Koinonia   Association of Christians in Student Development

Fall 1996

Koinonia

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INSIDE

A Mandate for Action in Residential Living and Learning

The multitude of reports generated in recent years on the status of higher education clearly indicate that student learning must be the primary focus of colleges and universities. This imperative is driven by a range of social, economic, and political forces that are transforming our society and our institutions. As state governments struggle to do more with less, governors are asking, "What are we getting for our investment in higher education — are students learning anything?" Academic administrators and faculty can point to credit hours generated, content mastery in the disciplines, and progress in achieving academic outcomes. But what can we in student affairs point to — what contributions are we making to fostering student learning in our residence halls?

Residence hall staff are often perceived — perhaps rightly so — as focusing on trivialities and marginalia, and we will continue to be so perceived unless we join the rest of the higher education community and focus on student learning! This is certainly not a new or radical notion, because the philosophical foundation of the student affairs profession — The

As the central theme of higher education, student learning provides common ground on which academic affairs and student affairs can speak with a unified voice.

Student Personal Point of View — considers students as learners (American Council on Education, 1937). If we are to realize the education potential of residence halls, we must return to our roots, to our espoused values, to our deeply held convictions about students and we must commit anew to focusing our efforts on student learning. As the central theme of higher education, student learning provides common ground on which academic affairs and student affairs can speak with a unified voice. By focusing on student learning, residence hall staff can engage faculty colleagues and extend the conversation beyond the often-narrow emphasis on the core curriculum to include the importance of core experiences; from exclusively teaching-centered and staff-centered environments to student-learning-centered environments; from what is customarily academic to what is uniquely educational. By focusing on student learning, residential hall programs can become interwoven with the fabric of the academy, bringing integration and coherence to a traditionally fragmented, compartmentalized, and often random approach to achieving important education outcomes.

Judy Moseman

By now we are all fully launched into the new school year. I hope and pray for all of us that the year will be a rich and growing one for our students and for us as student development professionals.

It was good to have so many of you on our campus here at Bethel for the ACSD conference in June. We wee overjoyed by your attendance and your response. It truly is a privilege to host the conference! It is also a responsibility of some magnitude and requires considerable time and effort. Please join us in praying for the staffs at the future conference sites – Asbury in 1997, Calvin in 1998 and Biola in 1999. The year 2000 will be a celebration of what will then be our 20 year anniversary as the Association for Christians in Student Development.

One of the most significant experiences for me during the June conference has, I believe, even greater significance for the future of ACSD. The Executive Committee invited those of you who were interested in multicultural perspectives and issues on your campuses to come together for a dialogue. There were around 20 of you who responded and talked with the six of us and with each other. The conversation was both challenging and inspiring. It also will be a continuing conversation. We on the Executive Committee are committed to that, and will continue to listen and work toward ACSD becoming a more inclusive and welcoming organization for our colleagues who are persons of color. Not surprisingly, we did not all agree on acceptable terminology. Here at Bethel our colleagues and friends are comfortable with the term "person of color." Others for other parts of the country preferred terms such as "underrepresented" and "marginalized."

Not only do we want to change the organization, we hope that ACSD can provide support for us all as we seek change on our campuses. Here are just some of the themes and recommendations from our dialogue that evening: encourage persons of color on our campuses to attend ACSD; be more welcoming to them and also to attendees who are from public institutions; ensure that ACSD conference programs represent diversity; nominate persons of color for the ACSD Executive Committee; compile lists of contact persons and resources regarding diversity and make available; encourage "top-down" emphasis–the presidents need to take the lead on our campuses; help to regain momentum on our campuses for diversity initiatives; attend diversity conferences as whites; be more intentional and relational in knowing persons different from ourselves; be agents for reconciliation; have a sense of urgency for making needed changes; listen; repent.

What do these initiatives require of us as professionals on our campuses? What about us as God's people? We are the body of Christ. We must see each other as created in God's own image, persons of worth who are reconciled to God and to each other. As Eugene Rivers said at the 1995 National Christian Multicultural Student Leadership Conference, "We need to have the hard conversations as the people of God, loving one another in the process." Let us keep talking to each other, even when it is difficult, and let us demonstrate love for each other in all of those conversations.

