in the Canal Zone. There, he continued to pursue his childhood passion: singing. He had studied voice at the National Conservatory of Panama with Mme. Marta-Spoel, who herself had studied with the great Lilli Lehman. Thus, for many, it was no surprise when in 1959 the Juilliard School of Music accepted my father as a scholarship student. At Juilliard he won the coveted Enrico Caruso Memorial Scholarship four times. He earned a bachelor of science degree in music and a master of science degree in voice from Juilliard. In 1962 he made his debut at New York's Towne Hall.

Marta-Spoel was pleased with his accomplishments. On many occasions, she suggested that my dad should

be more flamboyant when taking the stage. She had a Prussian (*haute bourgeoisie*) demeanor and thought that a little more "strutting" would be a good thing. Despite not fully embracing her suggestion, he was successful. That's what mentors do: They give advice with deathbed candor, even when the pupil doesn't want to hear it. Strut on stage, yes; act shy on stage, no.

### Senior Superlative: Most Talkative

Although my dad was reserved, he was open to feedback. I, on the other hand, was not reserved and was only moderately interested in feedback—particularly as a teen. My high school classmates voted me "most talkative." My parents were not surprised given that I'd always talked a lot—at the dinner table, in class, in the grocery store, even in my sleep. Being talkative was part and parcel of my extroverted personality.

As a college student, I continued to talk. I enjoyed classes that allowed for lots of discussion. I also liked to read, so I came to class prepared to talk about each week's lesson. I read assigned and unassigned material related to the topic. I worked part-time as a tour guide for the admission office—the perfect job for me.

When I graduated from college, I secured a job as a receptionist in the admission office at Old Dominion University (ODU), my alma mater. Again, this was a great job for one who loved to talk. Later I secured a

job as an admission counselor (one of my professional goals) and was admitted to graduate school (a personal and professional goal). It was at this time that several women at ODU began to mentor me. Like most mentors, these women saw something in me that they believed warranted their time and attention. (Likely they saw a hard worker who talked just a little too much.)

## Behavioral Psychology: Talkers Are Groomed

In “Why We Talk (Or Don’t Talk) So Much,” author Halle Tecco writes that “being talkative is entwined with our identity. It comes from the thing we did to survive and thrive from an early age. We either received love (reward, acknowledgment) for doing it well or were protected from what we were scared of for doing it well.”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, my mentors have been most helpful in making me aware of some downsides to talking too much, including inspiring boasting and sometimes eliciting a lack of respect.

Mentors Dr. Cecelia Tucker and Dr. Lenora Thompson did not want my excessive talking to derail my budding career. They invited me to lunches and private meetings. They “pulled my coat tail” when it needed to be pulled. They cheered when I was on the right track and gave me candid feedback and/or disapproving looks when I was moving in the wrong direction. They pointed out blind spots and talked about the power of silence. They were there when I needed to vent, or cry, or do both. I always knew that their intentions were good and that they wouldn’t hold what I shared with them against me. I trusted them immensely. Sometimes I’d call them late in the evening or early in the morning. Despite their busy schedules, they always returned my call or email.

## It Takes a Village

In addition to Dr. Cecelia Tucker and Dr. Lenora Thompson, I had other mentors:

- ◆ My graduate advisor (Dr. Dennis Gregory) shared that being a higher education “expert” requires diligence, commitment, and attention. He never let up on me. For example, he once firmly told me

<sup>1</sup> See <[huffingtonpost.com/halle-tecco/why-we-talk-or-dont-talk\\_b\\_467249.html](http://huffingtonpost.com/halle-tecco/why-we-talk-or-dont-talk_b_467249.html)>.

to “fish or cut bait” when I didn’t seem energized to finish my Ed.S. degree. (I finished it.)

- ◆ My supervisor at Johnson & Wales University drilled in to me to *never* take action when angry and also gave me lasting advice on “meeting etiquette.”
- ◆ My supervisor at Old Dominion University had me read the book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*; I have been a Stephen Covey convert ever since.
- ◆ My vice president (now the president) at Old Dominion University always urged me to give him “the *USA Today* version”—that is, to “keep it simple.”
- ◆ A mentor from the University of Michigan–Flint offered lots of leadership advice, including the admonition that “everyone is usually carrying some sort of burden” (despite the façades they maintain). So be kind *always*, and try to figure out how best to show appreciation (on an individual basis). He also gave me a book that I treasure to this day: AACRAO’s *Managing for Outcomes* by Wayne Sigler.
- ◆ My vice president at Northern Illinois University helped me understand how important perception is, how important first impressions are, and how the body politic is significant at institutions big and small.
- ◆ My non–higher education mentor reminded me to read as much as I can whenever I can. (She also taught me to play golf!)
- ◆ My mom gave the best advice of all: *Do your best—always!*

These individuals provided guidance, resources, and positive reinforcement during the formative years of my career. They helped me develop strategic thinking skills, management skills, writing skills, and more. They were then, and are still now, my strongest supporters.

## Life’s Most Persistent and Urgent Question

One of my favorite quotes attributed to Martin Luther King, Jr., is “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is ‘What are you doing for others?’” In addition to meeting regularly with mentees on campus, I stay in touch with other mentees whom I don’t see as often. I try to contact my mentees a couple times each year, typically via email. I’m always delighted to hear from a

mentee (whether I initiate the contact or he does). In typical mentor fashion, I quickly try to ascertain what I can do to help. Here are a few excerpts from recent emails I've received:

### Mentee A

*Hi, Kimberley—*

*Just wanted to give you a quick update and ask for your good wishes. I have a phone interview tomorrow afternoon with XYZ at XYZ University. I am very excited for the potential opportunity. Please whisper a little prayer for me, if you would, and send all the positivity you can my way (oh, and any words of advice in nailing the phone interview would be much appreciated).*

*Thanks so very much...I'll let you know how things go!!*

*Hi Mentee,*

*Good luck!*

*My advice would be to look at the job description and be ready to respond with two to three examples of your experience relative to what they are looking for.*

*Be prepared for “behavioral-based” questions—for example, “Give an example of a time when you went above and beyond to get something done.” If they ask for examples, provide examples. I hope this helps!*

*Good luck again :)*

*KBW*

*P.S.: Have your resume in front of you when you call.*

*Hi, Kimberley!*

*Thanks so much for the advice and good luck wishes!! I'm excited to say the interview went very well; XYZ called me about an hour ago to invite me for a campus interview next week. I am so very thankful and excited!!!*

*You are a true gem and I appreciate your mentorship more than I could even put into words. Thank you for*

*all your encouragement and continued advice....I will certainly keep you posted!! Have a great weekend!!*

### Mentee B

*Kimberley,*

*I hope that this email finds you well. Please accept my warmest congratulations on your recent move and promotion to associate provost.*

*Nearly all of my professional moves since '07 have been into similar positions in student affairs (advisor, admission counselor, etc.). That being said, I am desiring a move into higher levels at XYZ University. Several positions have opened up, and I plan to apply.*

*Although my experience working under your leadership was quite a while ago, you have served as one of my absolute best references during each of my transitions and are one of my best mentors. Would you be willing to continue in that capacity?*

### Mentee C

*Kimberley,*

*Thanks for taking the time to meet with me this morning. I really appreciate your insight and willingness to help.*

When I receive these kinds of emails, I'm reminded that if someone asked me the question “What are you doing for others?” I'd have a pretty good answer. Despite having a demanding job and two teenagers, I manage to squeeze in mentoring.

### Leadership UMW

In addition to participating in Leadership UMW, I have met with admission counselors seeking career advice. In each instance, I try to remember a few key aspects of mentoring and/or the mentor role—namely, that mentoring:

- ◆ is development driven;
- ◆ is about relationships;
- ◆ is done by an expert;
- ◆ is about personal transformation;

- ◆ helps prepare people for the increased responsibilities they will assume as they progress in their careers; and
- ◆ provides safety—a place where mentees may share difficult and challenging issues about their work or even their personal lives.

As one might imagine, I give the kind of advice that my dad’s mentor gave him and that my mentors gave me. If my mentee is introverted, I may advise that he “strut” a little more. If my mentee is extroverted, perhaps even chatty like I was, I may remind him that there is a reason we have two ears and one mouth. If a mentee just wants to talk, I listen.

## Conclusion: Onward!

Many of my own mentors have retired from higher education. Soon my generation (Generation X) will join them. Until then, we will continue to mentor young professionals—millennials and Gen Zs. We will encourage them and be available to them for the long haul. We will cheer and pull coat tails. And most of all, we will provide that safe space that many of us so desperately needed when we were where they are now. Onward!

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### *About the Author*

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# Workspace: The Final Frontier

By Jesse Parrish and Rodney Parks

## The Old Way

Imagine entering an office to conduct a transaction—the kind that only this particular office can handle. Stepping through the door with confidence, you are met almost immediately with a high counter. Wondering if you have perhaps experienced a lapse of certainty, you glance around and confirm that yes, there are only three feet between you and this unexpected obstruction. You are informed by an official peering down at you from the other side of the counter that the one person who can assist you is currently unavailable. You have two options: wait, or return at another time. Glancing around again, you notice there is no place to sit. Contemplating your options, you suspect that this office was intentionally designed to prevent you from staying for more than a few minutes and that each of its members has explicit, mutually exclusive responsibilities. One person can help you, but that person is not *available* to help you.

This description is at once a caricature of bureaucracy and a truthful portrayal of Elon University's registrar's office from the 1970s until the 2000s. The office was essentially a cafeteria line: students entered through one door, approached the counter to obtain a form or ask a question, and exited through another door. The registrar and other "ranking" staff members were invisible and inaccessible except by appointment. This inaccessibility fueled the perception that the staff were cold and cantankerous. Students avoided visiting unless absolutely necessary.

## A Changing Environment

Registrar's offices used to be—and in some cases still are—physical manifestations of organizational charts: upper management resides in one cloistered area, occasionally behind a locked door, connected to the rest of the staff by multiple degrees of separation. Lower-ranking employees respond to the bulk of the office's phone calls, e-mails, and walk-ins, escalating issues as necessary to more skilled, experienced, or higher-ranking officials. In this model, registrars responded only to issues of the greatest importance or urgency. The "front-line" staff were a structural and metaphorical vanguard, insulating managers from mundane work and presumably freeing them to focus on more important issues.

