

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF STUDENT SERVICES

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High Tech

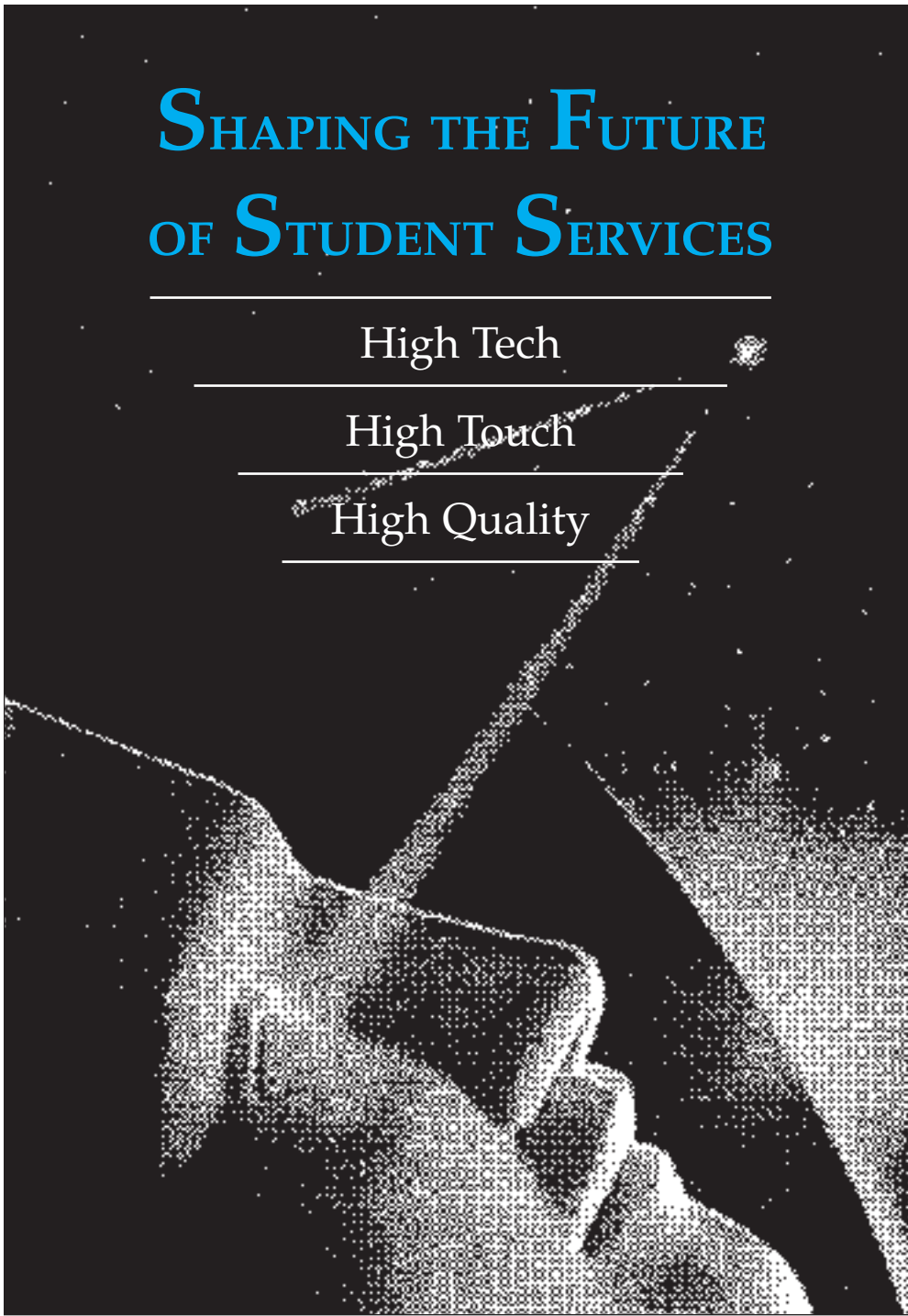
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High Touch

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High Quality

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Summary Report of the  
1996 NCSD Leadership Colloquium  
Memphis, Tennessee

**ACT**



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Memphis, Tennessee

Edited by

**Andrew J. Matonak**  
**Patricia C. Williamson**

**ACT**



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Houston Community College

**T**HE National Council on Student Development continued the tradition of sponsoring an annual leadership colloquium by hosting the conference in Memphis, Tennessee in October, 1996. Many people were responsible for the success of the conference, but a very special thanks goes to Ron Shade and Ed Franklin.

Ron Shade, as President of NCS D for 1996–97, provided the tremendous leadership and support needed to ensure a successful Colloquium. He led the planning committee in selecting a timely and thought-provoking theme, engaged a tremendous group of facilitators, and organized an outstanding three-day program. Furthermore, he served as a local arrangements committee of one; the facilities and the southern Memphis hospitality will be a hard act to follow for future Colloquia. Sandi Oliver did her usual efficient job in handling the registration.

Ed Franklin, as President-elect, served as Colloquium facilitator. He set the stage beautifully by creating an analogy of a tapestry, preparing Colloquium participants to “weave together the threads of high tech, high touch, high quality.”

He kept the group on track and on task. And in the end, after an exciting and productive three days, challenged participants to return to their respective campuses and to work with their staffs and within their states to create at home the same kind of synergy that was generated at the 1996 Colloquium.

The Colloquium presenters, Jonathan Bacon, Jack Becherer, Maggie Culp, Tom Flynn, Norma Hernandez, and Bill Piland, were exceptional. They came from the east coast, the west coast, the north, the south, and the heartland, and represented the tremendous depth and breadth of student development professionals across this country. They each brought a unique perspective to the Colloquium, added to our knowledge, stimulated our thoughts, and focused our discussions. They epitomized the high tech, high touch, high quality Student Development professional they challenged us to become.

Our secretaries, Diane Fuller and Nancy McSteen, deserve special thanks for typing and editing the monograph for the second year. Also, a big thank you to ACT for their continued support and for publishing the monograph for the thirteenth year.

Finally we must thank all the Colloquium participants, for ultimately it is the participants who make the NCS D Colloquia successful year after year. As always, there were seasoned veterans willing to share their experience, and newcomers eager to learn. It is the commitment to three intense days of discussion, the quality of the interaction, the contributions of each participant that make the Colloquia meaningful for the participants and through the colloquium monograph, valuable to the entire profession.

# Introduction

Andrew J. Matonak

Patricia C. Williamson

**T**HIS monograph is a summary of the proceedings of the 1996 Leadership Colloquium of the National Council for Student Development. The National Council for Student Development (NCSD) is a council of the American Association of Community Colleges. One of the purposes of NCSD is to promote staff and program development and to serve as a resource for student development professionals. This summary of the colloquium proceedings is a reflection of that commitment and is designed to provoke our thinking regarding the use of technology and the improvement of quality services to students.

The Leadership Colloquium took place in Memphis during October 1996. The theme of this colloquium, "Shaping the Future of Student Services: High Tech-High Touch-High Quality," was designed to allow participants to learn concepts and practices which integrate technology into an environment that encourages personal connections with students resulting in greater quality of services.

In Chapter 1, Thomas Flynn discusses the need to match technology with programs and services. He also shares some realities that student development professionals must face, such as: system complexity, the need for making training an institutional priority, funding, the need for prioritizing technology initiatives, and politics.

Chapter 2 analyzes the opportunities which result from enhanced technology, the threats of technology on society, and the use of technology as a tool. Jonathan Bacon offers a laundry list of applications available through technology. Finally, he addresses some important questions: How can we respond to the high tech challenge? How do we shape the future?