A Mandate for Action

From an institutional perspective, one of the greatest challenges associated with facilitating student learning is to create a new definition of "the classroom." Although it is well established that students learn as much, if not more, from cocurricular experiences than from formal academic ones (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991), most faculty and student affairs staff view the acquisition of knowledge and the development of various intellectual skills as occurring solely in the traditional classroom. In this setting, faculty usually communicate knowledge to students through a lecture format — often described as "teaching by telling" (Cross, 1986). Although many faculty and staff prospered under the traditional lecture system, there is increasing evidence that this approach may not work for the majority of today's students, most of whom exhibit learning styles quite different from those of contemporary faculty (Cross, 1986; Schroeder, 1993). New pedagogical approaches are needed to respond to students' diverse learning characteristics. By extending the definition of the classroom beyond bounded, physical space with a definitive temporal element to include learning environments and learning communities within residence halls, institutions can significantly increase the probability of achieving a broad range of learning objectives.

Residence halls can become nontraditional classrooms by providing students with a variety of active modes of learning. This form of learning bridges the traditional gap between knowing and doing through encouraging students to become more actively engaged in the subject matter of their disciplines. Active modes of learning are experiences and activities that encourage collaboration and cooperation, such as the team-centered approaches. Residence halls can be learning communities where students focus on problem-centered learning, case method, and peer feedback approaches, all of which help them work together to seek mutual understanding while developing specific interpersonal and cognitive skills. By providing active modes of learning, residence hall staff can be integrating agents, bringing relevance and coherence to the undergraduate experience. Indeed, active learning can integrate classroom and cocurriculum experiences into a total learning environment.

The design of purposeful and powerful learning environments is perhaps the greatest opportunity facing residence life staff today. A great deal is known about environmental conditions that foster student learning and personal development (Moos, 1976; Huebner and Lawson, 1990, Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Chickering and Reisser, 1993). As evidenced by the literature, students develop in different ways and both learning and development need to be nurtured by an environment that accommodates this diversity.

When we think about the learning characteristics of contemporary students, we are reminded that effective education is a lot like gardening. Successful gardeners not only know a great deal about different kinds of seeds, they also know that certain seeds need various conditions to promote growth and healthy development. By designing environments that provide a range of learning options, residence hall staff, like knowledgeable gardeners, can create multiple paths to the achievement of specific outcomes. The successful attainment of such outcomes, however, is dependent on the degree of student participation involvement in the educational process.

Make Residence Education More Intentional

Although the literature on the impact of college clearly indicates that residence halls do, indeed, foster student learning and development, it is relatively unclear as to how much of this impact is the result of specific programs, policies, or staff roles (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). As Levine (1994) suggests many of the educational outcomes of residence life

> ...one of the greatest challenges associated with facilitating student learning is to create a new definition of "the classroom."

seem to occur in a serendipitous fashion — that is, they occur more by default than by design. This statement may come as quite a surprise to many residence hall staff who invest considerable time and energy in the design and delivery of various education programs. But, as Stamatakos (1984) argues, few of these programs appear to have been carefully planned for content and developmental impact and few have proved to be effective, other than superficially.

If residential education is to become more intentional, and hence more effective, staff should consider doing the following:

1. Residence hall staff must develop a philosophy of student learning consistent with the academic mission of their institution. Historically, the student affairs profession has shifted its emphasis from controlling students to serving students, to the current emphasis on fostering students' development. Although most student affairs professionals embrace the student development perspective, it has been extremely difficult to translate the concept into operational behavior accompanied by measurable results. Part of the difficulty is the result of using the concept in interchangeable ways - as a philosophy, theory, process, and outcome. Student learning, as opposed to student development, is a much richer and well-respect-

A Mandate for Action

ed focus within higher education. By developing a philosophy of student learning, residence hall staff can use student development theory and process models as a means to facilitate student learning. Furthermore, by creating a philosophy of student learning, residence hall staff will more closely align themselves with the academic missions of their institution, thereby increasing the probability of developing collaborative partnerships with faculty and academic administrators.

2. Residential life programs and policies should be informed by a growing body of knowledge about how students learn and any systematic assessment initiatives. Considerable information is available about how students learn and develop. All too often, however, residence life programs and policies are created without the benefit of this knowledge. Hence, keys to program and policy development include utilizing this existing knowledge as well as creating systematic assessments that focus on student's residential experiences and what these experiences contribute to learning. By developing a systematic assessment program, residence hall staff can explore the effectiveness of their programs and services from multiple perspectives, including questions related to how and why students change intellectually as a result of their residential experiences.