This traditional spatial arrangement, while appropriate for the more linear and compartmentalized work of decades past, is ill-suited for the knowledge work of the 21st century. The registrar's office has long held many of the same core responsibilities, but in the age of information, its staff has increased in number, and its processes have become intertwined with technology and have compounded in terms of complexity. Modern communication tools like wikis and instant messenger help bridge physical separation, but the office's work requires a reimagined workspace, one in which team members feel comfortable rearranging and repositioning themselves according to the task at hand.

Even tasks traditionally assigned to subject-matter experts can be improved by face-to-face interaction.

Reporting, for example, has long been a staple responsibility of the registrar's office. Departments across campus often request data concerning student registration activity, grade distributions, or classroom efficiency. It is incumbent upon the registrar's office to determine the specific purpose of each request, its revelatory potential, its viability with respect to FERPA, and so on. While there may be a designated report writer in house, he likely must confer with other staff members at least on occasion to help clarify the nature of the request and determine the most appropriate presentation and whether the requesting individual or department has an "educational need to know." There is certainly merit to using passive communication to problem-solve, but sometimes the most efficient way to puzzle out the parameters is to brainstorm side by side.

Furthermore, without a shared understanding of basic data structures or the applicability of reports among team members, the report writer's peers will be unable to offer useful insight, and the report may take longer to produce. Departments frequently host intentional trainings to develop this shared understanding, but out of context it is likely to be forgotten. It is more realistic to expect common knowledge to develop over time via sustained collaboration. No individual will master the map of student data in the information system in a span of two hours, but valuable insights can be gained as staff tackle meaningful objectives together in their daily work. The more often peers interact, the more synergy will emerge from their efforts.

## A Changing Responsibility

There are quite a few parallels to the increasing complexity of reporting. For many years, registration was a manual process: students lined up at staff members' desks to add classes, and the office would maintain a list of closed courses against which students could compare and adjust their schedules. Now, students interact directly with the student system to register, and the process is embedded in detailed and interconnected curricula that are the product of shared governance. To ensure that the system is intuitive and navigable, members of the registrar's office work together to demystify the requirements and interoperability among scores of majors, minors, and co-curricular programs, often drawing from multiple areas of expertise. Without this sustained collaboration, it would be exceedingly diffi-

cult to keep pace with curricular evolution from term to term.

Many schools are also expanding their study abroad programs. With a more expansive catalog of locations and providers, there are more equivalencies to establish and more relationships to curate. This creates a need for multiple staff members capable of addressing nuanced questions about transfer credit and maintenance of enrollment status. Even transcript ordering, traditionally a straightforward process, has become more intricate. Students now use online systems to order academic and experiential transcripts and typically have the option to request them separately or concatenated, electronic or mailed, with or without attachments. Alumni whose academic experience predates data migration to modern information systems typically must use a custom ordering process. If a single representative possesses the knowledge necessary to resolve issues that arise from mainstay functions like these, she will be unable to assume many other responsibilities and will operate without peers with whom new solutions could be developed.

Customizing student systems to meet the changing needs of students, faculty, and staff has long been a duty of the registrar's office. The interconnectedness of these systems often calls for subject-matter experts in multiple areas of the office and across campus. Building, testing, informing users of changes, and launching these new technologies requires in-depth collaboration by multiple constituents. At most institutions, these partnerships are forged at a deliberate pace in meeting after wasteful meeting. But given the complexities of our work, is it time to consider implementing collaborative approaches within our workspaces?

## The Registrar's Office Reimagined

During the summer of 2013, Elon University agreed to remodel the Office of the Registrar at the behest of its new titular appointee. Other than a fresh coat of paint and new carpeting, the office had not had a significant renovation for more than three decades. The physical change was long overdue. Importantly, this material makeover also encouraged a reimagining of the work of the registrar. The nature of our work had evolved rapidly to incorporate new technologies and meet the needs of the budding, tech-savvy millennial generation, but by and large, our processes had remained unchanged. We

no longer needed high counters with computers to “register” students, walls to segregate team members according to their assigned duties, or mechanisms to prevent students from pilfering money collected for transcripts or perusing sensitive information printed on stacks of exposed forms. With input from team members in the registrar’s office, the institution’s architect and interior designer recreated the space to be more inviting.

For the six weeks of remodeling, the entire team was relocated to an unused classroom. We set up our workstations on a set of folding tables and set to work in close proximity. There was a bit of nervous tension once we were in place. If we had no privacy, would we feel comfortable doing our work? Would previously unnoticed idiosyncrasies become irritating? Would we feel pressured to outperform our peers once each of us was in full view? As expected, there were a few social setbacks, but the relocation was, by and large, a breath of fresh air. We saw our work and—more important—one another in a new light.

An unforeseen benefit that emerged from our time in that classroom was a substantial increase in collaborative ideation. Together, we dissected a host of topics ranging from routine tasks to complex issues that affect the whole campus. Each day, we discovered more about our peers’ responsibilities and personal challenges as well as their perspectives on the role of the registrar. What we scarcely noticed at the time, however, was that these discoveries were fueling a sense of camaraderie. We created new concepts, smarter solutions, and strong partnerships on the durable foundation of fellowship. The mood of such an intimate environment was an important precursor to a new workplace philosophy. We began to think more dynamically about interpersonal engagement and overall productivity.

## New Space

Placing more people in a smaller space with fewer partitions inevitably will result in more and more frequent interactions. Less evident is the importance of engineering specific types of interactions—those that will lead to greater productivity and redundancy in knowledge and skills. To that end, there is reason to consider an office design that is equipped with multipurpose tools and capable of accommodating a small group.

The registrar’s suite was the first individual office space chosen to enhance collaborative opportunities in

this way. Removing the traditional monolithic desk-cabinet and replacing it with a small adjustable desk made room for a large conference table and afforded plenty of space for engaging with students and other visitors. Whiteboards for note taking and adumbration were mounted on the walls, and a wireless flat screen television was installed opposite the adjustable desk for the purposes of conducting remote interviews, delivering presentations, hosting collaborative discussions and web conferences, and participating in continuing education.

Of course, an attractive space alone will not induce collaboration. Fortunately, a situation arose that would prove instrumental to the unabashed adoption of our new workspace mentality. Soon after we returned to our redesigned office, we hired a new assistant registrar. Mere months later, we learned that our satellite office across campus was being repurposed and a more senior team member would be returning. Faced with the prospect of a dusty office in an older building, our assistant registrar volunteered to work using a nomadic mentality—a “work anywhere” approach—and to relinquish his space to our returning colleague.

Liberated from the idea that work has to be performed at a specific place in the office, he catalyzed the actualization of the philosophy that we had committed to prior to his arrival. With a laptop and lunch in tow, he was encouraged to share the registrar’s suite and collaborate with others using this transient approach. Having a “floater” to set the tone for collaboration had the desired effect of freeing others to join together in the new workspace to address common problems. Following the success of the registrar’s suite, a second office was chosen, and furniture was changed to free up room for more than one workstation to support collaboration.

## New Mentality

Converting a segmented workspace into a collaborative one, especially in higher education, calls for a reevaluation of socialized office behavior. The registrar’s office is expected to perform its duties with a keen eye for personal privacy and the sensitivity of information. Historically, staff are required to have access to a private space should a student desire utmost confidentiality or a one-on-one conversation. As we began adopting philosophical changes to our working style, we had to address these concerns. At some point, each of us would need to meet with a student or family privately, quiet

time to focus on a project, or sustained privacy to work with sensitive documents.

After discussing these scenarios, the staff agreed to move around in the office as necessary, vacating collaborative spaces to accommodate any of the aforementioned scenarios. Importantly, the staff also came to embrace the idea that any space could be used at any time. All computers were replaced with laptops, and docking stations were installed in every space, allowing staff to connect anywhere in the office to complete assigned work independently. Although there are personal effects in each staff member's designated workspace, they are essentially interchangeable; it is now common to find team members moving about to join in collaborative discussions and cultivate camaraderie.

## The New Way

The registrar's office has become the modern university's cerebral cortex, storing student memories, manipulating spatial classroom arrangements, and informing higher-order decision making with data. As our responsibilities become more complex and technology

dependent, it is imperative to identify efficiencies in our processes and problem-solving techniques. When responsibility and expertise exist in silos, processes suffer from congestion and inhibit the assumption of greater responsibility—a key professional development priority. Furthermore, when team members suffer personal and professional disconnection because of the structure of the working environment, collaborative problem solving becomes obviated by the demands of routine work.

Collaborative workspaces break this stagnation, literally and figuratively. When team members feel free to congregate and address issues and ideas together, the group benefits from immense gains in productivity, creativity, and overall morale. For more than a year, Elon's Office of the Registrar has embraced the flexibility of a collaborative workspace and witnessed a marked increase in collaborative activity. Our team members are more engaged, more adaptable, and more receptive to one another. We now operate with a deeper appreciation of the challenges each of us face, and we approach our priorities with fervor, knowing that we can accomplish more without walls between us.

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### *About the Authors*

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**Jesse Parrish** serves as Financial Manager in the Department of Architectural Science at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario. Mr. Parrish previously served as Assistant Registrar at Elon University, where he worked with Dr. Parks to study vulnerable student populations, procedural innovation, and emerging transcript technologies. The two now continue their collaboration internationally, adding new perspective to their growing body of research.

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# Transforming the Enrollment Experience Using Design Thinking

*By Aaron Apel, Phil Hull, Scott Owczarek, and Wren Singer*

At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, more than 43,000 students sift through more than 20,000 class sections offered in approximately 5,000 courses to find that magical combination of sections in which to enroll each term. A specific subset of students—new freshmen and transfer students—needs between six and eight hours for their advising and course enrollment during orientation. Having heard from peer institutions that their students could complete the advising and enrollment process in less than two hours, we wondered why it took our students so long.

In an effort to simplify the advising and registration process and provide students with a more intuitive enrollment experience, especially at orientation, the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s Office of the Registrar and Office of Undergraduate Advising co-sponsored a project to transform the enrollment experience.

At the same time, design thinking was becoming a dominant means by which to solve complex problems in the private sector. As IDEO’s President and CEO Tim Brown said, “The mission of design thinking is to translate observation into insights and insights into products and services that will improve lives” (Brown 2011). The Office of the Registrar made the strategic decision to experiment using design thinking methodologies as a way to solve its problems. By adopting design thinking, the focus was shifted to the user experience so problems and needs could be fully understood and defined.

Using design thinking has helped the Office of the Registrar solve its most complex problems. This article

provides an overview of efforts using the methodology, with a focus on usability, to produce an intuitive enrollment experience that aligns with student and institutional goals.

