

Winter 1998

Koinonia

David S. Guthrie

Jeff Doyle

Brad Bowser

Steven Garber

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KOINONIA

Winter 1998

ASSOCIATION FOR CHRISTIANS IN STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

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A Preliminary Manifesto for Christian Student Affairs Practitioners

by David S. Guthrie

About one month ago I sat in the director's office of a long-standing, prestigious student affairs graduate preparation program. We were talking about the new graduate program in higher education that I coordinate at Geneva College. When I spoke about the program as one dealing with the pertinent issues in the field but from a Christian point of view, the director responded, "So then, are you preparing your graduate students to be college chaplains?"

The director's response caused me to wonder about the presence and clarity of a Christian voice in the larger post-secondary arena. What do faculty and administrative personnel who are unfamiliar with the Christian faith think is "going on" at "Christian" colleges? If the director's observation is any indication, it appears that some of our colleagues — maybe many — have quite differ-

ent perceptions (than we have) regarding the relationship between Christianity and college, Christianity and learning, Christianity and professional service... Christianity and anything!

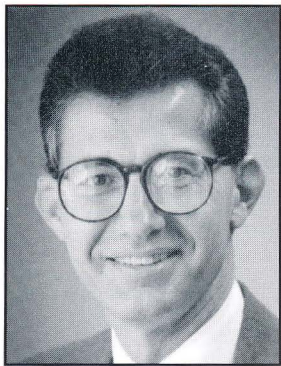
"Is Christian faith the starting point from which we understand why, how, and to what end we fulfill our work as student affairs practitioners? Is our [Christian] approach a current and clear voice within the student affairs profession? Are either of these questions important for us to consider?"

More close to home, is Christian faith the starting point from which we understand why, how, and to what end we fulfill our work as student affairs practitioners? Is our [Christian] approach a current and clear voice within the student affairs profession? Are either of these questions important for us to consider?

It's probably apparent that I believe that both questions are vitally important. In an effort to offer at least partial response to these issues, allow me to present five propositions that, to some degree, anticipate my remarks at the 1998 ACSD conference at Calvin College.

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The President's Corner



Sam Shellhammer

I trust that the recent holidays provided some welcome time with family and friends. As much as we all enjoy our work with students, it is nice to have a change of pace at mid-year. In addition to spending time with family, I was also able to spend some time reflecting upon God's faithful-

ness last semester. I realized all over again that in the midst of serving students, I often fail to see God at work. Reading two books, spending more concentrated time in the Word, and reflecting upon God's faithfulness served as a source of renewal as I began the new year and a new semester.

The Executive Committee met in early November at Calvin College for our annual fall meetings. Jinny DeJong and John Witte, Co-Chairs for the 1998 ACSD Annual Conference, are providing outstanding leadership in planning for the June conference. The Calvin staff are planning an expanded workshop schedule and excursions which will highlight the local color in the Grand Rapids area. I'm sure we will also see their creative spirit reflected throughout the program. Please remember to pray for the Calvin staff as they head down the "home stretch" in their preparation for the conference.

Norris Friesen and Tim Herrmann co-led the New Professionals Retreat prior to the ACSD Conference at Asbury and have agreed to co-lead it again this year at Calvin. The organization has a

strong commitment to providing educational and professional development for those who are new in Student Development. We are blessed to have two former Presidents of ACSD involved in providing the leadership for the New Professionals Retreat. I would encourage those of you who supervise staff who have only been in the profession for a few years to consider sending them to the retreat.

We also had the opportunity to focus on a variety of other items. We selected the service award recipients, reviewed a continued good report on the budget, discussed continued efforts to expand diversity, and examined the future of ACSD as an organization. We also identified nominations for the three offices open for election this spring — Vice President, Treasurer/ Membership, and Editor. It is both a joy and a privilege to serve the membership with the Executive Committee, and their dedication to our work was very evident. You are blessed to have Everett, Denise, Barry, Mary Ann, and Tim serving you.

...we are called to be good stewards of our resources. Resources include not only our budgets, facilities, and programs, but also our fellow staff. We must take seriously the personal, professional, and spiritual development of staff we supervise.

ACSD Executive Committee

PRESIDENT

Sam Shellhammer
Vice Pres. for Student Dev.
Wheaton College
501 E. College Ave.
Wheaton, IL 60187-5593
708-752-5022

PRESIDENT ELECT

Everett Piper
Vice Pres. for Student Dev.
Spring Arbor College
106 E. Main
Spring Arbor, MI 49283-9799
517-750-6333

VICE PRESIDENT

Denise Bakerink
Assoc. Dean of Students
Taylor University
500 E. Reade Ave.
Upland, IN 46989
805-565-6029

EDITOR

Tim Arens
Moody Bible Institute
820 N. LaSalle Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60610-3284
312-329-4191

TREASURER/MEMBER- SHIP CHAIRPERSON

Barry Loy
Dean of Students
Gordon College
255 Grapevine Rd.
Wenham, MA 01984-1899
508-927-2300

SECRETARY

Mary Ann Searle
Director of Student Services
University of Wisconsin
Center-Sheboygan County
One University Drive
Sheboygan, WI 53081-4789
414-459-6633

I have a number of neighbors and friends from church who work in the secular marketplace. In recent years, I hear them using terms such as "downsizing, re-engineering, and productivity." Some of these friends have lost their jobs and several have been squeezed out more than once. Most of

The sensitivity to and the encouragement of spiritual growth of our staff may be one of the most important things we do.

us are accustomed to seeking "to do more with less." Some of us have had to deal with budget cuts and the reallocation of funds. We are now seeing some of the same down sizing effects upon higher education.