3. Staff should develop a clear and coherent statement of their educational purpose. A philosophy of student learning enlightened by an ongoing, systematic assessment effort should help staff develop a clear an coherent statement of educational purpose. What should students be learning as part of their residential experiences? How is this learning to occur? What specific programs, policies, and staff roles will facilitate student learning? Clear and coherent statements of educational purpose are

probably the single most important factor in directing staff and student efforts toward educationally purposeful activities.

4. Learning communities should be created through collaborative partnerships with students, academic administrators, faculty, and others. Such partnerships require student affairs educators to leave the comfort, security, and predictability for their bounded organizational space and build linkages with other members of the campus community, in particular, faculty and academic administrators. To continue to keep our focus within our organizational boundaries strips our efforts in most of their impact. Collaboration is imperative if we are to be players in the student learning arena. Indeed, our impact of student learning will be in direct proportion to the degree to which we build partnerships and linkages with important internal and exter-

> Residence halls can be learning communities where students focus on problem-centered learning, case method, and peer feedback approaches, all of which help them work together to seek mutual understanding while developing specific interpersonal and cognitive skills.

nal constituencies. Finally, we must encourage and reward faculty members who help make residential life more intentional and effective.

5. The educational role of residence halls should be consistently communicated to important institutional constituencies - students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, legislators, and so on. Because most student affairs educators focus their energy within their organizational boundaries, the contributions they make to student learning are often somewhat invisible. As a result, faculty become increasingly amused by our claims of being "educators." By demonstrating, through a variety of assessment approaches, the contributions we make to student learning, we can more effectively demonstrate our educational role within our institutions. Creating more intentional and effective residence hall environments is a challenging endeavor, one that will require a careful examination of the traditional student-institutional relationship. The degree to which the educational potential of residence halls is realized, however, is the degree to which residence halls become intentional, purposeful, and effective learning environments, settings that are designed in keeping with a residence hall curriculum?

Implementing the Residence Hall Curriculum

Implementing the residence hall curriculum is a function of academic and student affairs leadership. Setting the direction identifies the path for movement; aligning faculty, staff, and students together places them in a position to create and accomplish the tasks; and encouraging the development of strong informal relationships focuses effort on using residence hall learning communities in ways that relate to courses, particularly general education. As may institutions continue to be confronted by higher expectations and demands for effective undergraduate education, a well-developed residence hall curriculum can assist in meeting this challenge. We recommend that educators in student affairs and academic affairs consider the following suggestions:

1. Determine what knowledge, skills, and attitudes the institution wants

residence hall communities to contribute to student learning and personal development. Student development educators must create a compelling and motivating vision along with strategies for setting high standards for students' performance, involvement, and responsibility.

2. Involve the institution's student affairs leaders and the housing director, along with the president and academic leaders, in conversations about innovative ways residence halls can meet students' educational needs and interests - ways that can be exciting and challenging.

3. With the involvement of academic deans, recruit faculty who want to design and implement a residence hall curriculum focusing on the applications of classroom learning to how students live their lives. Select faculty members who are excited about the possibilities and potential of active learning.

4. Develop ways to integrate the institution's general education architecture program with residence hall learning communities, so that students are expected and encouraged to be involved with real-world challenges and experiences as responsible learners. Create interdisciplinary cluster courses, and o-enroll students from the same residence hall floors.

5. Implement a first-year-experience program, staffed by both academic and student affairs educators, and create intellectual and interpersonal environments for student involvement, learning, and academic and social success.

6. Utilize a residence hall curriculum to challenge and support students to apply their formal classroom learning to their experiences, involvements, and activities, especially with regard to how they way to live their lives: What values guide their lives? What are their goals for shaping personal and professional aspects of their lives? How do they want to connect with society, friends, and peers in purposeful ways? To help address these issues, involve students from the same residence halls in credited, service learning activities that are integrated with their academic courses.

7. To enhance the academic and social success of residence hall students, recruit upper-division students to serve as peer educators. These highly trained students would be members of "student success teams" that also include professional staff from Academic Advising, Career Planning and Placement, and the Learning Skills Center. Peer educators would serve as mentors, providing assistance in academic and career planning, study skills enhancement, tutoring, and other support services to students on their floors. In exchange for these services, peer educators would receive Residential Leadership Grants (room-and-board stipends).