Jack Becherer outlines in Chapter 3 the challenges to being an effective leader in student development, discusses the steps to becoming a "high touch" leader, and reviews the core components of the connective leadership model.

In Chapter 4, Maggie Culp calls for a balance between high touch and high tech, between managing and leading, and between the burdens and rewards of leadership. She identifies the requisite skills for high touch leaders and defines the responsibilities and challenges one faces. Finally, she posits some guidelines for balancing high tech with high touch to achieve high quality outcomes.

Continuous improvement/enhancing quality is the theme of Chapter 5. William Piland and Norma Hernandez discuss the need for a new paradigm for community college student services in our quest for quality. They also identify five strategies for initiating a paradigm shift in student services.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 summarize the subsequent discussion groups. Each discussion group explored the implications of high tech, high touch and high quality on leadership, organization, and students. Each group then outlined their conclusions and recommendations for student development leaders in linking high tech with high touch, linking high tech with high quality, and staff technology training.

This publication, which is the latest in a series of monographs beginning in 1984 published by NCSD, will be presented and discussed at the 76th annual convention of AACC.



## **PART I**

### **High Tech, High Touch, High Quality — Setting the Stage**



## Shaping the Future of Student Services: High Technology

**Thomas Flynn**

Vice President

Student/Administrative Services

Monroe Community College

Rochester, New York

**T**HREE years ago, at the NCS D Colloquium in Denver, I stated that I believed the Chief Student Affairs Officer to be the best person to lead the technology agenda on many campuses. Following the publication of those remarks by ACT, I received several communications from colleagues in both four- and two-year institutions requesting additional information or just sharing with me that they agreed with my position. Today, I feel even stronger that those of us in student affairs are quite properly positioned to play a major leadership role in technology development in our colleges and universities.

That presentation three years ago was multimedia, glitzy—all the “trappings” of a technology presentation. Our message was clear, and participants easily related to the value of technology in student services and student development.

This presentation will be quite different. I will be covering several areas relating to high technology and will emphasize the need to match technology with programs and services to be provided.

None of us can afford to be caught up in the technology race, always insisting on the bigger and the better simply because each day it gets bigger and better. Today, I want to stress not only the significance of understanding technology and its development, but also the importance of knowing how to match technology with our student services and student development programs. I am going to share some of the realities that we in student development must face if we are to enjoy the true advantages of technology.

But, before we get to that, I want to address four areas with which we need to be familiar as we assist in leading our institutions through the maze of available technology:

1. history of technology development;
2. need for cost/benefit analysis;
3. necessity of institution-wide training; and
4. importance of institution-wide collaboration in technology implementation.

Let us quickly review the history of how those of us who believe we have been on the leading edge of technology have maintained this state-of-the-art status. We did this by selecting the best systems available and then customizing those systems to fit our own needs. Or, in many cases, we wrote our own software. Now most of us are faced with serious problems. Some of our systems have become obsolete. As we update one system, we find we lose integration with others.

The changing hardware configuration has been just as complex. Originally most of us were on mainframe systems. We then moved to the small client servers in order to give end users greater access and personal programming capabilities. This led to the problem of too many servers requiring too many staff for maintenance and programming attention. We are now moving to larger client servers which have become available in just the past few years.

Now, let me share some thoughts on systems development. I have reached these conclusions following many years of consulting with colleges and universities nationally, overseeing the technology growth at Monroe Community College, and the burden of attempting to finance this growth as well as projecting costs for the future.

While systems have become more friendly for the users, they have become more complex for those who not only maintain them but also provide the various upgrades. I believe it is necessary that we look for integrated systems, keep customization at the minimum level, and get out of the business of trying to develop our own software. We need to place the burden on software companies and hold them accountable.

We have been researching integrated systems for the past twelve months and believe there are systems and companies that can meet our needs at less cost and greater efficiency. In fact, it is a form of outsourcing. One of the advantages I have is that I not only serve as Vice President for Student Services, but also as the Chief Financial Officer. I can share with you that there is probably no greater concern for colleges and universities across the country than the cost of technology. And, I do not mean just the cost of computers, but the cost of training, software, maintenance, replacement, upgrades, and so forth.

It is absolutely essential that colleges and universities conduct careful cost/benefit analyses of their individual technology programs. In student services, we have a responsibility to recognize that the addition of various technology services cannot be just an add-on expense. There must be productivity gains, better service, increased retention, or other measurable positive values to what is becoming an exorbitant cost of maintaining state-of-the-art technology.

It is critical that you conduct a technology audit which includes not only inventorying the technology you have available, but also its expected length of service and its replacement costs.

In addition to hardware and software inventories, your technology audit should provide you with the following information:

- What are your training capabilities?
- What are your systems capabilities?
- What upgrades can be made?
- What systems are interlinked?
- What systems are integrated?
- What satisfaction is there with current systems?

And, most important, technology planning cannot be static; it must be dynamic and ever changing. At Monroe Community College, we are currently updating our technology audit and, in fact, just one week ago, I appointed a campuswide committee to:

- a. develop an information access vision and strategy;
- b. compare MCC's current information access status with that vision and strategy; and
- c. develop recommendations for closing the gap between this vision and strategy for information access and MCC's current status. If you plan to stay ahead of the curve on technology, you must have such planning.

The next topic I want to address is training. I challenge you to walk on any college or university campus and ask just one question regarding technology: What is the greatest problem you have with technology on your campus? I can assure you that the majority of the answers will be, "We do not have enough training."

I encourage you to consider technology training as an institutional priority and give it the same planning you would any other such priority. Too many campuses have approached training haphazardly, with many offices providing selected technology training. The training needs to be coordinated, well publicized, and available to all of the college community.

I recommend for your review the training program at Monroe Community College. Under the leadership of our Educational Technology Services Division, we have developed an outstanding training program which is offered each semester and provides training opportunities for all secretaries, faculty, administrators, and others associated with conducting educational activities on our campus.

The last area I want to share some information about is the importance of institution-wide collaboration in technology planning and implementation.

Nearly all institutions have made mistakes in this area. A division or unit will move forward in a well-meaning manner with exciting technology initiatives, not recognizing that, when implemented, those initiatives impact other areas of the college or university. We made such a mistake at MCC a few years ago. With funds becoming available late in the summer, we purchased some software systems to assist in improving communications with students, faculty advisement, and student tracking.

These were good systems; but when integrated in our own environment, there were considerable problems. The users, who were primarily faculty, were not pleased that the administration had purchased a system for their use without consultation—and they were right. If the faculty had been involved in the evaluation and selection of the software, they would have felt ownership, and the problems would have been resolved with much less stress.

It is important to recognize that with integrated systems, no division or core should move forward with technology planning without institution-wide collaboration. This is why we have established a process which requires an opportunity for input from all segments of the College prior to implementation of any new systems. In fact, it is a matter of routine at MCC to establish institution-wide task forces for the review, evaluation, and selection of such new initiatives. I strongly recommend you do the same.

When I was asked to do this presentation, the only guideline was to provide a presentation which would share information with the Colloquium attendees on high technology. As I attempted to get my arms around such a presentation, I considered a variety of topics. I considered the numerous topics and the many

conferences available in the next six months—more than 50—for anyone interested in technology issues. With this in mind, what could I possibly present that would be of interest that you couldn't find in other forums? Then I read an article entitled, "The Electronic Campus" by Rachele Moore, who is the Collaboratory Librarian at Binghamton University.