However, stewardship has always been a part of our practice, and long before the current trend of re-engineering. To whom much is given, much is required. Regardless of our views on the "how much" we are given, we are called to be good stewards of our resources. Resources include not only our budgets, facilities, and programs, but also our fellow staff. We must take seriously the personal, professional, and spiritual development of staff we supervise. Most of us are effective in focusing upon how we serve students and provide growth producing experiences for them, but we also need to be just as focused in developing our staff. Providing opportunities to attend professional meetings, focusing upon individual skill development, providing seminars on specific topics, and including staff in long-

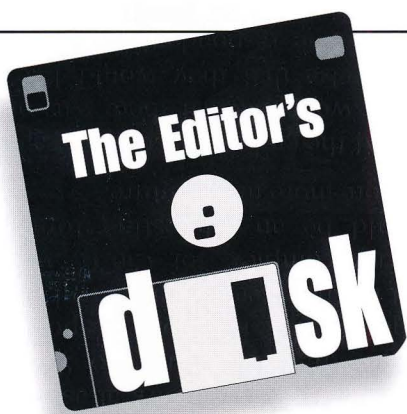
range planning are all ways to enhance staff involvement and development.

Some of the members of ACSD work in secular institutions and therefore have a different work environment. I want to encourage you to be "salt and light" and to look for appropriate opportunities to support the spiritual interest of fellow staff members. I worked in two state universities and a private liberal arts college for ten years before coming to Wheaton. I had many opportunities to dialogue with others about spiritual issues and my faith was challenged on a daily basis. We need to be supportive of those who are called to work in secular higher education.

The sensitivity to and the encouragement of spiritual growth of our staff may be one of the most important things we do. Our ability to make a difference in the lives of students we serve will be reflected in our own spiritual integrity. If we are so com-

Our ability to make a difference in the lives of students we serve will be reflected in our own spiritual integrity.

mitted to our work that we do not nourish our relationship with Christ, then we will be limited in how God may choose to use us. Let us be good stewards of the spiritual nurturing of our staff.



In this edition you find an article written by Dr. David Guthrie. Dr. Guthrie is one of our very own ACSD members and provides us

with a primer to his upcoming address to us at the 1998 ACSD Annual meeting.

As ACSD's twenty year anniversary approaches, an attempt is being made to identify individuals who were in attendance at the initial conference in 1980. If you have any such information or know someone who does, would you please contact me at your earliest convenience. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Are any of you contemplating the possibility of doing some

research on a student development related topic? You may be eligible for a research grant from ACSD. If you are interested, please contact me by telephone or email and I will inform you of the application process.

As always, if you have any questions, suggestions, or articles relating to the Koinonia please contact me at 312-329-4191 or tarens@moody.edu.

—Tim Arens, Editor

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A Preliminary Manifesto for Christian Student Affairs Practitioners

Proposition One:

Student affairs professionals — Christian and non-Christian alike, must come to terms with the essential nature of their role in the academy.

Christian student affairs professionals do well to consider models that better account for the nature and purposes of the complex setting in which students live and move while, at the same time, they understand and work towards all (or many) of the developmental outcomes that the particular setting intends to nurture, mostly through out-of-classroom initiatives.

Although I realize that this may be a well-worn issue, to my mind, resolution continues to be elusive. On the one hand, if the contributions of student affairs practitioners are integral to the task of the academy, then much still needs to be done. That is, institutional structures must be redesigned to accommodate more wholistic approaches to student learning, all of the participants in the educational process must broaden their theoretical understandings of student learning, and the relationship between in-class and out-of-class programs must reflect greater coherence. On the other hand, if the contributions of student affairs professionals are peripheral to what “really” goes on at colleges and universities, then student affairs staff should whine one last time about being inferior and move on. However, for student affairs professionals to “move on” to a professional isolationism by circling its wagons around in-house lingo, narrow theoretical constructs, and exclusivist planning and decision-making is not the answer. Such an approach diminishes opportunities for constructive and productive connections with

our colleagues in academic divisions, regardless of the relative status that we hold within the institution.

Proposition Two:

It's time to reconsider student development as the “best” (and most appropriate) paradigm for Christian student affairs professionals.

I certainly don't mean to suggest that a student development approach is altogether useless; nor do I wish to insinuate that various aspects of student development theories and practices may not be consonant with a Christian point of view. I simply mean that, as a paradigm, it tends to overlook the larger context in which students develop—namely, college. Recent works on “reform”¹, “shifting paradigms”², and “reconsider[ation]”³ draw similar conclusions. Christian student affairs professionals do well to consider models that better account for the nature and purposes of the complex setting in which students live and move while, at the same time, they understand and work towards all (or many) of the developmental outcomes that the particular setting intends to nurture, mostly through out-of-classroom initiatives.

Proposition Three:

Helping students to “make meaning” is insufficient and misleading.

Last year at the ACSD Annual Meeting, Russ Rogers suggested that Christian student affairs professionals should “design and manipulate [students'] experiences” and subsequently “facilitate [student] reflection” in an effort to help students “make meaning,” which is ultimately meaning in college, that we should help students make meaning in college, and that many if not most colleges advertise that they're in the business of helping students make meaning. If, however, the desired end of meaning-making is never considered, meaning-making is meaningless. Hear the thoughtful words of the profound prophet of our time, Woody Allen:

More than any other time in history, mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness. The other, to total extinction. Let us pray that we have the wisdom to choose correctly. I speak, by the way, not with any sense of

*futility, but with a panicky conviction of the absolute meaninglessness of existence which could easily be misinterpreted as pessimism. It is not. It is merely a healthy concern for the predicament of modern man.*⁵

Student affairs practitioners, therefore, are not simply concerned with helping students make meaning. Rather, they are committed to helping students make meaning that is meaningful within a particular world view. For Christian student affairs staff this necessitates that the meaning-making we attempt to help students towards resonates with a Christian world view. Although some students at our [Christian] institutions will fashion alternative meanings (i.e., meanings inconsistent with a Christian testimony), we misconstrue our [Christian] callings if we simply advise students that any meaning-making will do or help students define their meaning-making and its ultimate purpose in ways that conflict with a biblical view of life.