## Empathize

As UW-Madison enrollment grows and expectations for the quality of the college experience increase, a number of campus leaders (primarily the authors of this article) decided to get close to the new student course enrollment experience to understand why students needed so much time at orientation to select and enroll in their courses.

First, professional and peer advisors were asked to explain what the orientation advising experience felt like to them. Confusion, stress, and being overwhelmed were recurring themes. We observed the experience by attending orientation and watching students and advisors at close range. It wasn’t good enough to sit in the back of the room and watch at a high level. Instead, we got into the conversational space so we could hear details and observe students’ non-verbal cues and their use of the tools. Finally, the director of undergraduate advising was asked to lead a group of new students a few times over the summer to experience firsthand what it feels like to advise new students through their first enrollment experience.

The results of the inquiry were immediately obvious. A suite of enrollment tools, which had grown over

# Design Thinking

**D**esign thinking provides a framework that can be used to address complex problems by understanding the needs of the users and putting humans at the focal point of the process. D-School at Stanford has defined five distinct stages of design thinking.

- **Empathize:** Gain an empathetic understanding of the problem that needs to be solved.
- **Define** (the problem): Analyze observations and frame the problem.
- **Ideate:** Brainstorm the worst possible Idea. Identify many new solutions to the prob-

- lem, and look for alternative ways of viewing the problem.
- **Prototype:** Design and produce scaled-down solutions to identify the best possible solution for each problem defined.
- **Test:** Fully develop the best solutions identified by proto-

typing, and test them rigorously with users.

Design thinking is not a linear methodology in practice. Results from any of the individual stages may influence change and lead to revisiting earlier stages.

the years from a paper catalog and timetable, a blank course grid, a pencil, and a touchtone telephone to numerous separate online applications, had inadvertently made the process more time consuming and frustrating. Students had to search for courses in one application (formerly the catalog), transfer them to a second to view schedule options (formerly the timetable, blank course grid, and pencil), and then import their schedules to a third application in order to enroll (formerly the telephone). Navigation within and between the systems involved an endless series of clicks and imports, and students frequently got lost in the process. Tears were shed. Much precious individual advising time was spent teaching students how to use the tools and then bending awkwardly over their shoulders saying “now click here.”

A great deal of time, energy, and resources were spent trying to understand the problems (empathize) with the enrollment experience. As we were learning about the problems, we continued to tinker with old enrollment tools to make enhancements, but we quickly realized that tinkering would not be sufficient. The project leadership and the Office of the Registrar made the difficult decision to stop revising the old experience and to use design thinking processes to re-imagine a new experience.

## Define

It was immediately obvious that an intuitive new tool needed to be developed so valuable advisor time could be freed up for more important conversations. An integrated new enrollment application would decrease

stress and time spent advising and enrolling UW’s 8,000 new students.

The following problem statement was developed to drive the project: *How might an intuitive and supportive enrollment experience that aligns with student and institutional goals be created?* Once the team defined the problem and agreed on that definition, its creativity and innovative energy kicked in so we could focus on identifying and developing solutions.

## Ideate

In the third phase of design thinking methodology, we focused on processes to generate ideas. Having identified the problem during the empathize phase (too many tools) and having defined the strategy during the define phase (start over from scratch), we were ready to apply ideation techniques to generate as many creative solutions as possible.

To this end, we held a “design sprint” in which stakeholders from various campus partner offices participated in facilitated activities designed to elicit new, creative approaches to enrolling students. The sprint team planned the event to last a full five days so that all participants would have a clear understanding of the scope of the problem and details about the actual enrollment process while also allowing enough time to ideate solutions.

The design sprint consists of six stages:

- ◆ Understand
- ◆ Define
- ◆ Diverge

# Usability & UX Design

“In software engineering, *usability* is the degree to which a software can be used by specified consumers to achieve quantified objectives with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a quantified context of use.” (Wikipedia 2018)

Achieving a high degree of usability requires:

- An early focus on users and tasks—user driven direct contact
- Empirical measurement—test early with actual users
- Iterative design—prototyping, testing, analyzing, and

refining a product or process

As it applies to software development, *UX design* extends the traditional human-computer interaction (HCI) design and enhances the satisfaction of users by improving the overall usability of the product, with

special attention given to user interactions and information organization.

- ◆ Decide
- ◆ Prototype
- ◆ Validate

Day one, on which we tackled the understand and define stages, started with a detailed discussion of the enrollment flow and the myriad tools students were using to accomplish related tasks. We identified five major steps that a student needed to complete and seven (mostly) disconnected tools that students used for them.

Next, two students were invited to walk the sprint team through the enrollment process as they would undergo it in a typical term. This activity highlighted the challenges and enabled sprint participants to “see” the process from a student’s perspective.

Similarly, two academic advisors were invited to share the experience from their perspective, highlighting how much advising time is used for instruction on technology versus actual advising.

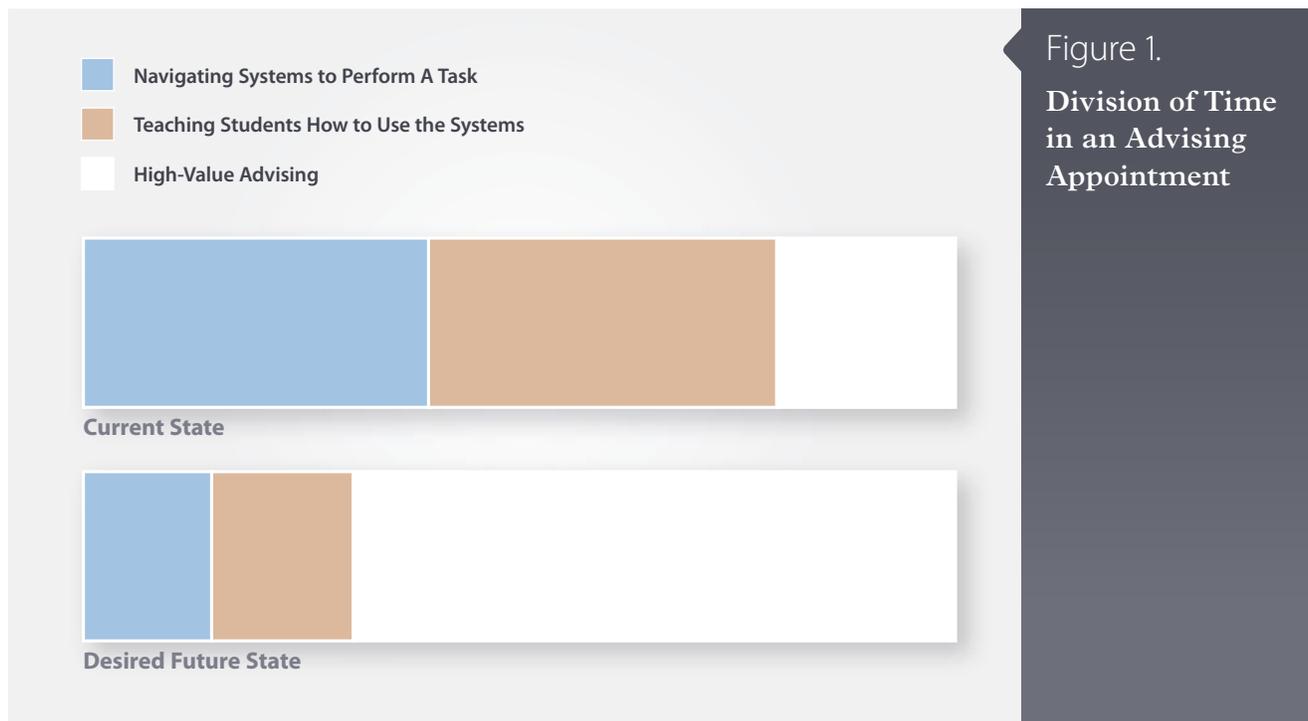
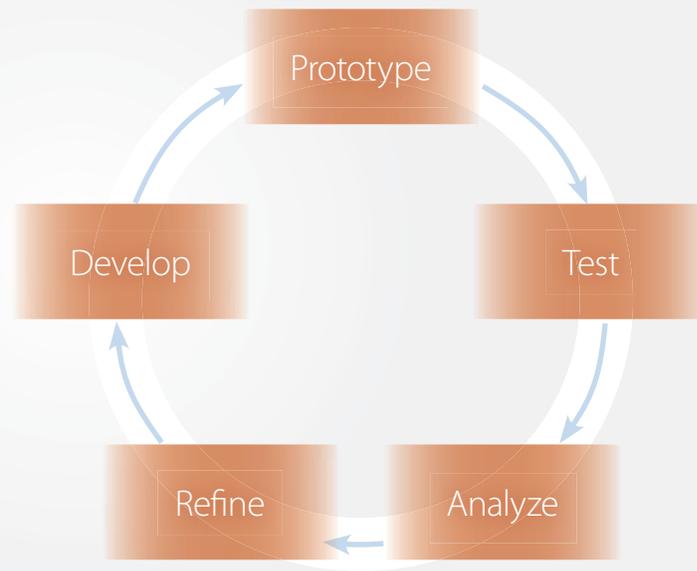


Figure 2.



On day two, for the diverge stage, the facilitator led the sprint team through a series of activities designed to develop as many ideas as possible. The activities included:

- ◆ Review of user stories
- ◆ Individual mind maps (quiet individual brainstorming)
- ◆ Crazy eights (sketches of ideas for improvement)
- ◆ Storyboards (use the best of your sketches to tell a story)
- ◆ Silent critiques (vote for your favorite storyboards)
- ◆ 90-second critiques (team member explains the idea behind her storyboard and listens to feedback)
- ◆ Sticky votes (two stickies per team member)

Day three, the decide stage, began with a guided discovery of tools used at similar institutions and then moved to evaluating the best ideas from the storyboards created on day two.

Activities for evaluation included:

- ◆ Search for conflicts (identify areas where there are two or more potential approaches, and explore the points of conflict).

- ◆ Capture assumptions (evaluate assumptions behind the storyboard approaches to identify tests and mitigations).
- ◆ Create a new user story (storyboard a prototype, click by click, from beginning to end).
- ◆ Evaluate prototype storyboards (determine how well each storyboard addresses the goals identified in the problem statement).

On day four, the prototype stage, developers, business analysts, and UX experts were tasked with quickly designing and sketching the pages identified in the storyboards from day two. Team members presented the pages to the group for discussion and feedback. Once the team identified the best of the pages, developers were tasked with creating clickable wireframe mock-ups of the various pages.