*Collaboratory* is not in the dictionary, but it is described in this article as a new model for teaching and learning in the electronic environment. Specifically, collaboratory is a means of creating an environment for sharing information of interest. One of the advantages of technology is that it is interactive—you access data of your interest, and you receive immediate feedback.

Using the collaboratory model, the colloquium participants were asked to identify five topics they would like me to address.

The following are the five areas you have identified as most important:

1. Funding
2. Prioritizing technology
3. Structuring the technology team
4. Common language problems
5. Politics on campus related to technology

I will address each of these topics briefly.

## **Funding**

Since we discussed training earlier, I can assure you that funding is the second concern raised on college and university campuses. Let me describe a few ways that institutions are addressing the funding issue.

Once you have completed your technology audit, the plan should provide a road map for upgrading current technology, adding technology where needed, and points of time in which various technology applications—both hardware and software—need to be replaced. An important part of the technology audit plan is to provide a cost analysis to provide the institution opportunity to plan for funding for technology.

Now where do the funds come from? Earlier I stated the importance of technology not just being an add-on expense. Each institution must clarify the need for a positive cost/benefit analysis for the addition of all technology where possible. Of course, when you have to replace your secretary's computer, there will be very little cost advantage, if any, to the institution. However, as new applications are considered in student services or in the academic area, it is important to attempt to identify how those new applications can provide productivity increases or cost reductions.

For public institutions, there has been some success in getting states or local sponsors to recognize the importance of technology. In fact, in some cases, there have been state grants available to public institutions for technology upgrades.

Some institutions have been successful with federal grants. However, I would caution that with the present grant situation, it is very difficult to rely upon grants to fund your technology programs.

The most popular funding mechanisms are identifying a certain percentage of the overall college budget which will be spent for technology, and/or the introduction of a technology fee to all students.

### **Prioritizing technology initiatives**

Technology may be broken down into three levels:

1. *Office maintenance* technology, the technology in your office which makes it efficient and effective, i.e., secretarial computers and fax machines. This technology needs to be put on a replacement cycle and maintained accordingly within your annual operating budget.
2. The second level of technology is your *management systems*. These are very expensive and include financial and human resources, alumni, and student information. This complete integrated package should be purchased from software vendors. This technology should be clearly identified for replacement and upgrade cycles and be considered as a part of the operating budget.
3. I refer to the third area as *innovative* technology. These are the developments faculty and administrators want to add to provide better teaching or service delivery to our students. It is not unreasonable

to suggest such enterprises demonstrate how the addition of these programs reduces costs or increases productivity. Again, we must stress that technology cannot just be an add-on expense; it is too costly, and most institutions have few budget dollars to direct to such expensive endeavors.

So, in prioritizing technology, I give the highest priority to technology that reduces costs or increases productivity to the extent there is a positive cost/benefit analysis. The second highest priority is the maintenance of necessary equipment to operate offices and classrooms at an acceptable level. And, the third priority is for those requests not considered a necessity but which may provide an interesting and/or advanced application.

### **Structuring the technology team**

Due to the cost of technology, it is absolutely important that the oversight of the technology agenda be at the highest level of the college or university, preferably Cabinet status such as a vice president. Technology is an important application for every segment of an institution, and a process should be developed to provide such input. Many years ago, we implemented such a process at MCC. As Vice President, I chaired an Executive Steering Committee, consisting of associate vice presidents from all divisions of the college and other selected colleagues. Reporting to this Executive Steering Committee were two other committees: an Administrative Users Committee and an Academic Users Committee. Such broadbased committees provided the necessary checks and balances for effective needs identification and recommendations for moving the technology agenda forward at our institution. The recommendations of those committees were forwarded to the Executive Steering Committee where action was taken accordingly.

### **Common language problems**

Many student affairs professionals are uncomfortable with the technical jargon used by those in the technology areas. This is a matter of your own education. As student development leaders, you need to become aware of the language of technology. It is not as complicated as you may think to grasp at least a basic

understanding of the common terms within the technology industry. You can do this by spending more time visiting with your data processing/technology staff, see what they do, and enter into dialogue with them regarding technology applications. Tell them you want to understand the basic terms. You will find they'll be pleased to assist you. Keep in mind there are new terms being introduced daily—they are learning these terms also, and I am confident if they know of your interest, they will be willing to assist.

## **Politics**

The political climate on your campus often does not lend itself to student services getting the necessary technology because of other priorities or overall costs. The 1993 Denver Colloquium Monograph identifies how, in many cases, the Chief Student Affairs Officer is the most knowledgeable, or has access to the most knowledge of technology and how that can be used to position the student affairs division in the appropriate priority. If the Chief Student Affairs Officer does not have a strong technology background, it provides information on how one gains such information relatively quickly. And, I do want to stress it is an absolute necessity for the Chief Student Affairs Officer to be technologically literate and attempt to know as much, if not more, about technology as any other campus officer.

## **Conclusion**

The questions raised in the colloquium sessions are the identical questions I hear from our colleagues across the country. Technology should not be a mystery. Technology should not control you or your environment. Technology is a tool, and we use tools for accomplishing tasks.

In the beginning of my comments, I emphasized the importance of matching technology to our programs and services. As I close, let me share such an example. A few years ago, institutions controlled the use of fax machines very carefully. Today, with lower long distance telephone rates and higher postal rates, it is wise to encourage our faculty and staff to fax communications whenever possible instead of using the postal service. A letter from Memphis to L.A. costs 32 cents; a fax costs as little as 10 cents. Again, that is matching technology to a need. When we speak of technology, most of us think of computers, and the same matching requirements exist. Through your technology audit, you should have a clear understanding of the computer power you need, and with appropriate planning, you should be able to match your hardware and software with your service and program needs.



## High Tech: Shaping the Future of Student Services

**Jonathan Bacon**

Director

Educational Technology Center  
Johnson County Community College  
Overland Park, Kansas

**T**HIS discussion of “High Tech” begins with a definition of high technology and discusses why student development professionals need to be concerned with the integration of technology into student services and the work place. Next, we discuss and list current implementations of technology available today in student services. No discussion of technology is complete without some projections regarding how quickly technology, and specifically the Internet, is expected to become commonplace in homes and businesses. We also focus on how technology can change the role of student development professionals and how student services can respond to the challenge. As an additional resource, examples of how various institutions have implemented technology are offered throughout the paper. Finally, several resources concerning student services and higher education on the Web are identified.

### What is High Tech and Why Do We Care?

The discussion of “High Tech” must start with an effort to define the term and then proceed to address the question “Why do we care about High Tech?” Everyone uses the term “High Tech,” but what does the term really mean? As evidenced by the tale of the elephant and the blind men, we can best picture technology by looking at its several parts. It is ubiquitous in nature, includes both individual and collaborative activities, encompasses both cutting edge and mundane innovations, potentially can stratify or level society, and is always changing, never static.

### The Ubiquitous Nature of Technology in Today’s Society

While “High Tech” can refer to the complexity or the elevated status given to technology in our culture, consider a different slant on the definition. The emphasis in this paper is on “High Tech” as it refers to the volume or quantity rather than the status or quality of technology. We are talking about the ubiquitous nature of technology and its pervasive intrusion into modern life.

If you think that technology has invaded your “personal space,” wait until you see and hear what is coming: AT&T and Sprint are both planning to roll out a new handheld Personal Communication System (PCS) that will replace your mobile phone and pager while providing you access to e-mail.