Proposition Four:

Our strivings for "professional respect" may be counterproductive.

I don't mean to suggest that we should be unprofessional — whatever that means. I want only to consider if the professionalization of our vocation is a barrier to the achievement we desire. Let me explain. If professionalization can be defined as the expression of individualism in the sphere of work, then the work place becomes a place of worship. As such, work is life and gives life, serving as that place where personal expression and value is eminent. Bellah⁶ suggests that "moral wisdom" isn't prized in such a place, stating that "what is required here is only a high level of competence, of expertise..." Although Christian student affairs professionals, by virtue of their faith commitments, may have inappropriately pledged allegiance to our workplaces.

Even if we aren't culpable as professionalized professionals, professionalization also privatizes. That is, professionalization identifies things as specialized compartments. Of course, in colleges and universities, including "ours", these compartments are called departments. Needless to say, not every part is equal; in fact, there seems to be an inherent

marginalizing (and self-marginalizing process involved). For example, one might say: "Profession A isn't as professional as Profession B because it doesn't have a professional association"; or "If Profession C is going to be recognized as a legitimate profession, it must develop its own programs, theory base, journals, and so on." One wonders if the student affairs profession's interest in legitimizing itself within the academy actually contributed to the development of the dif-

...in the midst of what most consider a redefining moment, and on a theme (learning) that I'd like to think Christians have much to contribute, a Christian voice was hard to hear. Although late, it may not be too late, and, in any case, I think it is important to do, ACSD should draft its own statement for consideration by our colleagues in the field.

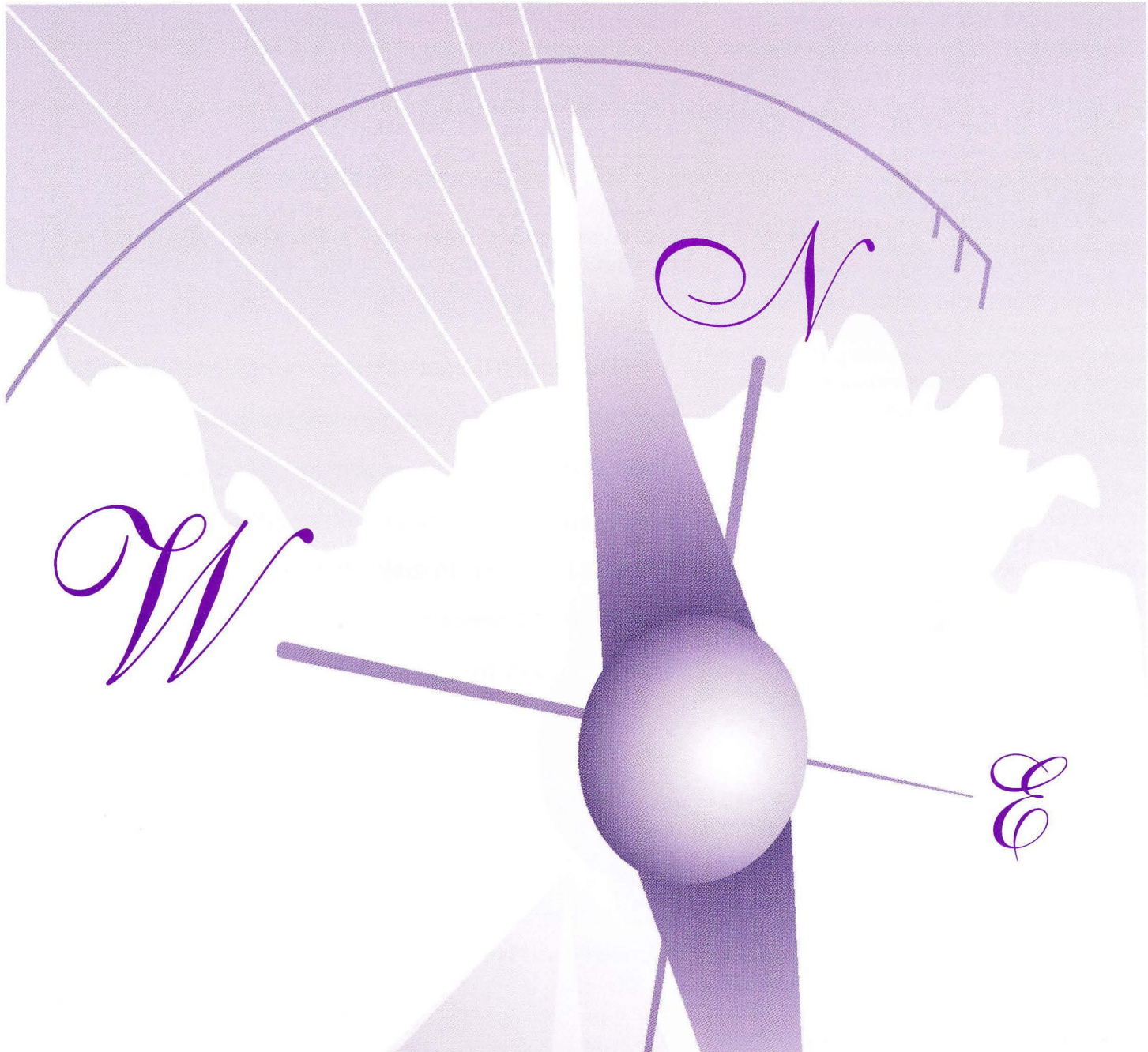
fuse and incoherent educational enterprise that it now criticizes. Could it possibly be the case that the Christian student affairs profession—both with reference to its role within particular institutions as well as to its being a subset of the larger profession—has pursued /is pursuing a similar path?