8. Nurture the commitment to embrace and celebrate diversity, thus honoring differences, seeking community, and respecting individuals regardless of gender, race, or creed. Establish internships for outstanding students who can create educational programs on diversity and teach them to residence hall students.

9. Teach staff and faculty who work with the residence hall curriculum the concepts and practices of community building, collaborative and team-centered learning, structured experiences, and holistic approaches to learning. Stress the importance of the development of students' character as well as their intellect.

10. Emphasize civic leadership education by designating one weekend per semester for a leadership retreat. The goal of the retreat would be to create an effective student government in each residence hall.

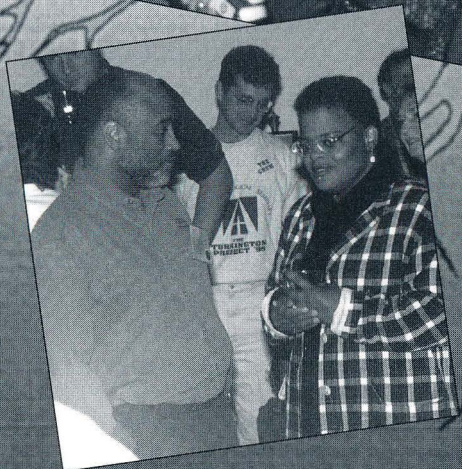11. Incorporate new technologies, such as Internet, interactive video satellite broadcast networks, virtual reality, CD-ROM, and personal computer-based multimedia instruction, as learning tools to make learning more accessible, challenging, and engaging.
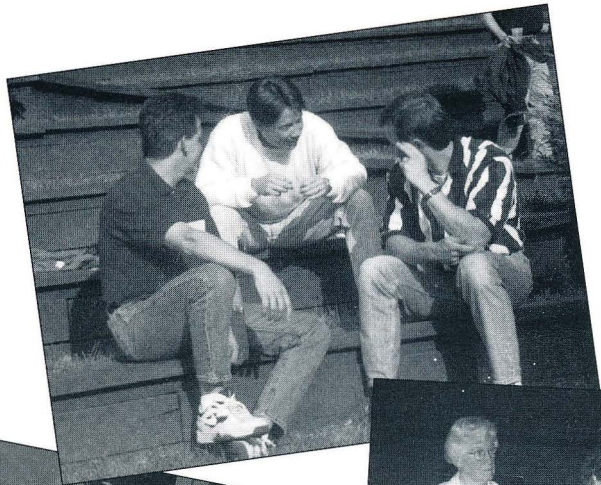
12. Adopt certain basic and fundamental strategies. Establish the date before classes as "residence hall day for community building." Develop a residence hall weekend symposium each year where academic and social activities emerge from the residence halls, and create learning themes each year for shaping, guiding, and influencing particular educational outcomes.

13. Improve the environment of the residence halls by redesigning semipublic and public spaces in support of student learning. Create attractive, engaging spaces for exhibits, libraries, current events, computing and multimedia laboratories, book and movie reviews, fitness centers, travel features, and so on.

14. Describe for prospective students and their families the value of residence hall learning communities and the central role of student involvement in the learning process.

…effective education is a lot like gardening. Successful gardeners not only know a great deal about different seeds, they also know that certain seeds need various conditions to promote growth and healthy development.

Highlights from the
1996 ACSD Conference

For such a t

time as this

Christian College Dating

An Activities Program Dares to Tackle The Sacred Tradition that is Not What Mom & Dad Remember

Sarah Beth Baldwin, Asbury Theological Seminary

Damon Matthew Seacott, Spring Arbor College

- Spring Arbor College (S.A.C.) students struggle with establishing healthy dating habits

- Dating in a Christian College setting seems to have the same dangers as dating on any state university campus.

- Spring Arbor College students avoid educational opportunities that might assist them in making wise choices regarding their dating relationships.

These three statements create a potentially lethal combination.

In an attempt to support our students, the S.A.C. Office of Student Development developed a program consisting of several activities (each being educational and hopefully entertaining), which dealt with various aspects of dating relationships.

Three activities were planned by a committee consisting of five student leaders, a Resident Director, and the college nurse. The purpose o the activities was to offer entertainment that would appeal to a wide cross section of the campus population and, at the same time, offer needed information that stressed healthy dating habits.

The first activity was a coffeehouse with the "Newlywed Game" as the main event. Four married couples from the S.A.C. staff, faculty, and administration competed against each other "best."