### Individual, Yet Collaborative

While technology (specifically that segment concerning computing) is frequently viewed as a solitary activity, it *can* be used to foster collaboration and communication. Anecdotal data and early research indicates that students using electronic forums often participate in “digital classroom discussions” with less reluctance than they do in traditional settings.

## Multimedia, Yet Text-based

Though technology is often equated with high impact multimedia and cutting edge innovations, it does not have to be flashy, graphic laden, and cutting edge to provide benefits. List servers (Internet mailing lists) that provide online opportunities for discussions among coworkers, though usually text-based, can be an extremely valuable, low-maintenance method to improve communication within an organization.

*Gene, a faculty member in the Science program, suffers from leukemia. Using a campus-wide list server, the department raises money for a bone marrow transplant. During Gene's hospital stay, Lois, the department secretary, notifies the campus community of his daily progress, and indicates when he is strong enough to accept calls and visitors. In early October Lois sends one more message: "By the time you read this, Gene is in the car with his wife and heading home! Gene is in wonderful spirits and can hardly wait to be home! If you want to send him a Welcome Home card, his address is. . . . THANK YOU to everyone who contributed or helped with Gene's fund raising and to everyone that helped his 110 days go a little faster."*

## Stratifying, Yet Leveling

Technology threatens to stratify society, creating classes separated into those who have access and those who do not: between those who have technological skills and those who are technologically illiterate. Technology also threatens to flatten our hierarchical organizations. When the custodian, student, faculty member, counselor, and president are just one key-stroke removed from each other, rigid chains of command are not likely to survive.

*A full-time faculty member posts a message on an instructional technology list server. Based on comments he has heard, the instructor writes, "I think it is outrageous and inappropriate to give students e-mail addresses before adjunct faculty receive them. Why have the adjunct faculty been left out? Adjunct faculty have just been reduced from second-class status to dirt!" A lively debate ensues on the status of students, adjunct faculty, and who should have access to technology. Finally, the Executive Director of Information Services steps in to clarify that e-mail addresses are available for all adjunct faculty that requested one and that within 30 days, accounts will be available for students.*

## Never Static

The only unchangeable aspect of technology is that it will change tomorrow. The World Wide Web included over 400,000 web sites late in 1996. That number continues to grow rapidly. Several times a year, new hardware and software releases exponentially increase the computing power and ease of use available to the typical user.

## Why Should We Care About High Tech?

Technology is only a tool, but it is a powerful one that separates survivors from Information Super Highway road kill. Technology is not synonymous with the Internet and the Internet is not synonymous with technology. However, the Internet has become a metaphor for the infiltration of technology into our lives. We now live in an Information Age where the primary product of the workforce is the development, management, packaging, and distribution of information. Each of these tasks is best accomplished using technology.

The appeal of universal connectivity is undeniable. Paper memos are replaced by e-mail messages. Paper handouts and reports emerge as Web-based documents. Work groups can share important information using a list server or an Internet-based forum. The corporate world has embraced the use of technology to inform, communicate, and collaborate. Further, the most ubiquitous tool, the Internet, is changing from passive to interactive with the addition of new interactive technologies such as Shockwave.

By 2000, the Gartner Group predicts that the Internet will become the "dial tone" of the data communications world. Today, no organization can afford to be without a mail box and a phone number. By the year 2000, no organization will be able to survive without an electronic mail box, a Web "presence," and access to the rich resources of the Internet.

Currency is another very important factor. Based on a Sequitur Corp. (August 1994, Atlanta) survey for the National Association of College Admission Counselors, ninety percent of the surveyed colleges and universities use a mainframe/minicomputer to support student information systems. Fifty-two percent of the surveyed institutions use a vendor supplied or supported system, while forty-four percent use internally developed and maintained systems. The same report found that fifty-six percent of the annual technology budget was spent on the purchase and maintenance of technology. Twenty-eight percent was spent on training.

In the last few years the trend in both business and education has been toward client-server systems and networked environments. The old mainframe connected to dumb terminals (one in each office) has yielded to networked systems with personal computers on every desk. This connectivity has fostered a new direction: the use of the Internet and corporate Intranets. The result is growth and more growth. More people having more access to more information and generating more data for more people to access and (it is hoped) to make better and more timely decisions.

As a side note, the Internet and the use of Intranets has made most cross-platform issues almost irrelevant. Except for convenience within work groups, bulk purchasing benefits, and support issues, the kind of work station you use (Macintosh, Unix, Windows 95, Windows 3.x, or Windows NT) does not really matter anymore.

Why should you care about "High Tech?" Technology is the pervasive force in today's workplace. Technological skills are needed for almost every possible career path. How do we promote lifelong learning if the clerk at the front desk, the Dean in his office, or the faculty in the classroom refuse to tackle the challenge of technology? By the turn of the century, the Gartner Group predicts (with a 0.9 probability) that the Internet will be as much a part of everyday life as the PC is today.

## Where Are We Now?

Technology in higher education takes a myriad variety of forms, even if you overlook the older, slighted technologies involved in the traditional classroom (the overhead projector and TV monitor) or the office (telephone, photocopier, fax). The "laundry list" of technological developments in higher education includes at least each of the following:

- transition from mainframe to mini-computer to client server systems with more emphasis on desktop computing
- use of computerized registration
- movement toward computerized degree audit and graduation checks
- use of touchtone (phone-based) registration and enrollment
- use of student and alumni information systems
- migration to the Internet

*Several campus-wide committees post minutes and the agenda for their meetings either on the Web or on a campus-wide list server. Committee members can respond with additions and corrections, which minimizes meeting times. One instructor asks why the committees don't just meet online.*

- placement of recruitment and application materials on the World Wide Web

*CollegeNet (at <http://www.collegenet.com>) enables students to apply for admission online to selected colleges. The service also lists academic resources, and links to colleges and universities with Web pages. Some of the colleges on CollegeNet (with online applications) include: Central College, Florida Southern College, Mercer University, Middle Tennessee State University, Palm Beach Atlantic College, and Virginia Tech.*

*The ApplyWeb site enables students to complete an application over several sessions (the application is sent only at the student's initiation). If the student applies to multiple colleges, common information is entered only once, all data is encrypted, application fees are usually the same as for paper applications, and fees can be paid using Cybercash electronic wallet, Compuserve Wallet, Checkfree, or credit card.*

- implementation of Web-based registration and degree audit

*The SCT Banner system offers a Web interface for its student information and finance systems that can be used by students to register for classes, with proper security. Faculty can use a Web-based interface to check class enrollments and post grades.*

- extensive use of electronic mail (e-mail)
- use of mailing lists (Internet mailing lists are used for discussion, information distribution, and Q&A)

*An administrator posts a recommendation to a list server and suggests that responses can be sent to him using e-mail or "snail mail." A flame war erupts instigated by the mail room clerks who take offense at the derogatory term "snail mail."*

- increased efficiency through the deployment of electronic calendaring and scheduling (electronic scheduling enables networked users to schedule meeting rooms and equipment, prepare an agenda and notes for the meeting, and automatically invite and receive confirmations from participants)
- almost instantaneous transfer of files from the sender to the recipient (File Transfer Protocol or FTP is used to transfer data without faxes, overnight or standard mail, rekeying, or any of the traditional methods of transporting data from one site to another)
- development and publication of timely and easily updated information using personal, departmental, and institutional Web Pages (the Student Senate, student clubs, faculty and administrative committees, faculty, staff, and students now have the capability of publishing on the Web)