On day five, the completed wireframe mock-ups were presented to students, who were asked to search and register for classes. The “student testers” were monitored using Google Hangouts and broadcast to the design sprint team members, who took notes on the student experience (good and bad). The notes were subsequently compiled, compared, and analyzed to identify

pain points experienced by the student testers. Identified pain points were then addressed by the prototype.

## Prototype

The primary benefit of developing working prototypes is the ability to solicit direct feedback from users working with the system. That feedback can easily be utilized to gauge success in addressing identified problems and highlighting opportunities for improvement.

For this project, the iterative development approach to design was used to develop working prototypes of the application. This methodology fit well with design thinking methodology and allowed the team to design and develop functionality in small increments and test prototypes in an iterative nature.

The project's testing coordinator conducted one-on-one testing of these prototypes with a variety of current students ranging from undergraduate freshmen to graduate students. Feedback from the testing sessions was compiled and analyzed to identify common themes across experiences. The themes were then used to refine the prototypes and ultimately were incorporated into the final development of the application.

By being intentional about engaging actual users early in the process, we ensured that the application met the needs of the user in terms not only of functionality but also of usability.

## Test

We decided to pilot an early version of the system at the January 2017 new student orientation. Piloting at an early stage with a smaller group of students in a less intensive situation would help us work out the bugs and (we hoped) establish some advocates within the advising community. Each of eight advising groups was invited to pilot the system with its new students; four agreed to do so. (They wanted to help the cause and be prepared for the full implementation in summer 2017.)

Numerous staff from the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Undergraduate Advising supported the groups through the pilot and were on hand to observe and troubleshoot during the orientation program.

The pilot was a great success: 139 students enrolled using the new system, and post-orientation student

surveys indicated that the system worked smoothly and exceeded student expectations. Seventy-two percent of the post-enrollment survey respondents indicated that the enrollment process was easy or very easy, and 33 percent indicated that the process went much more quickly than they had expected. The advisors who used the system in January became our best advocates, telling their colleagues how they used the system without having to train students how to do so (saving time) and how it greatly reduced stress levels during advising and enrollment. A lot of good feedback was gathered regarding changes to make prior to summer orientation. With the pilot, we were headed full steam toward summer 2017 and implementation for all new students.

## Conclusion

In accordance with the iterative design best practices and design thinking methodology, we analyzed the feedback provided during the testing phase and refined the enrollment application prior to introducing it to the incoming 2017 undergraduate class. To date, more than 9,900 students have enrolled in over 78,000 classes us-

**The new enrollment tools are doing exactly what they were intended to do. They are providing advisors and students with more time for advising, with far less time spent explaining the mechanics of using the tools. This has been a great improvement, in particular, for our orientation programs, where time is so limited.**

Timothy Scott, Advisor, College of Letters and Science

ing the new enrollment app during summer orientation and subsequent enrollment periods. Observation of advisor-student interactions at the orientation sessions has revealed that advisors are spending less time instructing students how to use the enrollment tools and are able to have more meaningful conversations around

Perhaps my favorite aspect of the new tools is how easy it is to teach them. I spend markedly less time helping students navigate the enrollment systems and have more time talking about the classes they're interested in. Many of my conversations with students have been richer, and I am extremely grateful for that.

Alex Mok, Advisor, Cross College Advising Service

course selection. Advising groups have recovered valuable time by eliminating an overview presentation about how to use the enrollment app and moving straight into individual advising. As we had hoped, students can figure out how to use the app without any explicit instruction.

The enrollment experience project highlights how design thinking can enhance an enrollment team's ability to develop great solutions with a focus on the user. The project team continues to embrace this approach for further development of additional features in support of student enrollment and academic success. This strategic decision by the Office of the Registrar to utilize design thinking has enabled us to solve some of our most perplexing challenges.

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## Creating a High-Touch Recruitment Event: Utilizing Faculty to Recruit and Yield Students

*By Lindsey R. Freed and Leanne L. Howell*

*The following article describes the planning and implementation of a university student recruitment event that produced a high (new) student yield. Detailed descriptions of how staff and faculty worked together to plan and implement this event are described.*

Baylor University is a private Christian university in the heart of central Texas. Established in 1851 and known as the oldest, continuously operated university in Texas, Baylor is a nationally ranked research institution that enrolls more than 16,000 students. Baylor's mission is to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community. The university's diverse community includes students from all 50 states and more than 80 countries worldwide, and its' stellar reputation for interdisciplinary research and educational excellence reflect the commitment of dedicated faculty and staff.

Baylor's School of Education (SOE) ranks among the nation's top 20 schools of education at private universities. The undergraduate teacher preparation program has earned national distinction for preparing future teachers in clinical settings, which include professional development schools and other district partners. Through unique academic initiatives in the United States and abroad, the school seeks to prepare its students to improve society through leadership, teaching, research, and service within a Christian environment.

### Preview Day: A Focused Recruitment Event

#### **Background/History**

Baylor's Office of Undergraduate Admissions utilizes many recruitment events, each of which shares a similar framework. This framework supports the university's strategic vision, *Pro Futuris*, by showcasing close interactions with faculty and staff, linking academics to residential experiences, and nurturing communities while instilling a sense of pride. Baylor's School of Education participates regularly in university recruitment events and has found that the event framework highlights strengths such as faculty, staff and student collaboration.

Several years ago, Baylor hosted high-ability students at the first recruiting event of its kind. The event reached capacity within hours of registration opening. Undergraduate Admissions was eager to replicate this model at smaller-scale recruitment events in order to better meet the demand of prospective, high-ability students within separate academic units. Scaled down in size, the event would facilitate more casual interaction among prospective students and would give more academic units the opportunity to have closer, more personal interactions with prospective students who were interested in pursuing certain majors.

The School of Education seized the opportunity to participate in such a hands-on recruitment approach. The goal was to recruit students who aspired to be teachers and to secure a commitment from them prior to the university's enrollment deposit deadline. Leadership within the school designated departmental scholarship dollars to support the effort. Realizing this would need to be a team effort across the school, the leadership charged staff and faculty in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction with planning and implementing an event utilizing the aforementioned model. This planning resulted in a recruitment event known as "Preview Day"—a day when prospective students and their families could preview all of the unique opportunities within the School of Education. Faculty, staff, and students worked together to showcase Baylor's School of Education to aspiring teachers.

### Preparation/Planning

Faculty and staff work as a tight-knit community to ensure that teacher candidate students are supported in every step of their educational process. It was im-

portant that the recruitment event reflect the support of faculty and staff. Once co-chairs were appointed, a guiding goal for the event was identified: to recruit and retain a diverse population of future teacher candidates by encouraging student engagement during the recruitment cycle. Involvement with this event was intended not only to increase the number of incoming education students, but also to demonstrate the ways in which students are supported through graduation. Research supports the impact of student engagement, which has been called "a linchpin of student success and retention" (Nelson *et al.* 2012). Beyond showcasing the university and its education programs, it was important that prospective students feel connected and engaged with the School of Education sooner rather than later in their college decision-making process. A group of between ten and twelve colleagues was invited to serve on the committee charged with planning and implementing this high-impact student recruitment day. Faculty represented each academic program area, and graduate students and staff represented areas related to communication, recruitment, and the Living-Learning Center.

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The diversity of the committee proved beneficial, as each individual brought an understanding of different student needs and focus areas. Ultimately, the committee divided into smaller subcommittees, each led by an education faculty member, to focus on various aspects of Preview Day.

Subcommittees and their roles were as follows:

- ◆ *Media*: to advertise the event on the Web page and other relevant places; to take photographs of students and their families on the day of the event; and to use social media to ensure awareness.
- ◆ *Logistics*: to organize the agenda, produce nametags, identify event locations, coordinate catering, and communicate with other entities on campus.
- ◆ *(Graduate) student ambassadors*: to host individual families and answer students' questions. (Each ambassador was assigned a family to "host," escort, and respond to questions throughout the day.)
- ◆ *Simulated learning activities*: to design and implement a simulation of four instructional methods courses so prospective students could experience how a real class in the School of Education might be taught. Four simulated learning activities were offered, one from each certification content area: language arts, math, science, and social studies.
- ◆ *The SOE Living-Learning Center*: to showcase the Living-Learning Center and help students learn about all of the support systems provided in this residence hall that partners with the School of Education.
- ◆ *Scholarship*: to create the guidelines for scholarships awarded for attending the event. Guidelines included development of the scholarship rubric, reading scholarship applications, and determining the recipients of the scholarship(s) awarded.

Follow-up with each sub-committee chairperson occurred weekly. The sub-committees were instrumental in freeing the event's primary organizers to focus on the larger plans for the day, rather than the small details. Faculty were more deeply engaged in planning and implementing specific tasks.

The larger committee engaged in constant and open communication. Committee notes and other important artifacts were shared via an accessible electronic file. Anyone on the committee could also access resources such as prospective students' contact information, committee agendas, meeting notes, as well as any other re-

sources used during the planning and implementation of the event. This proved to be a great resource for the committee and ensured that all committee members were informed of the most current details in real time.

## Implementation

Three primary objectives were identified for prospective students attending the Preview Day: (1) to obtain high-quality information about Baylor's education programs; (2) to experience a true representation of the School of Education's character; and (3) to develop relationships with the school's faculty, staff, and current students. According to Crosling and Thomas (2009), all are factors recognized as supporting retention. The following agenda for Preview Day was developed with the aforementioned goals in mind:

### Agenda

8:45–9:15 a.m.	Welcome and Admission Presentation
9:15–11:00 a.m.	Campus Tour
11:00–11:30 a.m.	School of Education Welcome
11:35–12:20 p.m.	Lunch (with faculty, staff, and current students)
12:30–2:30 p.m.	Students: Simulated Learning Activities Parents: Parent Panel Presentation
2:35–3:00 p.m.	(Impact) Living-Learning Center Tour
3:05–3:45 p.m.	Dr. Pepper Hour

Experience of previous university recruitment events confirmed this should be a high-touch event. Thus, in addition to a School of Education representative being present during the check-in process, faculty and student ambassadors were present during much of the day to further personalize and socially integrate the experience. Faculty engaged prospective students in lessons showcasing their teaching pedagogies. In acknowledgment of the role parents play in guiding and supporting their children (Perry 2015), a session was specifically dedicated to connecting parents with representatives of university support resources (prospective students attended the Simulated Learning Experiences during this time). The parent panel focused on information that many parents seek, and it also presented many of the university's academic expectations. Another important focus was bridging academics with residential life

in order to deepen students' engagement and success within their college experience. The last part of the day included a tour of the Living-Learning Center (LLC) to help prospective students visualize themselves as education majors at Baylor. Parents also toured the Living-Learning Center so they could better understand the support that would be available to their children. Throughout the event, committee members engaged in intentional conversations with each family and showcased the way in which faculty, staff, and students in the School of Education work together seamlessly to ensure students' success.