Proposition Five:

Christian student affairs professionals have a low profile at best within the student affairs profession.

Notwithstanding the current FIPSE-funded assessment project in which a considerable number of CCCU institutions are participating, a Christian voice in professional conversation is mostly quiet if not silent altogether. For example, within the last four years, both of the primary student affairs professional organizations (NASPA and ACPA) drafted seminal documents on the nature of the professional task. In addition, numerous other books and articles have furthered an already lively conversation. And yet, in the midst of what most consider a redefining moment, and on a theme (learning) that I'd like to think Christians have much to con-

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ACSD '98

toward professional faithfulness

CALVIN COLLEGE • GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

June 1-4, 1998

Christian vs. Secular Universities

Where Should You Work?

by Jeff Doyle

At this year's Association for Christians in Student Development (ACSD) conference, a group of people met several times to discuss issues relating to being a Christian in a secular higher education environment. Most everyone involved in these gatherings appreciated the opportunity to connect with Christians working in secular student affairs environments. One of the many conclusions that was reached was a concern that issues relating to secular student affairs work environments need to be discussed more often in order to attract Christians at secular universities and maybe more importantly, to renew and retain current membership. ACSD was originally created for Christians at Christian colleges. While no efforts have been made to discourage Christians at secular universities from joining ACSD, neither have there been any efforts to seek out Christians at secular universities. The chasm between Christians at Christian and secular universities, although certainly not impassable, is not currently being crossed primarily because of a lack of knowledge about what the "other side" does. This article will hopefully seek to bridge this gap by examining current ACSD members' opinions on the benefits and drawbacks of working in both Christian and secular universities.

This article came about as a result of a presentation made at the ACSD conference this past year. A 6-question e-mail survey was sent to approximately 40 ACSD members at both Christian and secular universi-

ties. Twelve and ten responses were received from student affairs professionals at Christian and secular universities, respectively. Because the goal was not to collect quantitative statistics from a large sample, not much time was spent measuring the frequency of responses. Instead, this

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survey was used to gather some overall quantitative impressions from respondents. Forty persons were sampled from each category because there are only about 40 ACSD members at secular universities listed in the 1997 Membership Directory. These 40 persons constitute approximately 5% of ACSD membership of 841 persons. As a result of the survey responses received, a summary of the benefits and drawbacks of working at

Christian and secular universities has been compiled.

Christians in Student Affairs at Christian Colleges and Universities

Benefits of Working at a Christian University:

Christians at Christian Colleges (CaCC) enjoy the freedom they have to openly talk about Jesus. This includes both co-workers and students. For example, at many state universities the separation of religion and state causes many employees to feel as if their spiritual life needs to be kept separate from their professional life. At a Christian college, there is no fear that comes from mentioning the word "Jesus". Although CaCC are not afraid to share their faith, they feel more called to equip believers to go out in the world and share their faith. Often this comes from having attended a Christian college and understanding the environment of preparation for ministry. CaCC like knowing that they have a standard of truth on which they can base much of their work. For example, one response mentions that it can be helpful in discipline situations to lovingly communicate standards that often come not just from the college, but are outlined in God's word as well. In addition, CaCC also mention appreciating the ability to pray together with students and staff, and the joy of working with other Christians. "A staff that prays together, stays together," is one phrase that communicates the value of group prayer to student affairs staff. Finally,

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Christian vs. Secular Universities: Where Should You Work

although some respondents feel guilty about it, CaCC report really enjoyed being in a comfortable and safe environment where everyone cares about and supports each other.

Drawbacks of Working at a Christian University

The flip-side of living in a protected environment is described by several respondents as feeling like one is living in an artificial world, protected from the "evil" outside. Some people ask the question, "How can you prepare Christians to deal successfully with the world by never allowing them to see it?" Of course, one response would be that after graduation students will see the world the rest of their lives. The complacency that comes from not having one's faith challenged daily by non-Christians in a world not based upon Christ-focused living was a concern of some of other Christians at Christian Colleges (CaCC). In other words, the comfort and safety of the Christian college is taken for granted and the keen attention to spiritual warfare can become dulled. One disappointment is that the expectation that Christian colleges are miniature replicas of heaven on earth is not true and believing this can lead to an even greater let down for some professionals who were hurt by the amount of cruelty that can occur at a Christian college. A few complaints center on the minimal amount of talk about issues such as sex, homosexuality, drugs and alcohol. This avoidance of issues relating to sexuality and substance abuse makes some professionals feel as if Christians really do not know what is going on or do not know how to approach these issues with their students. Some CaCC are bothered by the assumption that every-

one is assumed to be a Christian, which makes it more difficult to share with non-believers. Furthermore, in a pervasively Christian atmosphere, many non-Christians may be intimidated or uncomfortable sharing their lack of knowledge and/or faith with people they hear talking about non-Christians in such "less-than-worthy" terms. The dis-

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like of modeling a Christian lifestyle by forcing students to live according to rules involving separation of the sexes and dress code which most people would agree are not critical components of a Christian's life bothers some respondents. The lack of professional involvement and post-bachelor's degrees for student affairs professionals leads some CaCC to wonder if their field is really credible. Of course, it does not help the credibility level when respondents have the impression that their salaries are less and their contracts shorter than colleagues at secular universities.