*The Dean of Instruction posts committee assignments, workload task force recommendations, and the new proposed academic year calendar on his World Wide Web page. With an e-mail link on the page, faculty can respond directly to the Dean.*

*Students in the Clayton State College Computer Information Systems curriculum create multimedia resumes as part of their course work.*

*Texas A&M University publishes class notes and text books on the Web to support students with disabilities.*

- implementation of distributed document databases and searchable sites (Lotus Notes, Microsoft Meeting, NetForum, and the Worldgroup BBS are all tools for the creation and distribution of documents, and the publication of discussion databases)

*The League for Innovation in the Community College has a Web site (at <http://www.league.org/>) that includes a search engine for the workshop sessions at the annual League Conference (scheduled for October or November each year). The site can be used to survey how different schools are using technology.*

- utilization of document management systems (with relative ease, you can publish existing documents on the Web including the Student Handbook, Cafeteria menus, Student Activity calendars, and Career Planning information)

*Dartmouth's online Suicide Prevention Guide, Johnson County Community College's weekly Post-script calendar of events, San Francisco State University's Campus Memo, and the orientation*

*schedule for the State University of New York at Oswego are all examples of using technology to diminish the consumption of paper and still provide easy management and access to important documents.*

*The Chronicle of Higher Education's site (at <http://www.chronicle.merit.edu>) provides a quick method to check top stories. A full-text version of the Chronicle is not available, but you can find some interesting information by checking the Information Technology link.*

*The College Board's Web site (at <http://www.collegeboard.org/>) includes links for Admissions Staff, Financial Aid Staff, Counselors, Students and Parents, and High School and College Faculty. The site also includes the SAT Test Question of the Day, a Financial Aid Calculator, and a College Search link for prospective students.*

- movement toward technologically-based discussion databases for the storage and easy retrieval of important documents

*The Counseling Center at Johnson County Community College uses a list server to share important memos and curriculum announcements as well as to host online informational discussions that otherwise would greatly lengthen staff meetings.*

- use of personal information managers (PIMs store client and contact information for easy retrieval)
- use of project management software

*Many colleges and universities are using project management software as a useful planning tool for student organizations, the student activities office, career fairs, and other student services coordinated activities (such as on-site registration and recruitment programs).*

- installation of campus kiosks to provide vital, timely information to students concerning current enrollment, completed courses, fees due, and degree audit or graduation check data

*Students at the University of Delaware can conduct routine business at a campus kiosk or on the Web. Johnson County Community College also has student information kiosks located on campus from which students can order transcripts, check on course offerings, and retrieve other enrollment and registration information.*

- use of interactive media (also called multimedia) presentations, tutorials, and modules to deliver routine data to students who otherwise would require the one-on-one assistance of a student services staff member

*At Johnson County Community College, students can view an introduction to the career planning process, see an orientation to the Career Center, or access a new student orientation module at one of two computers located in the waiting area for the Counseling Center and Career Center. The use of technology frees professional staff to address more complex issues after the student has completed a basic orientation session.*

*North Arkansas Community College provides students access to online career services like America's Job Bank, Job Web, and the Online Career Center.*

- adoption of institutional Intranets (to provide access to institutional data, procedures, and news that is not released publicly)

*The Educational Technology Center at Johnson County Community College has established a PointCast News server with a channel dedicated to disseminating information to faculty and staff regarding instructional technology and computer training opportunities. Anyone on campus can use PointCast as a screen saver which automatically displays campus announcements and late-breaking news. The server creates an Intranet: no one outside the institution is able to view the "college channel."*

- online access to forms and procedures that students can view on campus, at home, or at work

*Northwest College in the Houston Community College System uses the Web to publish admissions procedures and answer frequently asked questions.*

*Arizona State University provides common college forms online using Adobe Acrobat which creates PDF (portable document format) files.*

- addition of desktop video and data conferencing to the desktop (data conferencing and electronic whiteboarding can facilitate meetings, committee work, and other collaborative tasks when the participants can meet at the same time but not in the same place; these technologies enable collaborative work to proceed even while freeing the participants from "place" constraints)

- continued use of established tools (student systems, finance systems, and career development and placement tools such as SIGI+ and Discover)

## Will High Tech Change Student Services?

Without hesitation, the answer is yes. Student development professionals must focus on answering the following questions:

- How can we use technology to more effectively and efficiently accomplish the mission of student services within our institution? Easy access to resources such as student handbooks, resource guides, and transfer information is a first step. Student access to information should be ubiquitous: from the student center, open labs, library, home, student offices, and from your office.
- How will we admit, register, assess, advise, counsel, involve, and place distance learning students? Many organizations in the coming decade will embark on a major thrust to provide educational services to students free of time, place, and pace constraints. These distance learning students still need advising, counseling, and many of the student services provided to traditional students.
- How can we demonstrate that adaptability to change and lifelong learning are important concepts, not just hollow mottoes offered for the "other fellow?" Student services professionals must not shrink from embracing technology and change, even as we advise students to prepare for an uncertain, changing future.

## How Much Time Do We Have?

The early warning system declaring the imminence of technological change has already sounded. Already 33–40% of American homes have a computer on site. One in six adults (over age 16) are already on the Web in America, according to panelists on the "Tap the Power of the Internet II" video conference sponsored by Quarterdeck Corporation in the Fall of 1996. According to the Arts and Sciences Group based in Baltimore, MD, one in three high school students have Internet access (e-mail or Web), one in seven high school students have World Wide Web access, and one in twenty high school seniors have used the Web to search for college information. Kenneth C. Green of the Campus Computing Project (Claremont Graduate School in Claremont, CA) predicted that "By Christmas 1996, roughly 40 percent of American

households (some 40 million families) will own a computer, up from 33 percent as of Christmas 1995...the real growth in the consumer market over the past two years has been among middle-income consumers—families with annual incomes ranging from \$25,000–50,000.”

## Coming Attractions or Near-Range Predictions

During the “Internet Strategies” video conference aired in 1996, the Gartner Group predicted with a 0.7 probability that the following events would occur based on the timetable listed. The first two events have already occurred.

- Audio publishing will become practical on the Web during 1996. Internet-based e-mail will reach the mainstream during 1997
- Fifty percent of all large companies will have an enterprise-wide web established by 1998
- Internet performance/security will be viable for most applications by 1998
- Thirty percent of all Web sites will have executable content (rather than just static text) by 1999
- Fifty percent of U.S. dial-up access to the Internet will be via ISDN by 1999 (which translates into faster access times and the ability to transfer streaming multimedia over the Web)
- The majority of PC users will be Internet users by 1999
- Internet commerce will be as common as 800-number ordering by 1999
- Internet will become the data “dial tone” by 2000
- Electronic commerce will be essential for most businesses by 2000
- Quality desktop video conferencing will be practical by 2000
- Twenty-five percent of transaction processing applications will be on the Web by 2000

## How Do We Respond to the High Tech Challenge?

The easy response is to simply complain, saying, “My head is spinning...can you make this all go away?” Two additional responses can be just as deadly. Pursuing every new technology just because it’s the current fad is no wiser than forsaking the fight because your institution is behind the curve and you fear it does not have the resources to compete.

Always start by defining which applications of technology are appropriate for adoption within student services. Start with what you have, work with it, and stretch.

## Observations and Notes

- Technology is a high expense item and costs are recurring. Costs include hardware, software, infrastructure, training, and support.