### Follow-Up/Feedback

Guests offered many positive remarks during the event, and committee members followed up individually with each family. The event was intentionally scheduled several weeks prior to the university's enrollment deposit deadline so there would be ample time to engage with families. Pictures of the event were shared through several outlets of social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Participants were also contacted via phone. Personalization was one more way to showcase the School of Education's commitment to providing an individualized educational experience to all students. Faculty remained engaged with the event because they were actively included in its planning and development. Interacting directly with prospective students highlighted the faculty members' strengths and provided families with a faculty contact in the school. Subsequent requests for faculty participation for scholarship review or post-event communication were well received.

Two years of data now exist to support the continuation of Baylor's School of Education Preview Day. Data indicate this event has been a monumental success in helping attract and retain students. Currently, 70 percent of the 2016 attendees and 87 percent of the 2017 attendees are enrolled as students in the School of Education. In fact, the success of the 2016 event inspired expansion of the 2017 event to include "undeclared major" students. After the event, half of the so-called "undeclared" students declared education as their major.

### Conclusion

While this type of recruitment event is especially time intensive for faculty, it has netted positive results in terms of the school's recruitment and retention of a diverse population of future teacher candidates. Not only has the number of students recruited increased, but those who have attended the event are more knowledgeable of the school's programs and expectations once they enrolled. Anecdotally, these same students report that this event bolstered their pride in the School of Education and that interactions with faculty and staff occurred more fluidly once they enrolled. Given the overwhelmingly positive attributes of Preview Day, the school has chosen to continue hosting this exciting event each year to showcase the many excellent opportunities available to students who enroll in Baylor's School of Education. More formal research needs to be conducted regarding the effect of pre-entry learning about the school's programs and its connection to student engagement, student-faculty interactions, and the success and retention of students.

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## *Earning Admission: Real Strategies for Getting into Highly Selective Colleges*

KAPLAN, G. 2016. CREATESPACE PUBLISHING. 161 PP.

*Reviewed by Christopher W. Tremblay*

*Earning Admission* is one of the newest entries in the market of books for parents and students about gaining admission to highly selective colleges and universities. The book was self-published in 2016 by a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania who is now serving as a college application strategist for students and families in southern California.

### Introduction

Kaplan begins by presenting the realities of a “hyper competitive and biased” admission process. The introduction provides a lot of facts, but the author does not cite his sources. For example, he states that “private high schools have strong ties to selective colleges and regularly send more than half of their senior class to the ivies...” but he does not provide any examples. He later states that private college admission consultants charge up to \$25,000. I personally have not seen a bill that large, but it is possible that a family doing a lot of “a la carte” admission counseling could rack up such a bill. Kaplan offers typical advice (write a strong essay, have a solid transcript, invest in test prep), but he also introduces the concept of a “theme” for applicants,

which is a unique approach to applying to college. The author compares college admission to Las Vegas and frequently references “favored” applicants: recruited athletes, children of alumni, and future donors.

In the introduction, Kaplan introduces the seven components of the college application: the high school transcript, SAT/ACT scores, the personal statement, responses to application form questions, extracurricular activities, letters of recommendation, and the admission interview. He treats the application process like a sales pitch. (Interestingly, he writes from the perspective of the college admission officer, though he has never been one.) Although he states that the “college application process is a family affair that you will likely need to spearhead” (15), the student should spearhead it. Yes, the student needs family support, but the student is the driver. Kaplan then makes another difficult statement: “Do not trust guidance counselors to help your child earn acceptance into college” (15). While this statement may reflect his own personal experience (which is described in the introduction), he should not make such generalizations: There are excellent school counselors (the preferred term) who do help students prepare thoroughly for the college admissions process. Kaplan concludes the

introduction with a nice personal story and wishes families good luck as they embark on this stressful process.

## Chapter 1: The High School Transcript

Kaplan offers five pieces of advice to maximize the value of a student's high school transcript. However, he also makes a couple of unsettling comments: "stack the playing field" (21) and "find the easy 'A' advanced courses" (26). Kaplan also boldly suggests that students should stay away from "tough teachers that are terrible graders" (26). Otherwise, this chapter is pretty straight forward about the role of the high school transcript.

## Chapter 2: Entrance Exam Scores

Kaplan effectively presents data from Brown University that support his statement that students with higher SAT and ACT scores are admitted at a higher rate than are students with lower scores. This is helpful for par-

ents and students to see. Kaplan offers effective advice about taking the PSAT and PLAN exams early for practice and exposure. He mandates a test prep program for students who fail to score in the top 25 percent. Kaplan's advice in this chapter derives from his personal experience of having enrolled in an SAT prep program that he credits with having helped him earn a perfect score on the math section. He states, "Prioritize SAT prep above anything else" (35). In this chapter, Kaplan also reviews the SAT II subject tests.

## Chapter 3: Application Theme

Kaplan introduces the concept of an "application theme" using the movie *Casablanca*, which he advises should be emulated in the college application because of its effective use of a theme. This concept of theme is a unique approach developed by Kaplan: "A college application theme is similar to putting together a puzzle" (44-45). He then offers two examples of applications and their themes. He recommends that application themes be short, sweet, and focused, which is practical advice.

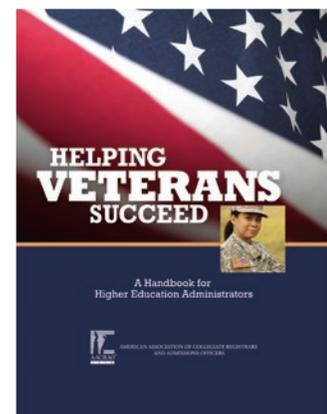
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## Chapter 4: The Personal Statement

Kaplan provides five essay prompts from the perspective of an admission officer. Kaplan states, “There is no ‘right’ essay for your child to write” (51), which is spot-on advice. Another aspect of this chapter is the list of five things admission officers look for in personal statements: ability to communicate, ability to follow directions, focus, an applicant’s unique attributes, and how an applicant will add value to the college. I appreciated Kaplan’s comment to ensure that there are no typographical errors in the admission application. Kaplan even shares what he wrote about when he applied to college. He then presents three different essay examples and comments on their strengths and challenges.

## Chapter 5: Extracurricular Activities

In this chapter, Kaplan discusses the link and alignment between extracurricular activities and the application theme. The majority of this chapter describes six primary ways to “create a compelling profile of extracurricular activities” (75): focus on quality, track accomplishments, reinforce the theme, type of activity matters, demonstrate excellence, and consider summer programming. While his suggestion that students keep a notebook is noble, today’s students are more likely to use a spreadsheet or app. Kaplan then writes extensively—and well—about considerations for the future college athlete. He further emphasizes the importance of leadership, not just membership, in student organizations. Regarding “thinking big” related to involvement outside of the classroom, Kaplan’s statement “Your child has no option but to be grand to stand out” (81) is commendable.

## Chapter 6: Responses to Application Form Questions

This brief chapter includes tips for filling out online applications for admission. Kaplan gives effective advice about finding out if admission is based on a student’s choice of major. While it is true that colleges seek to enroll a diverse class, Kaplan’s advice about recording race/ethnicity could be better framed for the purpose of avoiding being perceived as “gaming” the system.

## Chapter 7: Letters of Recommendation

Kaplan offers insight—if somewhat “off”—into what admission officers look for in letters of recommendation. For example, he indicates that “admission officers want to know about your child’s personality” (96). In reality, they want to know about observed behaviors, not personality traits. Kaplan offers good advice to students about recommendation letters: Provide authors with enough material to write an outstanding recommendation. Kaplan’s reminder to provide a thank you note or gift to one’s letter writer is noteworthy, no pun intended.

## Chapter 8: Admission Interview

Most of this chapter overviews the admission interview, whether conducted by an alumni or admission representative. While Kaplan realistically describes the alumni interview scenarios, he suggests there is only a marginal benefit and leaves the reader wondering why they are even done. He also indicates that the admission interview is the only human interaction a student will have with the admission office (this is not true; some schools offer on-site admission). Kaplan’s advice to students—about not bringing parents to the interview, the importance of professionalism (attire and behavior), and not disclosing applications submitted elsewhere—is appropriate. Overall, this chapter will be helpful to students and their families.

## Chapter 9: Where and When to Apply

Kaplan begins this chapter by talking about the value of “fit” and “experience” over “name brand.” He suggests that college is what you make of it, and he introduces the concept of reach schools and safety schools—important concepts for students to understand. He indicates that many students apply to ten to twelve schools, but he does not cite any national statistics. In its 2016 national study on the filing of college applications, Stamats/Chegg reported that students applied to five to six colleges, on average (Fiala, Rogers and Sickler 2016). Although Kaplan does state that there is no “right” number of colleges to which to apply, it

would have been helpful for him to at least mention application fee waivers (*i.e.*, NACAC’s form) for students needing them. Kaplan does not value campus visits, describing his own visit experience as a waste of money. He introduces the topic of women’s colleges and also references colleges in Canada and England. The most valuable part of this chapter is Kaplan’s review of the various types of admission processes—*i.e.*, early decision, early action, regular decision. Yet the charts he provides include no citations, leaving the reader curious as to the source of those data.

## Chapter 10: Scholarships and Financial Aid

In this chapter, Kaplan covers the basics of all types of ways to pay for college: merit-based scholarships, need-based grants, and outside scholarships. He introduces the concept of “need-blind admission” and “no loan financial policies” used by some colleges and universities. In an effort to help advantage students, Kaplan may be giving advice contrary to that of the U.S. Department of Education with regard to students who have divorced parents who file the FAFSA. Kaplan states, “If your child splits her time equally with both parents, provide the financial information for the parent that makes less each year and/or has fewer assets if possible (133–34). Yet the U.S. Department of Education website states, “If you lived the same amount of time with each divorced or separated parent, give answers about the parent who provided more financial support during the past twelve months or during the most recent 12 months that you actually received support from a parent” (Federal Student Aid 2017). Kaplan then dedicates a few pages about the negotiation process in which he encourages students to engage in a bidding war to increase scholarship awards from colleges: “Your child has nothing to lose and tens of thousands of dollars or more to gain by negotiating with colleges” (135). His statements about negotiating likely are not shared by many colleges and universities. (Unfortunately, the National Association for College Admission Counseling does not prohibit this type of activity in its Statement of Principles of Good Practices.)