When asked if they would consider working at secular university, about 75% of CaCC said yes, that they would enjoy the challenge in spite of the stresses it might cause. Some respondents are concerned with the limits that might be placed on their expression of faith and others say they would consider it "liberating". When asked what they would

want Christians at secular universities to know about their job, the majority of responses deal with defenses that Christian colleges are professional, credible, of high quality, and not as easy to work at as others might think. "It ain't no Sunday school!" was how one respondent put it. There seems to be a real "inferiority complex" of CaCC, which would be an interesting topic to explore more in the future.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked if there was anything else that they would like to share. One respondent summarizes the Christian college side of the gap between student affairs professionals at Christian colleges and secular colleges best when s/he says, "I think that Christians (at Christian colleges) often view the secular environments as difficult and pagan. As a result, we tend not to engage our colleagues at

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secular universities]

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other colleges. I think we have a lot of common areas to explore and we can learn from each other...I feel there is an openness to explore common ground, but sometimes we (Christian college professionals) are more hesitant to become involved than our secular friends. For what it is worth."

In other words, the comfort and safety of the Christian college is taken for granted and the keen attention to spiritual warfare can become dulled.

Christians in Student Affairs at Secular Colleges and Universities

Benefits of Working at a Secular University:

Christians at secular universities (CaSU) identify the importance of being one of the only Christians in an administrative position. This gives them the opportunity to support and be role models for Christian students who feel alone or without fellowship. CaSU know how much they are needed by the Christian students, who often find their faith shaken daily by faculty. CaSU also enjoy the continual spiritual renewal that comes from trying to live out a Christian faith among non-believers and learning to explain one's faith to non-believers. Respondents feel as if they need to seek God's daily guidance in every interaction with others, and that this constant striving brings them into a more intimate relationship with God. Another benefit is the perception (or should we say reality?) that secular universities often have more resources, better facilities, and overall, better reputations due to often to higher endowments, higher SAT scores, greater diversity in the student body, and the number of faculty with Ph.D.s. CaSU also perceive that they receive more encouragement than CaCC to be involved in a variety of professional development activities. They also appreciate their daily interaction with co-workers

who are "current" in the professional field of student affairs. Although more money and longer contracts are not mentioned as reasons for choosing to work in a secular environment, these factors are perceived as benefits in a field that is not known for making people rich.

Drawbacks of Working at a Secular University:

Working in an environment where tolerance is the ultimate virtue and truth only exists in the eyes of each person, was seen as an immense challenge for Christians at secular universities. Many respondents identify religion in the workplace as a "taboo" subject and those who bring up the subject of religion in conversation are only trying to force their views on others. This perception of being "too religious" and "out to convert" others hurts respondents feelings and make it more difficult to be open about their lives. There is also the feeling that Christians are the "enemy" and one could risk losing one's job by expressing his/her Christian beliefs. Some respondents find it challenging to live a life pleas-

Working in an environment where tolerance is the ultimate virtue and truth only exists in the eyes of each person, was seen as an immense challenge for Christians at secular universities.

ing to God in the midst of the many temptations of a secular world. This could be seen as either a benefit or drawback, depending on one's abili-

ty to be "sharpened" versus "dulled" in regards to challenges. Many CaSU are concerned with the frequency with which one must deal with the elements of a broken world; abortion, alcoholism, sexually-transmitted diseases (AIDS), drug abuse, homosexuality, etc. Although one criticism of Christian universities is the failure to talk about issues of sexuality, one difficulty in secular universities is the prevalence of sexual issues. Although most respondents miss the fellowship of Christian co-workers, several respondents mentioned finding their

...many respondents

ask or even beg

Christians to consider working at secular colleges due to the great need for them.

support through their church and small groups/Bible studies. The lack of common standard of morality was mentioned by a few respondents, which makes it difficult to appeal to other's sense of right and wrong in dealing with situations. Furthermore, the greater number of instances when one is asked to violate integrity (i.e. lying to students) worries some CaSU. Finally, there are concerns that co-workers are spreading false rumors about respondents' Christian beliefs.

When asked if they would consider working at a Christian university, all the respondents said that they would. Reasons for not acting on these thoughts include the fear that Christian colleges prevent students from thinking critically due in part to strict behavior contracts, that Christian colleges only wanted "their own kind", and the need to "stand in the gap" for Christian students at secular universities.

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Involvement through Campus Activities

by Brad Bowser, Director of Student Activities, Anderson University

This is my first year as the Director of Student Activities at Anderson University. We have had many successful programs, last-second pull-togethers,

...the more involved students are on campus, the greater their growth, achievement, and satisfaction with their educational experiences, and the more likely they are to continue their learning.

and a number of chances to both learn and teach. One of the best learning experiences for me has occurred from the desire to achieve the educational objectives of the university through the various programming that we plan in campus activities. I am beginning to understand the educational value provided from fun, spontaneous events that are planned by campus activities boards.

Student affairs practitioners have been given the important tasks of developing students, teaching them values and ethics, preparing them for a global economy, developing their leadership skills, and helping them find purpose and meaning in their lives. Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) found that college does have strong effects on students as they develop a greater sense of interpersonal and intellectual competence and a greater commitment to developing a meaningful philosophy of life. In addition, Astin (1984) asserted that the more involved students are on campus, the greater their growth, achievement, and satisfaction with their educational experiences, and the more likely they are to con-

tinue their learning. Involvement includes time with faculty, peers, and in extracurricular activities. However, students have been afforded great freedoms as members of the educational community to decide what to attend or how much to be involved. These fun, spontaneous programs that are planned by campus activities boards provide the opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to become involved and intertwined in each other's lives.

The question becomes, "how do students change because of their involvement?" Alexander Astin (1992) found that the most important influence on student learning is their peers. A vast majority of undergraduates expend enormous energy seeking acceptance and approval from their peers. By being involved in activities,

Campus activities are important because they put students and faculty on an even playing field.

students develop interpersonal skills, communication skills, and sociability. These attributes are not necessarily desired by students but help them obtain the more desirable goal of building relationships and making friends. Along these lines, Astin (1984) found that students who are involved report more positive educational and social experiences overall and a greater satisfaction with the institution. Research also demonstrates that students report increased intellectual and leadership development, success in academic and career goals, and are more likely to graduate.