Kenneth C. Green of the Campus Computing Project states, “Three-fourths of American colleges and universities do not have a financial plan to ‘acquire and retire’ technology resources; rather, most technology purchasing is largely opportunistic, often done with ‘budget dust’ at the end of the fiscal year.” Don’t depend on “budget dust” to keep your institution viable into the 21st century.

- You’re not just buying technology; you’re committing to explore new methods to accomplish old tasks.

The prerequisite for successful integration is responsive technical support. Based on a Sequitur Corp. (August 1994, Atlanta) survey for the National Association of College Admission Counselors, seventy percent of the responding colleges have an individual identified in their office “whose specific duty is the management or supervision” of the office’s technology requirements. If you don’t have a customer service oriented centralized support structure, “*fight like heck*” for a decentralized approach that enables student services to hire their own technology support specialists. Crucial technology cost factors include: technical support, customer support, and computer training.

- The useful life for most technology is 3 years, for most software 9–15 months, and for Web-based applications 3–4 months. The typical employee represents an average work life of 20 years at your institution and a \$1,000,000 commitment. What does this tell you about the need for training? Randy Dorsey in his “The Internet Design Challenge” from the “Tap the Power of the Internet II” paper related the humorous story of an interviewer who greets an applicant with, “You’ve got an impressive resume—just what we’re looking for! We’re a high-tech company. We live on the bleeding edge of technology. In our business you gotta move fast or get eaten. In fact, things move so fast around here, that you’re no longer qualified for the available position. Come back when you have more training.”

To that point, Kenneth C. Green in the July 1996 (Volume 9, Number 7) *Leadership Abstracts* (published by the League for Innovation in the Community College) states, “Perhaps the best preparation for a world where change is the only constant is found in

the advice that the best teachers, professors, and mentors pass along to their prized students. By word and by deed, they stress the importance of core knowledge, interpersonal and technical skills, and perhaps most important, a capacity for self-renewal.”

- Training costs are recurring expenses, just like other technology-related costs. You cannot afford to train once and assume the task is complete.

Does your institution foster self-renewal? As a supervisor and institutional leader, do you demonstrate by example and encourage your staff to expand their technological literacy or are you in a holding pattern?

- The virtual college will become a reality, not just a technological pipe dream.

The League for Innovation in the Community College in conjunction with Jones Interchange is laying plans for the International Community College (ICC). This consortium of colleges will offer credit instruction through distance education. How do you plan to compete with, resist, or cooperate with other institutions that chose to offer a course in your (previously) exclusive service area? Further, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has adopted a set of “Principles of Good Practice: for Electronically Delivered Degree and Certificate Programs.” The document states that good practice requires that “enrolled students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning and assess their progress.” How are you going to serve the needs of distance learning students?

- You must *always* play technological catch-up.

We’re not experiencing a technological revolution (patterned after the Industrial Revolution). Instead, it’s a wave that washes over every element of modern life, whether we care to swim or not.

## How Do We Shape the Future?

If the technological wave is already breaking around us and there’s no place to run for shelter, how should student development professionals face the tide and tame it? The following are offered as ways to shape the future rather than be contorted by it.

- Face the fact that technological literacy is not an option, just as language literacy is not an option for student services professionals. According to Alvin Toffler in *Power Shift*, “No nation can operate a 21st-century economy without a 21st-century electronic infrastructure, embracing computers, data communications, and the other new media. This requires a *population* as familiar with this informational infrastructure as it is with cars, roads, highways, trains, and the transportation infrastructure of the smokestack period.”
- Student Services does not have the luxury of waiting for the next generation to migrate into student services with the required technological skills.
- The only effective answer is personal renewal through training and lifelong learning. Ironically, just what student development professionals advocate for the students we mentor.
- Student services must strive to use the very technologies that are required for successful citizenship in an information society. That is, use computers for communication, for collaboration, for information, and for interactivity.
- Start small, start soon, and push the envelope. Acquiring technological competency parallels learning to walk. Both require that we stretch our limits and suffer bumps, bruises, and tumbles. Like an infant, everything we need is not within an arm’s reach. To sit and wait for some benevolent entity to bring technology to us is dangerous. We must stretch beyond our comfortable surroundings and learn to crawl, toddle, walk, and change.

## In Closing, a Word to the Technologically Wise

As you consider the examples of technology employed by other higher education institutions offered in this paper, don't forget the story recounted in *Feathers*, the publication of the California Poultry Industry Federation. The United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has a unique device for testing the strength of windshields on airplanes. The device is a gun that launches a dead chicken at a plane's windshield at approximately the speed the plane flies. The theory is that if the windshield doesn't crack from the carcass impact, it will survive a real collision with a bird during flight.

The British wanted to test a windshield on a newly developed, high speed locomotive and borrowed the FAA's chicken launcher, loaded the chicken and fired. The ballistic chicken shattered the windshield, went through the engineer's chair, broke an instrument panel and embedded itself in the back wall of the engine cab.

The British were more than a little shocked and asked the FAA to recheck the test to see if it was properly conducted. After a thorough review by the FAA, a single recommendation was offered:

"Use a thawed chicken."

Always be sure that any technological innovation is appropriate for your campus. If it succeeds elsewhere, be sure you understand the conditions (thawed or frozen) under which it was implemented and consider whether your campus environment is sufficiently similar to warrant the use of the same technology. At the same time, always be prepared to adapt any technology to meet the distinctive needs and goals of your institution.

## A Few Internet Resources

To keep up with the *competition*, you can locate and browse the Web pages of other colleges and universities. The following are starting points to find educational sites on the Web:

To access a list of U.S. Colleges and Universities by state, go to  
<http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state/>

To access a list of U.S. Colleges and Universities in alphabetical order, go to  
<http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/alpha/>

To access a list of U.S. Community Colleges by state, go to  
<http://www.utexas.edu/world/comcol/state/>

To access a list of U.S. Community Colleges in alphabetical order, go to  
<http://www.utexas.edu/world/comcol/alpha/>

Also check out the Internet Resources for College Student Affairs site located at  
<http://www.whitman.edu/~hedgesaj/stuaff/>

Finally, check out the Netscape Customer Showcase by selecting the Directory command (using the Navigator browser), then select the Customer Showcase option. On the Customer Showcase page, click the Education Case Studies link.

## Complex Challenges, Conscious Connections, Thoughtful Leadership

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**A**LTHOUGH working as a community college student affairs administrator is not necessarily a difficult job, serving as an effective student affairs leader certainly is. The difficulty does not lie in the implementation of a complex mission. In fact, the missions of student affairs are elegantly simple: to provide services that prepare students for learning and to be partners in the student learning experience. Neither does the interpretation of what it takes to be effective contribute to the challenge, for the interpretation is as clear as the mission is simple. Effectiveness in student affairs can be measured solely by the extent to which intentional interventions enhance student success. Today's effective student affairs leaders not only face increasingly complex challenges, but they realize that their success is dependent upon capturing the support of colleagues and the energy of followers.

### Understanding the Challenges

Challenges to student affairs leaders are presented by our students, by the system, and by our faculty and staff members. Clearly, the students who currently enroll in community colleges differ from those we taught a decade ago. Many of our current students have survived twelve years of elementary and secondary education without understanding how to learn. They arrive in our classrooms with learning styles that differ from the instructor's method of teaching. In addition, the diversity of today's students appears to be expanding exponentially, challenging faculty and staff to facilitate learning for those who don't look, speak, or act like "them." Further complications result when our open-door institutions accept

apathetic, undecided, at-risk, and acting-out students, whose motivations vary widely—ranging from shallow and self-serving, to fragile, to those who befuddle anyone who attempts to understand them. Further complicating the challenge for those who try to help students reach their goals is the breadth of student intent, be it to develop vocational skills, to transfer to a university, to build foundations, to put off impending choices, or to chart new paths. Add to this the burden that accompanies a commuter student with family and work responsibilities, and an overwhelming picture emerges of the difficulty in addressing the needs of the students who attend our colleges.