## Chapter 11: Getting Admitted from the Waitlist

In this short, final chapter, Kaplan explains the concept of the waitlist, how it works, and how a student can navigate it. He offers three suggestions about how to get off of a waitlist: send a letter of continued interest, send another letter of recommendation, and consider a visit/meeting. (Kaplan admits that his additional letter of recommendation to Harvard and Yale did not make a difference.)

## Conclusion

Kaplan’s book concludes with a five-page checklist “for persuading a college admission officer to admit your child” (147), inclusive of an application strategy checklist. The first checklist parallels each of the chapters and provides a succinct list of steps. Similarly, the second checklist aligns with the third part of the book. Kaplan concludes with some parting thoughts about the reality of rejection that are informed by his personal experience with Princeton University. Kaplan ends strong: “Success in the college application process is not measured by acceptances and rejections, but rather your child’s growth in college and preparation for the world beyond it” (154).

## Appendix

The appendix, “College Admissions Timeline,” features a month-by-month list of steps for each year of high school.

## Final Reflections

Borrowing from Kaplan’s concept of an application “theme,” the “themes” of *Earning Admission* are as follows:

- ◆ Theme 1: Kaplan offers practical advice to parents and students and provides insight into the competitive admission process, especially at highly selective schools.
- ◆ Theme 2: Kaplan’s perspective is only his and sometimes misrepresents reality.
- ◆ Theme 3: Kaplan could improve his credibility by citing sources.



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- ◆ Theme 4: Kaplan’s book is written like a conversation and thus is easy to read and follow. The author’s use throughout of both gendered pronouns (*i.e.*, he and she) made for an inclusive read.

In conclusion, I would not rely on this book alone for guidance through the college admissions process, but it does provide good information and techniques to navigate the complexities of the process.

## *Pathways to Enrollment Management: A Financial Aid Perspective*

CONARD, L. 2016. WASHINGTON, D.C.: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS. 85 PP.

*Reviewed by Christopher W. Tremblay*

A funnel. A thermostat. A puzzle. A house. A ticket. A pyramid. A wheelhouse. All of these words are used as metaphors in this book about the role of financial aid in strategic enrollment management.

In 2016, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) published the long-overdue first book dedicated to the role of financial aid in enrollment management. *Pathways to Enrollment Management: A Financial Aid Perspective* explores the mutually beneficial relationship between enrollment management and financial aid.

This publication emerged from NASFAA’s Enrollment Management Task Force and followed a three-day workshop in February 2016 on the intersection between financial aid and enrollment management. Throughout the book’s eight chapters, multiple authors offer insight and suggestions for effectively engaging financial aid in a SEM model. The foreword articulates the book’s two goals: to ensure that financial aid administrators have a “stronger voice at the enrollment management table” (vi) and to position financial aid professionals for leadership roles in the field of enrollment management.

### Fundamentals of Enrollment Management for Financial Aid Leaders

This beginning of the book lays a foundation for enrollment management. It presents three definitions of enrollment management—those of Dolence, Kalsbeek, and Ruffalo Noel Levitz—and otherwise draws heavily from Ruffalo Noel Levitz models and practices. The subsection describing the role of the financial aid office

emphasizes the office’s integral role as it works with students and families at every stage of the student lifecycle. The text also explains the phenomenon of financial aid professionals’ serving “three masters”: regulations, students, and the institution. This section also presents a variety of key strategic areas, from branding and communications to tuition discounting. It uses the example of financial aid packaging philosophy to demonstrate how it falls under the enrollment management “umbrella.” Use of the metaphor “the art of war” to exemplify enrollment management seems distasteful.

### Following Financial Aid Through the Enrollment Process

This chapter focuses on the major areas within enrollment management: marketing, recruitment, admission, aid, and retention and their intersections with financial aid. It discusses the importance of communicating with prospective students about financial aid, emphasizing that balance is critical. Furthermore, it raises the conflict between ethics and institutional positioning, especially related to the role of transparency. This chapter references the financial aid cycle, citing the value of students’ filing their FAFSA early. One essential element in this chapter is the reminder that there is no correct way to assemble a financial aid package—rather, it requires consideration of a wide variety of institution-specific variables. Yet this chapter fails to reference the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) when describing the importance of communication with parents and families. An insightful element in this chapter is the explanation of “the triad”: student needs, insti-

tutional needs, and fairness. The chapter ends with a primer on financial literacy, including a reference that financial aid staff are not financial planners.

## Fiscal Realities of Enrollment Management

This section focuses on four primary fiscal considerations: modeling, pricing, discounting, and some broad key concepts. Enrollment management concepts such as the cost to enroll a student are introduced and presented through several tables. The chapter also discusses the important role of projections and predictions as a part of revenue forecasting; the concept of yield and its various calculations are also introduced. The author of this section uses the metaphor of a puzzle to describe this aspect of enrollment management and offers a great deal of advice—for example, the need to be nimble in making mid-course adjustments in order to effectively manage financial aid. The most essential sentence of this chapter occurs near the end: “As an enrollment manager, it is your role to make sure that the institution understands the impact and potential trade-offs to be made” (in relation to enrollment and revenue). Regrettably, the text states that there are seven broad concepts but only articulates six. Although all should have been given equal consideration, some were given more than others.

## Five Lessons in Using Data in Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM)

This chapter by SEM guru David Kalsbeek is one of the richest of the book. Kalsbeek opens by positioning SEM as a “perspective, a process, and a practice” (37). He then describes enrollment management’s three defining features: outcomes oriented, goal driven, and data dependent. This section is laid out as five lessons. The first highlights what Kalsbeek calls the two faces of SEM: administration and planning. Here he justifies the existence and importance of SEM. He frames the planning aspect succinctly: “This facet of the SEM effort requires information designed to identify and weigh strategic choices and opportunities, frame problems, and challenge assumptions and enlighten the

planning process” (39). He relies on a model and a graphic from the SAS Institute to support his argument. In lesson two, he—like the book’s other authors—uses metaphors (funnel and pyramid) and also introduces “critical pressure points.” Lesson three presents the idea of an “information resource plan” to drive the research agenda. Here Kalsbeek provides a comprehensive list of 33 critical questions for SEM in five broad areas. The fourth lesson hones in on the variety of ways in which information is used in SEM to inform organizational intelligence. This lesson also mentions the metaphor of the thermostat, referencing the surveillance of data for knowledge building. Lesson five directly addresses the realities of institutional constraints, especially in staffing for the support of institutional research.

## Breaking the Data Paradigm: Building an Alliance Between Institutional Research and Financial Aid

Given the two chapters dedicated to data, one would presume that enrollment management and financial aid data are the most important parts of effective SEM. Here the “wheelhouse” metaphor is used to illustrate the complexity of enrollment management and the essential nature of data. This chapter is formatted as nine tips addressing the intersection between financial aid and institutional research. It discusses complex and merging data connections, the role of advanced analytics, the absence of aid-related modeling, cohort reporting elements, and data literacy and data consumers. Interestingly, this chapter includes the first and only reference in the text to student success.

## Identifying and Overcoming Ethical Challenges in Enrollment Management

This chapter directly addresses the proverbial elephant in the room: the freedom of enrollment management as against the rule-bound world of financial aid. It also introduces the trio level of ethics: professional, institutional, and personal. The golden rule and the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) are referenced as best practices, though fights and tensions are also ad-

dressed. One of the longest-standing tensions between aid and SEM is “merit vs. need” aid. Four scenarios are presented to demonstrate the potential ethical tensions that may arise. This section concludes with a reminder that enrollment management enterprise-wide discussions are critical.

## Claiming Your Place at the Enrollment Management Table

The shortest of the chapters, this focuses on the self-advocacy of the financial aid professional. It opens with a reminder of the role of politics and relationships in the field of enrollment management and is framed by five “bes” (*e.g.*, be heard, be seen, etc.). It points out that financial aid is often the forgotten stepchild in the enrollment management model and is up front in referencing the resistance of financial aid professionals to engage in enrollment management activities. Nevertheless, it then goes on to offer tips on working with chief enrollment officers. This portion of the book also provides a list of sample enrollment management–based financial aid dashboards. The implication that enrollment management professionals do not have hearts—and that only financial aid professionals do—is potentially offensive. This chapter references an appendix that highlights a two-day SEM training program example. Overall, this section offers some very practical tips for increasing the engagement of financial aid professionals in SEM.

## Data and Diplomacy: Fifteen Tips from NASFAA Members on Engaging in Enrollment Management

This concluding chapter presents tips from six veteran enrollment managers. However, it seems like little more than a hodgepodge of suggestions, and the tips are of varying depth (for example, minimal information is presented on access and success). The tips are framed around three themes: use data to build your EM strategy; build support on campus; and keep students at the forefront—all important perspectives in SEM. The best of the fifteen tips was to stay abreast of national issues and trends in the field of SEM.

## Concluding Remarks

The nine authors of this book showcase the integral role of the financial aid office and staff in the work of SEM. Overall, the book is rich in metaphors, which can be helpful in understanding the various constructs that comprise the field of enrollment management. The length of the book is ideal as it provides a “thorough enough” understanding of financial aid’s role and intersection in and within SEM. NAFSAA could develop a publication series to elaborate further and offer greater depth on some of the major points in this inaugural text. The ten graphical elements offer some visualizations to help financial aid administrators further understand the various components of SEM.

The book offers numerous examples from multiple colleges and universities, explicitly mentioning the following fourteen: DePaul University, Eastern Kentucky University, Georgia State University, Indiana State University, University of West Florida, Miami University, University of Michigan, Oakton Community College, Lawrence University, Northeastern Illinois University, Vanderbilt University, Kennesaw State University, Claremont McKenna College, and Iowa State University.

The book omits the word “strategic” from its title. It should have been titled “Pathways to Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM): A Financial Aid Perspective,” particularly because the financial angle of SEM is imperative to the success of any enrollment management model and approach.

For the most part, the book accomplishes its dual goals of helping financial aid professionals establish that “stronger voice” at the table and providing a foundation of knowledge to equip them for ascent to the role of chief enrollment officer.