Extracurricular activities provide the opportunity for students to get out of their

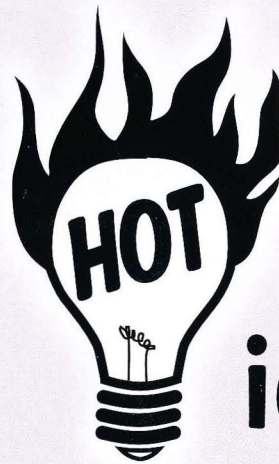
rooms, library, and classroom to come face-to-face with other students, faculty, and staff. Astin's research stated that faculty have a profound impact on students. On campuses where faculty have a strong presence, students are more satisfied with their experience and the institution. Campus activities are important because they put students and faculty on an even playing field. The two groups have the opportunity to have fun, enjoy each others company, and build relationships that go beyond aca-

A vast majority of undergraduates expend enormous energy seeking acceptance and approval from their peers. By being involved in activities, students develop interpersonal skills, communication skills, and sociability.

demics and books. This keeps students and faculty from becoming one dimensional in their educational process and opens the door for a stronger, well-balanced community. At Anderson, we started a faculty-mentor program that places freshman students with a full-time faculty mentor. They spend time outside the classroom talking about experiences and building relationships. The program has been successful from the standpoint that more students have already registered for second semester classes than did last year. Many programs like this one have achieved the same desired result of emphasizing relationship building between students and faculty. In return, students are more satisfied and participate more in their educational process.

Finally, the rewards reaped by the institution are substantial. Students who are satisfied with their educational and social experiences will be retained by the institution. Also, students who get involved with faculty and peers will help build or maintain the sense of community in an institu-

tion. As institutions, we need to work to maintain an environment that is supportive of student involvement. As student affairs practitioners, we need to be committed to providing involvement opportunities for students. I am realizing the importance of fun, spontaneous involvement opportunities for the students at Anderson and the educational importance they provide.



ideas!

80'S NIGHT

Each year Taylor University puts on an activity called 80's night. It is basically an opportunity for students to showcase their musical talent by performing music from the 1980's. From year to year various "fillers" have been implemented so that there is no down time between musical acts. This year Taylor's Student Activity Council decided to try something a little different from the standard skit or comedy routine; they put on a game show. Prizes were purchased including a five disc CD player, a full set of camping equipment, and a car (o.k., it was a 1981 Datsun, but it was still a car). The students responded in an amazing way. Very soon the music became the "fillers" for the game show. The total cost of prizes was under \$1,000 and with a modest cover charge all expenses were, in fact, covered.

Provided by Brent Ellis
Taylor University

ACSD Placement Update

Each year ACSD sponsors a placement service which provides position and candidate listings to the membership. Throughout the years this has proven to be profitable for individuals seeking positions and institutions desirous of filling openings.

As in years past, Placement Bulletins will be sent out on a periodic basis throughout the Spring Semester. In an effort to enhance this service, any position or candidate listings received after the published deadlines will be placed on the ACSD list serve, on a weekly basis, by Denise Bakerink, Vice President. They will then also be added to the next placement bulletin. An application for placement listings is enclosed in this issue of the Koinonia.

If you are interested in subscribing to the ACSD list serve, please consult the article in this issue for instructions.

Interested in Hosting an Annual Conference?

The ACSD Executive Committee desires to know of member schools who would be interested in possibly hosting a future ACSD Annual Conference. Applications are being sought for the year 2002 and beyond. Interested parties should contact Sam Shellhammer, President, for further information.

The ACSD Electronic Discussion Group

Introduction:

The electronic discussion group (or list serve) concept may be new to you so we hope the following introduction to the group's purpose and use will help you utilize this new tool which we believe will have a positive impact on your work with students.

The purpose of the ACSD Discussion Group is three fold:

- 1) To provide a forum for convenient and FREE conversation with other Christian student development professionals;
- 2) To facilitate rapid sharing of information. As the group grows numerically, subscribers will be able to quickly receive numerous responses to their questions from all over the country;
- 3) To promote the goals and mission of the Association for Christians in Student Development.

Here is how it works:

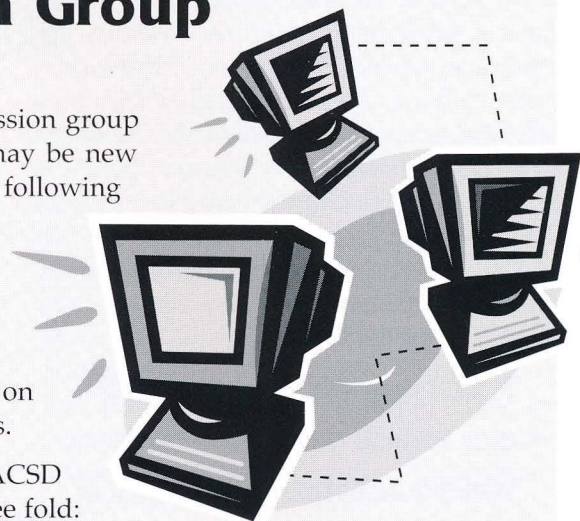
Membership to this group is free, but limited to ACSD members. To subscribe, send a message from your E-mail account to LISTPROC@SPU.EDU. In the body of the message, type only "subscribe ACSD yourfirstname yourlastname" (without quotes).

You should start receiving messages from the group within a day. To send a message to the group which will go to all subscribers, simply send it to ACSD@SPU.EDU if you want to respond to a message sent to the group, you may do so by replying to all subscribers or just to the individual who sent the original message.

If you wish to stop receiving messages from us, send a message to LISTPROC@SPU.EDU saying only "unsubscribe ACSD" (without quotes).