Although the challenges presented by students are formidable, at times they seem to be the least concern of a student affairs administrator, for the educational system itself makes comparable demands. Foremost among these demands may be the very technology that is a focus of this year's colloquium. For many student affairs administrators, technological support seems to be a distant dream. These administrators are tormented by seeing the technological tools to enhance student success that exist at other colleges while their only option is to perform a comparable task in a labor-intensive manner. Today, the absence of technology makes the routine activities of prior years seem oppressively cumbersome while limiting the time available for more creative and innovative activities.

The demands of internal and external mandates present additional challenges. Present-day administrators experience greater reporting demands to external agencies, greater pressure to demonstrate how programs make a difference, and increased state control

and legislative interference. Although these mandates often result in clearer definition of institutional impact and in greater accountability to our constituents, they also require precious energy and time, thus, limiting our resources to coach staff members and to nurture student success.

An additional challenge from “the system” comes as a consequence of the “new” student described earlier in this paper. Research has documented that the students most in need of support services are the least likely to ask for help (Friedlander, 1980). Acknowledging this, student affairs practitioners must develop a system that reaches out to the college and community, rather than to wait for students to come to them. In addition, practitioners must conceptualize new ways of serving diverse student groups. Often our educational communities do not often welcome minority groups, nor do they always convey to these students that they are important. Addressing these systemic issues is necessary for student affairs staff to facilitate student success.

A third challenge to student affairs administrators is presented by those we try to lead. Our division’s staff members, who are typically experienced and often tenured, present both opportunities and challenges. Opportunities result from the talent, energy, and effort provided by committed professionals. These are the staff members who collaborate with instructional faculty to create courses, who step out into the community to meet under-represented student groups, and who connect with local agencies to extend available services to students. Challenges come from staff who resist changes and new initiatives. Resistance can be demonstrated by reluctance to revise services that address the changing needs of students, by failing to offer programs with clear connection to the teaching/learning process, and by presenting barriers to those staff members who attempt to champion change. Some experienced staff members appear to consistently operate behind the paradigm shift, to be out of touch with current theory and research in our field, and to base decisions more on personal comfort level or conjecture than on data and analysis. Guiding those who resist change toward a new perspective is a formidable task. Leading experienced, independent, and job-secure educators, who may prefer not to be led at all, can require more time than an administrator can afford.

In order to have any chance to promote student success, student affairs leaders must understand the challenges presented by the students, the system, and the staff. Yet, understanding the complexity of the challenges will not in itself effect this desired outcome. A leader’s effectiveness in promoting student success is contingent upon awareness of the challenges, understanding one’s own strengths and liabilities and how they affect the relationships with staff members, and connecting with colleagues to gain institutional support to implement services and programs.

## **Seizing the Opportunities**

A parallel can be drawn between a counselor’s satisfactory resolution of a student’s concern and a leader’s ability to assist a staff member in promoting student success. Excellent community college counselors realize that students send messages indicating what they really need from the counseling relationship. These messages are not always direct and obvious. More often, they are indirect and subtle. For example, a young male student might express his intent to seek counseling as a need for career definition when his core concern is a pervasive belief that he lacks the potential to achieve in any college degree program. Although he might ask to take a career inventory, he will also provide clues that other issues are important. The key to a successful intervention lies in the counselor’s ability to acknowledge the student’s clues and to help the student address them. This task is made simpler because the student will send repeated messages to cue the counselor about the core issues. If the counselor misses the clues initially, other opportunities will be provided, for the student’s lack of comfort will drive his need to continue sending these cues. The success of the counselor-student interaction is contingent upon the counselor striving to understand the student’s core issues. Once these issues are uncovered, progress will likely be made.

Leaders in student affairs are also sent cues by their staff members regarding what they need to effectively promote student success. Sometimes these cues are more subtle than direct. A financial aid director might express frustration with the extent of federal and state mandated reports when the essence of the message is the lack of time or staff available to help students

resolve their financial difficulties. A director of admissions might call attention to the lack of a secure records retention system when the main concern is the lack of value that the institution places on issues she is charged to implement. The challenge to effective leaders is to listen to their colleagues and to sort beyond the stated and toward the subtle message, for therein lies the critical issue that must be addressed.

Followers often present these kinds of issues to leaders. These issues become “defining moments” that determine a leader’s style and potential effectiveness. Ignoring the subtle messages results in missed opportunities to establish a relationship with subordinates that will promote student success. This does not mean that the student affairs division will be ineffective in promoting student success. Rather, it indicates that the staff are accomplishing the mission of the division without the assistance that a leader is expected to offer.

In this context, leading must be a high touch activity. An administrator wears many hats, including those of management, planning, supervision, organization, and hopefully leadership. Furthermore, administrators choose the hats that define their work. Thus one can be thoughtful in planning and excellent in managing while avoiding altogether the issue of leading. If, however, an administrator chooses to view leading as an aspect of the responsibilities, it will be necessary to consider the relationships with those who are supervised.

Drucker (1996) states that “a leader is not someone who is loved and admired. He or she is someone whose followers do the right thing. Popularity is not leadership. Results are.” Using Drucker’s definition, the question might be asked, “how can a leader help followers do the right thing and make a difference in enhancing student success?” One answer stems from the leader’s acknowledgment of total dependence on followers to get results. Another results from seizing opportunities presented by followers to contribute to the solution. Just as students subtly share their true needs with counselors, so do followers define their needs to leaders. By understanding and addressing these needs, a leader accepts the responsibility to become a partner with his/her staff in fulfilling the mission of student affairs. Understanding the challenges presented by the students, the system, and the staff presents a perspective from which to lead. Seizing the opportunities by listening to “defining moments” with followers enables a leader to actually become involved in promoting student learning.

## Connecting as a Model

The next step in becoming a “high touch” leader lies in identifying a model to guide both thoughts and actions. Such a model can be found in *The Connective Edge, Leading in an Interdependent World*, by Jean Lipman-Blumen (1996). Lipman-Blumen suggests that a fundamental shift in leadership will result from the tension caused by the antithetical forces of interdependence and diversity. Technological advances have virtually eliminated global barriers, rendering autonomous decisions obsolete. The elimination of geographic, political, and economic boundaries has led to an interdependent world and, in the process, an awareness of the inter-relatedness among members of any organization, including those working in academic institutions. At the same time, the diversity of the marketplace manifests itself in individualism, an appreciation of distinctive identity, racial and ethnic pride. Diversity demands recognition of separate entities while interdependence calls for all to work as one.

Lipman-Blumen uses the existence of the antithetical forces of diversity and interdependence as the foundation for a connective leadership model. She describes leaders as emphasizing “both mutuality (a focus on common interests and values) and inclusiveness (the willingness to include even those very different from the rest, without requiring their homogenization)” (Lipman-Blumen, p. 12). Connective leaders must view the system in its totality, emphasize similarities rather than differences, and join forces rather than issue orders. In addition, connective leaders must be willing to negotiate, sensitive to the political forces that effect a solution, and able to build communities where everyone wins something at least some of the time.