This book should be a part of every credit- and non-credit-bearing enrollment management credential. It is essential reading for every EM professional. The text will appeal to financial aid professionals and enrollment management professionals alike. Minimally, the four universities that require a financial aid course in their enrollment management credential (Bay Path University, Drexel University, University of Miami, and the University of Southern California) should mandate this reading.

A glossary of terms should be included in the next edition of this book. For the enrollment manager who is not familiar with financial aid, it would be helpful to

explain terms such as “horizontal/vertical equity” and “professional judgment.” This book is a valuable tool for any enrollment management professional who did not

rise through the ranks on the financial aid side of the house. As for my metaphor for this book? It’s a survey of the landscape.

## *Organizing Enlightenment. Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University*

WELLMON, C. 2015. BALTIMORE, MD: JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS. 353 PP.

*Reviewed by Matthew Fifolt*

Wellmon describes *Organizing Enlightenment* as a “conceptual and historical account” of how and why the German research university came into existence and how its development may provide a framework for understanding the transitions of higher education in the modern era. With the proliferation of books and other ‘technologies’ of the 18th century, Wellmon suggests that “the situation we now face—information overload—is not unprecedented” (9).

The author notes that concerns regarding the “disruptive technologies” (e.g., Internet-enabled learning platforms) that currently challenge higher education in the United States reflect the same “cultural anxieties among late 18th century German intellectuals about print technologies and epistemic authority which eventually gave rise to the modern research university” (3). Similar to these 18th century concerns, contemporary issues, he argues, are rooted in confusion about the “authority and legitimacy of knowledge” (5).

For readers interested in exploring current issues in higher education, *Organizing Enlightenment* would be a poor choice. Other than brief mentions of contemporary higher education at the beginning and end of the book, the author focuses exclusively on the events of the 18th century and makes little effort to connect them to the 21st century. In fact, Wellmon delves so deeply into the minutiae of historical developments of the 18th century that it is frequently difficult to separate the important details of each chapter from the rest of the narrative. In spite of these shortcomings, Wellmon presents ideas that are worthy of consideration. This review represents an effort to share key concepts that might be of interest to the broadest possible audience.

### Historical Views of Knowledge

Wellmon describes the emergence of the research university as “an attempt to come to terms with the fragmenting character of modern knowledge” and to manage its proliferation in print through the ‘technology’ of books (13). However, the organization of knowledge through published texts was a radical departure from its Greek and Latin antecedents in which scholars viewed true knowledge as an “act of thinking” conveyed through speech. Wellmon states, “Plato and Aristotle emphasized the interpersonal transmission of knowledge over the collection and aggregation of knowledge in material forms” (24). This classical understanding of knowledge, however, was disrupted in the Middle Ages.

According to Ferrara (2015), the early modern period of education in Europe was extremely tumultuous; therefore, medieval scholars attempted to preserve ancient texts and harness their power through new print technologies. This paradigm shift from oration to written text represented an equally important shift in how knowledge was viewed by scholars. Whereas classical knowledge was seen as individual-dependent, modern scientific knowledge became institution-dependent and reliant on technologies (i.e., books) for knowledge transfer.

### Stockpiling Knowledge

Wellmon notes that in the last decades of the 18th century, “the dual imperatives of distributing knowledge broadly and producing more of it became untenable. As knowledge grew, it became too disparate and unwieldy” (35). This expansion of knowledge was also the cause of great anxiety since knowledge, which was sup-

posed to be a “unified and coherent whole,” had fragmented into “distinct and often competing claims and truths” (41). Therefore, to manage ever-growing bodies of knowledge, scholars developed better-organized and more comprehensive systems of control, such as encyclopedias, indexes, and specialized journals.

Wellmon notes that bibliographic data, though widely dismissed as “false sciences,” were “crucial predecessors to science and disciplinarity”: twin pillars of the research university. He states, “It [categorization of knowledge] allowed scholars to differentiate their sciences from other types of knowledge” (54). Further, the accumulating and organizing of knowledge laid the foundation for a “research-oriented paradigm of science as it emerged over the last decades of the 18th century” (59).

Toward the end of the 18th century, scholars were printing “periodicals of periodicals” in renewed efforts to organize knowledge into a single comprehensive printed text, a “bibliographic repository that humans only need manage” (75). While this description sounds like the modern-day equivalent to an online search engine, it was ultimately unsuccessful given ever-expanding bodies of knowledge. However, as Wellmon points out, these indexes helped constitute authoritative traditions of sciences, which were another precursor to the modern-day research university. According to Wellmon, “True knowledge was not simply a function of unbounded expansion; it also required a capacity to judge what was worth knowing and what was not” (40). This sentiment is consistent with observations by Levine and Dean (2012) regarding the current generation of students: the challenge is not accessing but rather sifting information and evaluating the trustworthiness of its source.

## Specialization

Toward the end of the 18th century, scholars and intellectuals turned increasingly toward specialization to manage the proliferation of texts. Whereas prior attempts to manage information overload through categorization were focused on a universal and complete knowledge, specialization represented an “ethos of research—the endless, unceasing pursuit of knowledge” (112).

Wellmon reiterates that anxieties about information overload were rooted in concerns about the source of epistemic authority, or notions of what constituted real

knowledge. He writes, “The research university came to represent not just another content delivery device, another more efficient technology for disseminating information, but rather an institution and community that bestowed epistemic authority and legitimated knowledge” (122).

## Kantian Notions of Knowledge

According to Wellmon, philosopher Immanuel Kant was “one of the first German thinkers to make an explicitly ethics-focused argument about the purpose of the university in the new media environment” (123). Kant worried that modern print technologies would “indiscriminately scatter knowledge” (124). Kant opposed books as objects (commodities) in favor of books as actions (speech), noting that only when ideas are made public can an individual “compare and test them against other people’s ideas and recognize when his own ideas are false” (126).

Wellmon writes, “The central question in a modern age of print...was how the benefits and insights of reason could be communicated while maintaining the quality and authority of rigorous, real knowledge” (136). Kant’s solution was to entrust the legitimacy of knowledge to the university as a way to both preserve scholastic methods and “discipline scholars into recognizing the differences between scholastic and merely popular forms of thought” (141).

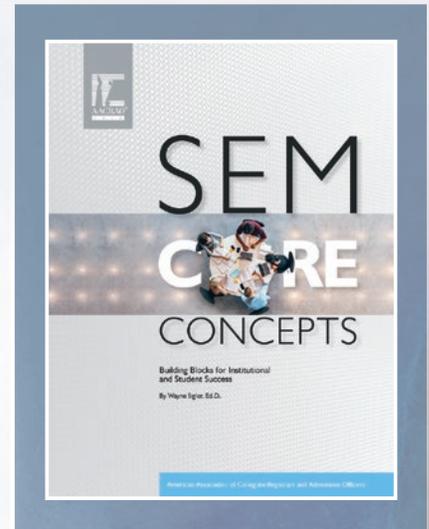
## A New Institutional Culture

One of the most significant contributions of the research university in the 18th century was its separation from traditional sources of authority. Wellmon writes:

*Although universities had always been devoted in different ways to the life of the mind and the pursuit of knowledge, historically their ethical resources, the basis of their underlying norms and authority had been tied to the church or to the state. Grounding the university in a distinct culture of science was an innovation of the German research university (154).*

This institutional shift toward scientific discovery fostered a new cultural ethos that allowed universities to distinguish themselves from “an increasingly literate public, the broader medium of print, and the prolifera-

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tion of professionalizing and credentialing institutions” (160). In the absence of a unique and separate institutional identity, universities ran the risk of becoming irrelevant amidst “oceans of print” (170).

The shift in institutional focus from merely transmission of knowledge to transmission and production of knowledge required a new type of scholar. According to Wellmon, these individuals would be characterized by “a lasting commitment to a particular science [body of knowledge], industriousness, an ability to make judgments, obedience to standards of excellence, and a capacity to view all particular types of knowledge in relation to a broader whole” (172–73).

Wellmon argues that ultimately, the purpose of the university was “the legitimization of knowledge and the formation of the types of people who could generate and transmit it” (182). Notably, scholars agreed that books were products of science rather than knowledge personified, and “true knowledge or science begins not in a printed object but in the interaction of people with print and each other” (192).

*University lecture.* Despite the proliferation of print, the university lecture remained a staple of the research university. It did, however, transform from solely transmission of knowledge to scholarly performance in which skilled lecturers engaged their students and promoted independent thought. Wellmon writes, “The lecture is... the moment of higher learning when the student does not merely ‘collect facts’ but participates in the actual production of knowledge” (197).

In contrast to the bibliographic mindset in which scholars conceived of knowledge as an ideal of completeness, research university scholars regarded knowledge as “a problem that can never fully be solved... [Therefore], research represented a distinct orientation to knowledge; it stood in for the pursuit, not the attainment, of knowledge” (220).

The author concludes:

*The distinguishing feature of a modern science was not its material completeness, its capacity to give a comprehensive account of everything in print, but rather its internal integrity, the extent to which it could account for itself as a self-enclosed process over time* (241).

The defining characteristic of the research university, therefore, was not its ability to solely manage information but its ability to foster a community of researchers committed to the practice of science.

## The Future of the Research University

In a brief yet insightful afterword, Wellmon returns to the modern-day dilemmas of disruptive technologies. He states, “The 21st century prophets of digital disruption fetishized MOOCs [massive open online courses], just as 18th century scholars had their printed encyclopedias and lexicas” (262). Yet in the face of these threats, the research university has persisted.

Wellmon restates that the research university is not just another content delivery system; rather, it conveys epistemic authority. “It [the research university] is a distinct technology that MOOCs, Google, *Wikipedia*, and myriad other digital technologies have yet to replicate” (274). Historically, research universities have integrated old and new technologies and embedded them in practices oriented toward the legitimization of knowledge. According to Wellmon, this is both the legacy and the future of the research university.

## Summary

A noted German scholar himself, Wellmon does a commendable job of describing every nuance of higher education in Germany over the course of the 18th century—the ethos, debates, individuals, and context in which radical reforms revolutionized knowledge and higher learning from one epoch to the next. What he fails to do, however, is adequately connect these ideas to contemporary higher education. Wellmon bookends the text with references to current problems in higher education, like disruptive technologies, but abandons the reader in the intervening text.

While Wellmon’s goal for *Organizing Enlightenment* was to draw parallels between 18th and 21st century technologies, with a specific focus on print and electronically mediated media, the history he presents highlights numerous other similarities that reflect modern-day issues in higher education, including: institutions of higher education and other competing bodies as ‘credentialing agents’; institutional ‘prestige’ as competitive advantage over other universities; the purpose of higher education—specialized training vs. liberal arts; and competing priorities between teaching and research. Yet these topics are never raised let alone addressed by the author. This is a significant missed opportunity.