We hope this discussion group will be a valuable tool to its users so we encourage you to use it but not to "clutter" it with information or questions not pertinent to the group's purpose.

If you have questions or suggestions about the operation, purpose, or use of the discussion group, please send an E-mail message to Alan Muia at amuia@paul.spu.edu. ENJOY!!



Christian vs. Secular Universities: Where Should You Work

When asked what they would want Christians at Christian colleges to know about their job, many respondents ask or even beg Christians to consider working at secular colleges due to the great need for them. Others wanted Christian college student affairs workers to know that Christians at secular universities do not worship the gods of the world by working at a secular college and they do not spend hours thinking about how they can evangelize students and staff.

Again, at the end of this survey, respondents are asked to share anything else that might not have been asked. A couple respondents challenge Christians to step out of their comfort zone and others just ask for prayer. Several respondents mentioned feeling uncomfortable or out-of-place attending ACSD conferences. Overall, this group of respondents was very concerned that so few Christians seem to work in student affairs on secular campuses.

Conclusion

This article began with the question, "Christian vs. Secular Universities: Where Should You Work?" Although there is no correct answer to this question, hopefully the information in this article will give you a better idea of the issues in both the Christian and secular university environment. I have worked at both Christian and secular universities, and often find myself vacillating between which environment is best for the God given gifts I have been provided. Hopefully, if you haven't already, you will take time to seriously seek God's wisdom in answering this article's question.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this topic or would just like to discuss about the topic in more depth, please contact me at doyleja@emu.edu or 540-432-4562.

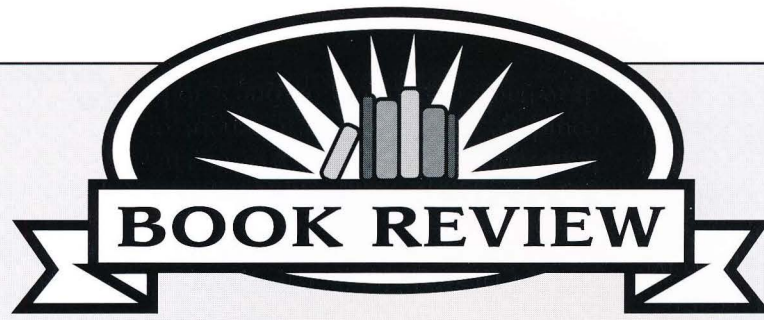
A Preliminary Manifesto for Christian Student Affairs Practitioners

tribute, a Christian voice was hard to hear. Although late, it may not be too late, and, in any case, I think it is important to do, ACSD should draft its own statement for consideration by our colleagues in the field. At the very least, ACSD as an organization and ourselves as professionals should not overlook the national discussion on the relative merits of student learning as an appropriate paradigm for higher education.

I am elated that the 1998 ACSD National Conference at Calvin College is being designed to address some of these issues. Over the years, the ACSD conference has created a legacy by re-energizing Christian student affairs practitioners and by offering them a clearinghouse for the sharing of ideas, programs, and strategies. While preserving these foci, the upcoming conference at Calvin College will address more basic, principle questions such as: What are the contours of faithfulness in our profession? What is a distinctively Christian approach to the practice of student affairs professionals? In light of the director's comment above, such a conference is sorely needed, perhaps for everyone's sake. I pray that the conference itself will stand as a signpost for us, pointing us towards greater professional faithfulness; and, as a signpost for our institutional and individual counterparts, pointing them towards greater recognition and understanding of the legitimacy—and attractiveness—of a Christian view of life.

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The Fabric of Faithfulness

By Steven Garber

Why do you do what you do? I'm not talking about your job necessarily, but rather your entire lifestyle. What is it that causes you to put action behind your beliefs, or even get out of bed in the morning? Most, if not all, of you have already wrestled with these issues and come through with a grounded connection. But what of the students with whom you work and interact? How are choices about meaning and morality being made during the critical years of the college/university experience, and what seems to be the characteristics of those who weave a "blanket" of belief and behavior that will stand the test in our pluralistic society.

Dr. Steven Garber uses the history of ideas, ethics, and sociology to challenge our notions of how students form habits of the heart which are fleshed out in vocations, relationships, and social consciousness. Dr. Garber is a member of the faculty of the American Studies Program, an interdisciplinary semester of study on Capitol Hill, sponsored by the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities. Mixing the themes of the writings of Aristotle, Camus, Francis Shaeffer, Os Guinness, C. S. Lewis, and other philosophers and theologians, Garber also draws on exam-

ples from contemporary popular culture to bring practicality and understanding to his points. The ideas of student development pro-

"...those threads are strengthened when the student finds an adult mentor who embodies that world view and forms a close relationship with him or her...It's a "flesh and bones" kind of relating which attracts students to your life and helps them understand that the world view can become a way of life."

professionals and theorists like Sharon Parks, Ernest Boyer, James Fowler, et. al., share the page with descriptions from movies, (*Reality Bites*, *Howard's End*, *Platoon*), comics (Calvin and Hobbes, Frank and Ernest), and music (Smashing

Pumpkins) as well as classic literature and commentary from Mike Royko. It all comes together to create a thought-provoking look at world views and their impact on our beliefs and behaviors.

Despite what may be the prevailing attitude among today's students, Garber contends that education is indeed more than just a passport to privilege, the key to the good life of big salaries, nice cars, and the house in the suburbs. He challenges the reader with the premise of how what is learned (the academic arena) moves into the world of work, making significant connections between faith and behavior to create meaning (What shapes my life and matters most?)

As you read you will probably find yourself examining how you learned the relationships of knowledge to responsibility, what you know to what you do, and how you challenge students to transfer a personal faith to a public life.