At the conclusion of the "Newlywed Game" each couple shared about, "What makes your marriage great?" Emphasis was given to communication, honesty, and trust.

Our "Regis & Kathie Lee" wanna-be hosts (two widely popular students), interacted

with the crowd of over 130 students — S.A.C. has an on-campus population of approximately 450 — allowing for questions to be asked of the married couples.

Using the success of our first event as a catalysis, we prepared for "The Shelby! Show," spoofing (unfortunately) popular talk shows. A panel of couples role-played various stereotyped dating relationships including abusive, codependent, and manipulative relationships.

Shelby Sheridan, the host and respected student leader who can act, did a commercial that was televised in Chapel generating additional enthusiasm for the event. The over 150 students that attended the "Shelby! Show"

A major concern that came out of these sessions is the need for Christian college students to stop "playing games" and begin to act responsibly when entering into a dating relationship.

were given an opportunity to ask questions of several "real" dating and/or married couples.

The final activity developed for students focused on difficult topics of discussion. The men and women met separately to struggle with such issues as: date rape, sexually transmitted diseases, virginity, masturbation, loneliness, and sexual addiction. Health Care and Psychological professionals were available to offer guidance to students. Christian perspectives that avoided "pat" answers were given, and students were lead to seek to be Christlike in their response to dating relationships.

COCCA

COALITION OF CHRISTIAN COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

There were 25 participants in each of these discussion groups. A major concern that came out of these sessions is the need for Christian college students to stop "playing games" and begin to act responsibly when entering into a dating relationship.

S.A.C. continues to wrestle with how to educate students about dating relationships, but by utilizing creative programming we wee able to bring some valuable information and insight to quite a few students.

For more information regarding this activities program contact Sarah Beth Baldwin (formerly a Resident Director at Spring Arbor College), an Asbury Theological Seminary graduate student.
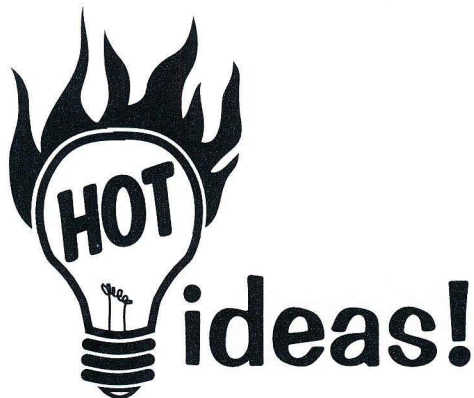
Job Description Brochures

Purpose:

To improve the marketing methods for recruiting students for campus leadership.

To recognize and encourage creative alterations in the "traditional" way we present information.

Description:

The brochure (usually a trifold) should include all of the information needed to explain the job responsibilities and employment prerequisites. The information should be broken down into categories which may be placed on the various sections that are created when the brochure is folded. These categories may include:

1. The organization's purpose, vision and/or goals.

2. General responsibilities.

3. Specific duties.

4. Qualifications for employment.

The front of the brochure should include the job title and may also include a logo or slogan.

Resources & Needed Items:

Office supply catalogs for pre-printed brochures (i.e., Quill Office Supply or Paper Direct).

Software package for the computer to assist in entering the information in a brochure template (i.e., Microsoft Publisher).

Brochure rack to display the brochures.

The job description or information for the position.

Contact Person:

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A Mandate for Action

15. Sustain and nurture the implementation of the residence hall curriculum by rewarding the contributions of student affairs and academic leaders, professional and student staff, and students. Formally celebrate outstanding achievements and consistently communicate successes to various institutional constituencies.

The preceding are but a few suggestions for implementing a residence hall curriculum. The principal, integrating construct in each of these recommendation is that the only way to bring "education" and "student learning" back into the residence halls is to craft a curriculum for the residence halls that is similar in intent and purpose to the classroom curriculum.