Wellmon also defends the research university against current arguments to “unbundle” its services. He states, “Unbundling...would threaten a particular practice, a particular way of knowing and, by extension, the central technology for organizing knowledge over the past two centuries” (265). He further contends that “scientific specialization is not a new problem to be solved, but the answer to an older problem of media surplus we still inhabit” (269). Despite the power and agency

of these statements, Wellmon relegates these arguments to the end of the book, which again seems unfortunate.

*Organizing Enlightenment* is a challenging book even for the most studious reader. Wellmon is clearly an expert in his field, yet his inability to communicate with and engage the reader is apparent throughout the text. It seems clear that *Organizing Enlightenment* was written for a small group of highly specialized academics and would have little appeal to a general audience of readers.

## *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*

BERG, M., AND B. K. SEEGER. 2016. TORONTO: UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS. 115 PP.

*Reviewed by Matthew Fifolt*

In *The Slow Professor*, Berg and Seeger combine rich personal experiences with existing and emerging bodies of knowledge to explore the structures and culture of contemporary higher education that reward efficiency and productivity over scholarship and reflective practice. By applying principles of the Slow Movement to academia, the authors present an alternative to the “beleaguered, managed, frantic, stressed, and demoralized professor who is the product of the corporatization of higher education” (x).

According to Berg and Seeger, the Slow Movement is not simply a matter of slowing down, but rather, of acting with purpose—taking time for deliberation, reflection, and dialogue. Consistent with findings in the research literature, Berg and Seeger note that higher education administrators frequently place the financial needs of the bottom line ahead of pedagogical and intellectual concerns (*i.e.*, corporatization) (Bok 2013, Ferrara 2015, Parker 2011), which can result in expanded class sizes, increased use of technology, and the consignment of clerical tasks to faculty.

The shift toward “managerialism” of the university has led many to question the future of higher education. Berg and Seeger, however, suggest that this crisis rhetoric incites an unnecessary sense of urgency that “makes us feel even more powerless in the face of overwhelming odds” (11). Instead, they advocate for approaching the profession from a perspective influenced by the Slow Movement as a way to “disrupt the corporate ethos of speed” (11).

### Re-Conceptualizing Time

The authors note that issues of time—or lack thereof—are pervasive in academic settings; faculty members consistently report high levels of stress due to expectations of increasingly higher levels of productivity. The underlying problem is that academic work by its very nature is never done. Berg and Seeger state, “While flexibility of hours is one of the privileges of our work, it can easily translate into working all the time or feeling like one should” (17). Academic culture “celebrates overwork, but it is imperative that we question the value of busyness” (21).

Instead of more ‘time management,’ the authors advocate for more ‘timelessness’ or periods of time in which individuals engage in “deep thought, creativity, and problem-solving” (26). Timelessness, they suggest, is desirable not only for work but also for professional and personal satisfaction and wellness. Because these periods of time are frequently crowded out by more immediate and pressing demands, Berg and Seeger encourage faculty members to identify and protect a space for “timeless time” and to continually remind themselves that timelessness is not self-indulgent but rather “crucial to intellectual work” (28).

The authors observe that the majority of time management literature for academics offers contradictory advice: “On the one hand, we are told that we need to exercise, eat well, pursue hobbies, and socialize so we can work at optimal levels, but the postulated hours of work preclude actually doing so” (19–20). In contrast

to strategies that call for jamming more into academics' schedules, Berg and Seeger promote doing less and doing it well. Too many activities, they suggest, creates stress, which actually makes us less productive.

## Slow Movement Lessons for Teaching and Learning

According to Berg, one of the casualties in the rush toward 'efficiency' in higher education is the ability of instructors and students to actually enjoy the processes of teaching and learning. Enjoyment and engagement, she suggests, may be the most important predictors of learning outcomes (34). And to achieve this level of satisfaction, the author advocates for face-to-face, in-person classroom experiences as compared to remote/distance or technologically enhanced learning.

Consistent with findings in the research literature (Carnes 2014, McGee 2015), Berg and Seeger contend that learning is fundamentally a social activity that inherently requires close proximity between students and faculty. Similarly, Losh (2014) argues that reducing the instructional process to a mere delivery of information effectively diminishes the experience and discredits the role of emotions in the process of teaching and learning, which she notes is fundamental to the human experience.

In addition to fostering positive student-to-student and student-to-faculty interactions, in-class learning promotes a sense of affiliation or belonging within an academic community that in turn may help students persist through academic and social challenges (Chambliss and Takacs 2014). Further, enjoyment allows faculty members to be fully present for their students. Berg states, "The student-centered teacher...shows positive regard for her students regardless of whether they are successful at one's subject or not" (46). This sentiment echoes Cox's (2009) call for a more relational model of teaching in which faculty are encouraged to develop a deep understanding of student expectations and preconceptions about college in order to more effectively meet students' ever-growing learning needs.

## Slow Movement Lessons for Research

According to Seeger, "The increasingly managerial model of research shifts the focus away from those doing the scholarship and creates faculty compliance with

institutional imperatives" (54). Ferrara (2015) goes one step further by calling American colleges and universities "quasi-corporations" in which administrative strategies and corporate influence have a "deleterious effect on teaching and research" (121, 125). Seeger describes the Slow Movement as a way to "get us back in touch with what it means to produce scholarly work" (57) by placing greater emphasis on discovery and pursuit as opposed to productivity and output.

Seeger reminds the reader that reflective, evaluative critical thinking takes time and that in scholarship, as in life, there are detours and delays. The culture of speed (and its associated values of efficiency, productivity, applicability, and transferability) fails to recognize that "writing is often a very difficult thing to do and that there will be days when it does not go well" (65). However, citing Retting, Berg and Seeger note, "Guilt and self-reproach do not make us more productive; they only create a 'context fundamentally hostile to creativity'" (22).

Seeger recommends challenging the corporate clock mentality of research by reexamining expectations of productivity and time. "For the sake of our happiness and the quality of our scholarship," she says, "we need to resist the temptation to measure our 'output' against that of others, and we need to embrace the variety of scholarly trajectories" (69). In doing so, Seeger describes slowing down as an ethical choice, a choice to care for oneself and for others.

## Collegiality and Community

Berg and Seeger observe that daily interactions among colleagues are disappearing. Corporatization, they suggest, has imposed an instrumental view of both time and one another, and because casual conversations cannot be counted on a curriculum vitae, such exchanges are frequently considered superfluous. This lack of collegiality, however, forestalls the intellectual life of the university. Notably, technology has exacerbated the situation.

Echoing Turkle's notion of being "alone together," the authors contend that technology has made faculty members both easier to access and more distant, all at the same time. Even in-person interactions are diminished when individuals check e-mail or text while physically attending meetings. Quoting Franklin, Berg and Seeger note that such behaviors make it obvious that "face-to-face contacts bear a secondary importance"

(75). Paradoxically, they state, “The hallways are empty because we work elsewhere, and we work elsewhere because the hallways are empty” (75).

Despite the perceived benefits of collegiality, as reported in multiple studies, individuals are increasingly feeling more socially isolated from one another at work. Proposed solutions to workplace isolation that rely on individual effort are “doomed to fail,” according to the authors, “because it [isolation] is a fundamentally a social phenomenon. Both loneliness and belonging are contagious” (80).

Therefore, instead of encouraging individuals to view their co-workers through an instrumental lens (*i.e.*, how can this individual help me increase my productivity?), Berg and Seeger encourage academic units to pay more attention to the affective nature of work. The corporate (rationalistic-bureaucratic) understanding of working life “ignores or downplays” the socioemotional aspect of work and the important role of community. It “disavows emotion in pursuit of hyper-rational and economic goals” (82–83).

Conversely, the practical characteristics of a well-functioning team, according to Martela (2014), include “asking and giving advice, helping each other, sharing the workload fairly, knowing each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and trusting each other” (97). Berg and Seeger state: “It is vitally important that we recognize that workplace loneliness affects our well-being, interferes with professional development, and makes us more vulnerable to burnout” (83).

In contrast to the current culture of busyness that permeates academia, the Slow Movement seems to promote authentic relationships in which conversations are meaningful and relationships are built on trust and mutual respect. Fostering an ethos of kindness and mutual regard, suggest Berg and Seeger, is a legitimate strategy for challenging the corporatization of higher education. According to the authors, “In the corporate climate, collegiality is worth nurturing” (83).

## Summary

Presumably following their own advice that “more is not necessarily better” (66), Berg and Seeger address topics related to the Slow Movement in academia in just under 100 pages (not including references). De-

spite the book’s brevity, the authors offer compelling and persuasive arguments for challenging the corporate ethos of speed by encouraging faculty members to utilize slow elements to become more deliberate and conscientious instructors, researchers, and co-workers.

Throughout *The Slow Professor*, Berg and Seeger describe the process of writing collaboratively as more convivial and supportive than individual projects they have completed and as reflective of a strong foundation of trust. Putting their words into action, they state:

*We not only motivated each other to keep going but also gave each other permission to see work-life balance as a legitimate goal, a balance particularly tenuous for academics whose commitment and love for their subject matter makes drawing the line between work and life more difficult* (88).

Despite its strengths, *The Slow Professor* largely ignores many of the realities of the current system of higher education that make quality, face-to-face classroom interactions difficult, such as the high enrollment rates of part-time, nontraditional, and first-generation students (Bailey, Jaggars and Jenkins 2015; NCES 2016); of students who are frequently academically underprepared for college (Conrad and Gasman 2015; Tierney and Duncheon 2015); and of those for whom a college education is not their top priority but rather an economic means to an end (Cox 2009). While these conditions may be beyond the scope of this narrative, it seems that more systemic changes would need to be addressed before individual or collective actions would have an effect.

The authors steer clear of providing prescriptive recommendations for change, instead favoring personal reflections and affirmations. And while these observations are instructive, more concrete examples and illustrations, perhaps beyond their own experiences, would have been welcome.

Nevertheless, *The Slow Professor* is a thought-provoking and attentive account of the ways in which corporate expectations of competition and productivity have undermined academics’ understanding of relationships, reflective thought, and self-care. While neither an empirical work nor an exposé of the current corporate university, *The Slow Professor* is an enjoyable and reflective piece that would appeal to a broad audience of readers.

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