Using the results of a series of interviews with students, and adults in the work force, Garber shares his findings of the relationship between their lives today and the experiences influenced by the tapestry of the college years. Integrity and the ethic of character are threads which Garber says may

be frayed when one faces the modern consciousness, especially as it is manifested in the current college/university setting. Garber asserts that every major center of culture forming power discourages coherence and connection to truth. Purposelessness is prevalent and we have a "world of facts without positive values" and those with positive values seem faced with a world view in which the "values have no basis in fact." The modern university is examined to determine what it is about it that prevents students from finding and forming moral meaning; in other words, why it is seen as simply the "passport to privilege" or graduates those "who get all A's but flunk life." How then do we impact students who face a world that tells them they need no foundation for what they believe, beyond the fact that they believe "something", even nihilism? How do we counteract the condition where higher education not simply be an avenue to success, but a gateway to responsibility; not simply about competence, but commitment?

Society is plagued by a loss of moral meaning. Cynicism has replaced optimism and hope has been lost from vision in our modern world. Most of our institutions operate as if convictions are irrelevant; curriculum is fragmented, disjointed, and common threads ignored. College students particularly are faced with this "mod rot", a term coined by theologian Thomas Oden signifying a modern consciousness characterized by confusion, and the dichotomy of public and private lives. At this point in the book, it is easy to feel overwhelmed, and wonder how we can ever help students "connect."

But Garber offers what may be the warp and woof of the "fabric of faithfulness". It is found in those who develop a world view that can address the challenge of coherence and truth in a pluralistic society, a world view shaped by historic Christian orthodoxy, not subject to their own inner logic of self.

And those threads are strengthened when the student finds an adult mentor who embodies that world view and forms a close relationship with him or her. Garber suggests this is more the master/ apprentice relationship

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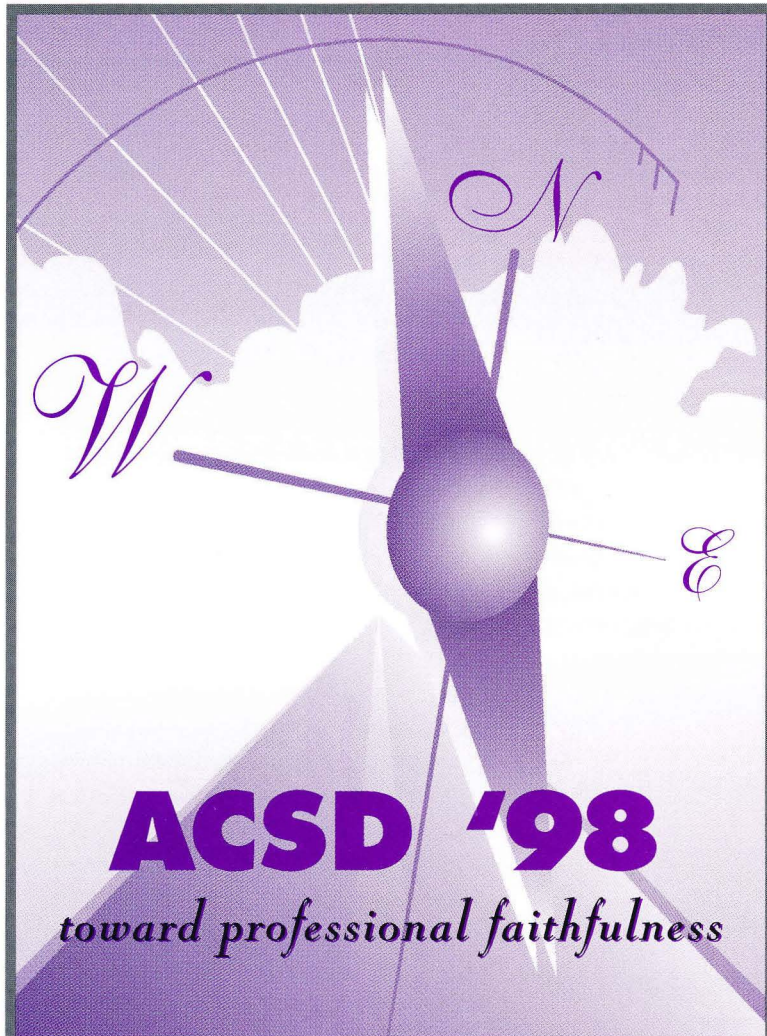
than that of lecturer/ audience. It's a "flesh and bones" kind of relating which attracts students to your life and helps them understand

that the world view can become a way of life.

Further texture is added when choices are made to live lives among others whose common life is an embodiment of the world view. Becoming part of a community of character and seeing oneself as part of a larger whole is critical. While Garber does not specifically point to the Body of Christ as that community, he is implicit in pointing to how the Church can meet the need of fostering "dramatic coherence." He states that a fraying social fabric gnaws away at our feelings of responsibility to and for each other, and that nurtures cynicism about everyone and everything. Those who chose to surround themselves with others of like mind and form friendships, be that through church fellowship or the strength of a committed Christian college community, will guard against becoming "threadbare."

As a Christian working in a state university I was particularly challenged by this book. I reflected back on my own college years at a private church-related school, the mentors who opened up their lives to me, and the resulting impact that had on my own weaving of belief and behavior. But beyond that, I examined my own role in ministering to the current generation of college students in helping purposefully weave a pattern of faithfulness into the fabric of their lives. I encourage you to get a copy of this book and do the same.

*Submitted by:
Mike McClure, Program Assistant
Disabled Student Development
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306*



ACSD '98

toward professional faithfulness

The 1998 ACSD Annual Conference

**CALVIN COLLEGE
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

June 1-4, 1998

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EDITOR Tim Arens

LAYOUT DESIGN Sharie Schnell

KOINONIA

c/o **Tim Arens**

**Moody Bible Institute
820 N. LaSalle Blvd.**

Chicago, IL 60610-3284

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