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BOOK REVIEW
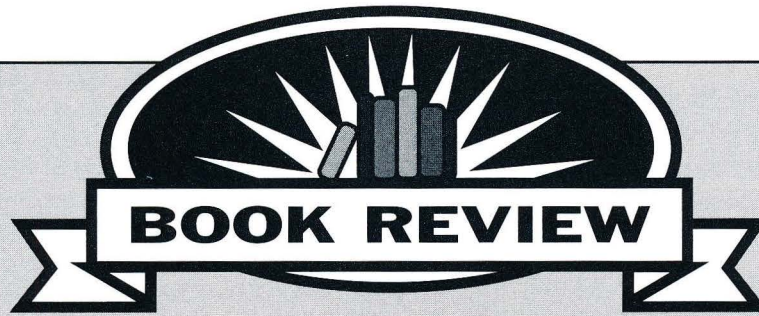
The Abandoned Generation
Rethinking Higher Education
By William Willimon and Thomas Naylor

A term paper without a thesis, a lab without a formula, a speech without audience ... Something vital is missing, yet that is the picture of today's college student. They lack direction and purpose and meaning. Consequently, students find something else to fill those needs.

In their book, *The Abandoned Generation*, Willimon and Naylor share what they found students doing outside the classroom. They discuss their ideas regarding issues students face and why they face them. They also offer their thoughts on what they see as the solution. This thought provoking book challenges the Christian student services professional to reflect on and define meaning, purpose, and direction.

The prevailing issue and concern — alcohol and alcohol abuse. Small campuses, large campuses, private colleges, and public colleges - none seem to be exempt from the excessive drinking and parties that are increasingly common for the college students. Other issues include "indolence" and "excessive careerism." Underlying all this are the basic problems of: "(1) meaninglessness; (2) fragmentation of a student's life into unrelated, incoherent components; and (3) the absence of community."

Alcohol abuse has become the misleading outlet for students trying to remedy the separation and meaninglessness they feel. However, Willimon and Naylor believe that campus life is a metaphor of

Students need this sense of community — a sense of belonging and being connected to feel like they matter. At that point they start finding direction and purpose and meaning — a thesis, a formula, an audience.

the national malaise of meaninglessness. Without a sense of direction, students find meaning through other avenues often surrendering to external pressures.

Willimon and Naylor write that what is missing in most colleges and universities is a well-defined sense of direction for administrators and faculty. Students, as well, seem unable to say who they are or what they want to do with their lives. They are coming out of college with

skillful abilities to compete but not to collaborate. They strive for personal attainment with little regard or know-how to contribute to society and with little regard toward social responsibility. It has seemingly become more important to win national (athletic) titles and championships than to teach students how to think and find meaning.

Not only has alcohol become an issue and a filler to hide a lack of purpose, but it has also been cited to contribute to the breakdown of the campus community. Those students who drink a lot have little regard for their fellow student. The "sober" students are unwilling to confront the drinking behavior, especially since social consequences of alcohol abuse are no longer considered socially unacceptable. Students are not alone in this moral breakdown. Higher education itself has avoided stating its opinion on moral and character-related issues.

Willimon and Naylor look at the possibility of (colleges) creating a meaningful philosophy of education which responds to the question: "What does the educational process do for students, faculty, and those living in the larger community of which the university is a

part?" It also needs to address "some notion of the meaning or purpose of education, a statement of educational values, ethical principals, and a statement of social responsibility." Ultimately the question to answer will be, "What do colleges and universities do that no other institution can do?"

The authors pose an answer by implying that if colleges and universities would reevaluate their organization, they could create an environment in which students would be challenged to take ownership and responsibility for their education. If this were to happen, the alcohol issue would find itself not buried in additional rules and policies, but rather, competing against academics and the rigors of learning. With reorganization by the institution and encouragement and leadership from faculty (and staff), these students would participate in a structure that would engage them in critical thinking (skills) and challenge them in their search for meaning.

Higher education is about people —students, faculty, and staff working together, learning and growing, challenging each other. When this happens, a community is created. Students need this sense of community — a sense of belonging and being connected to feel like they matter. At that point they start finding direction and purpose and meaning — a thesis, a formula, an audience.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Proverbs 29:18a

Submitted by: Shay Jewitt, Director of Counseling, Colby Community College

ACSD Regional Directors 1996–97

Back: Todd Voss, Lake; Tim Wolf, Northeast; Jim Fereira, North Central; Joe Brockington, Appalachian. Front: Becci Rothfus, South Central; Marianne May, Southeast; Joan Cargnel, Central; Melinda Moers, West; Mark Conklin, Mountain. Not pictured: Becky Leithold, Northwest.

When the Pieces Fit

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ASBURY COLLEGE • WILMORE, KENTUCKY

When the Pieces Fit

ACSD 1997

The 1997 ACSD Annual Conference

ASBURY COLLEGE
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See where **YOU** *fit.*
JUNE 2-5, 1997

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