Of course, the connective model described by Lipman-Blumen is much more elaborate than this. However, these core components of connective leadership are consistently reflected in the work of successful educational administrators. For example, few supervisors can ignore the impact of diversity on the operation of a college. Certainly, community college students represent great variations in race, ethnicity, age, ability, intent, status, and income. The open-access philosophy, a cornerstone of the community college movement, directs our institutions to accept anyone with the potential to benefit. In addition, statements emphasizing the importance of multiculturalism and diversity are common components of a college mission statement. Finally, all community college faculty and staff are keenly aware that today’s students are more diverse than in prior years, a trend that will persist into the future.

Interdependence is an equally common component of the community college structure. Oddly enough, the privilege of tenure, and the autonomy and independence that accompanies the teaching profession, requires educational leaders to acknowledge their dependence upon collaborative and inclusive approaches to get things done. Heavy-handed approaches intended to direct the course of events will typically result in resentment and a resistance to comply. Few educational leaders possess the charisma or the wisdom to commandeer the troops. Rather, successful administrators acknowledge their interdependence with the faculty and staff, and seek to build alliances where everyone wins sometimes.

Just as all effective educational leaders incorporate the elements of connective leadership, so do successful student affairs administrators embrace the core concepts of the model. Effective student affairs leaders realize the necessity of developing partnerships with academic affairs, for the “business” of colleges is to provide instruction. Although both instruction and student affairs share student success as the criteria for effectiveness, the work of student affairs is dependent upon the quality of the initiatives taking place in the classroom. Colleges that do not promote academic achievement are meaningless institutions. Learning that occurs outside of the classroom, whether in a leadership seminar, in a career clarification process, through organizing a college activity, or by developing resume skills, would not occur if the student did not enroll in courses at the college.

Student affairs leaders will also benefit from using political strategies and skills. The value in this connective element lies in the imbalance of power that exists between student affairs and other areas of the college. The primacy of instruction has been noted in the preceding paragraph. The power of instruction is further clarified by acknowledging that seventy percent or more of the institution’s financial resources will be committed to instructional activities while ten to fifteen percent of the money will go to student affairs. Although business services will also receive ten to fifteen percent of the budget, the business manager controls the assets, typically tipping the balance of control in the direction of the business office. Student affairs leaders are best served, therefore, by developing interconnections whenever possible with whomever possible. Essentially, they are “joining their vision to the dreams of others; by connecting and combining, rather than dividing and conquering” (Lipman-Blumen, p. 17).

One should not think that student affairs staff must employ connective strategies merely as a defensive strategy to overcome a powerful adversary. Far from it. Many of the elements of connective leadership are central to the strengths of student affairs practitioners. For example, the ability to communicate and to understand both the expressed and the unexpressed needs of others, so central to the work of a student affairs professional, provides a foundation to identify commonalities when resolving problems. This foundation helps a student affairs leader build communities where diverse groups can enjoy a sense of belonging. Also, a fundamental respect for very diverse students keeps student affairs staff open to involving those very different from the norm in leadership opportunities. Powerful leadership teams result from this inclusion, comprised of individuals seeking to be challenged while being encouraged to share their unique perspectives and views. Finally, just as the field of student affairs is grounded in service to others, so too will the student affairs leader easily accept responsibility for combating college-wide problems, and seek connections with colleagues that will promote student learning, growth, and development.

The connective model presents challenges not only to leaders, but to followers as well. Faculty and staff can no longer wait for the supervisor to point the way. A student affairs division, emphasizing shared solutions rather than isolated decisions, has no room for passivity or spectatorship. Rather, the model assumes that the opportunity for, as well as the burden of, leadership is distributed among all staff members. Constituents must revise their expectations of the leader as the initiator of ideas and activities. They must act as partners in charting the course for the division, by suggesting priorities and accepting the responsibility to implement mutually determined goals in ways that will best contribute to student success.

## Questions and Conclusions

Four points emerge from this analysis of the role of the student affairs leader:

1. *Leading is extremely hard work.* Those who accept the challenge of leadership may be already overwhelmed by student challenges, by a system that appears to compound rather than resolve problems, and by staff members who seek their personal comfort over the needs of those they are paid to help. Who can blame anyone choosing to reject the burdens that accompany leadership?

2. *Even among excellent administrators, good leadership is hard to find.* There is a great need for leadership, and yet we see it less and less. Student affairs administrators wear many hats, including managing projects, supervising staff, implementing activities, writing reports, meeting mandates, resolving conflicts, evaluating effectiveness, and developing plans. Unfortunately, after all the tasks are completed, little time or energy remains to lead change and clarify direction.

Warren Bennis is frequently quoted as saying that “Leaders don’t just do things right. They do the right thing”(1989). With so many “things” for a student affairs administrator to do right, how can time be found to do the right thing? And then again, what price is paid for the lack of leadership and direction present in many of our organizations and institutions?

3. *Leading is evidenced through the actions of followers.* Leaders achieve little if not through the efforts of others. DePree states that “The signs of leadership are among the followers. Are they achieving the desired results?”(1989). Just as our effectiveness in student affairs is contingent upon the success of our students, so too is the success of a leader contingent upon the results of those charged to implement the goals and objectives.

Leaders use high touch activities to influence the behavior of followers. Leaders empower, collaborate, compromise, listen, coach, persuade, or motivate other staff to achieve an end result. Leaders must demonstrate authenticity to keep followers from questioning the motives behind these attempts to influence. If the leader is genuine and trusted, high touch behaviors will capture the support of followers and increase the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes.

4. *Leading requires connections—with constituents, with colleagues, and with community.* Lipman-Blumen describes connective leaders as forming a “community of shared actions, values and responsibilities” (p. 235). Elaborate connections among key players enhance the commitment necessary to achieve the desired result. In a diverse yet interdependent world, more can be accomplished through supportive networks and alliances than through independent action.

In conclusion, leading is a difficult yet vital component of a student affairs administrator’s responsibilities. Only by understanding the complexities of the task, embracing defining moments, developing the necessary connections with constituents, and accepting leadership as a core responsibility can an administrator contribute to student success.

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## High Touch + High Tech = Student Success

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### A Question of Balance

**B**EFORE computers arrived on the scene, student affairs practitioners—and their leaders—wore the high touch label proudly. No one dared to fold, spindle or mutilate a student! Then came the computer followed by the techno-managers with their pledge to use technology to contain costs and increase services. Almost immediately, student affairs practitioners began the polarization process. “Techno-peasants” clustered at one end of the spectrum clinging to their pencils and the belief that every student needed hands-on services; at the other end were the “techno-wizards” contending that machines could do it all, and one-to-one student contact was an unaffordable luxury. Most student affairs leaders sought the middle ground but found it more and more challenging to bridge the gaps within their division, build teams, connect with staff and colleagues across campus, manage day-to-day activities, and plan strategically. So the leaders chose to become planners and managers, to focus on software and systems, and to reject the burdens that all too often confront those who try to lead in student affairs.

This discussion is about finding the balance between high touch and high tech, between managing and leading, and between the burdens and rewards of leadership. It also is about the future of student affairs in the community college and the characteristics of the high touch-high tech leaders who will help practitioners create that future.

### Defining High Touch Leadership

In *Gifts Differing* (1980), Isabel Briggs-Myers observed that “Thinking and feeling are rival instruments of decision. Both are reasonable and consistent, but each works by its own standards (p. 65).” Research using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator confirms that 50% of Americans use the Feeling (F) function and 50% use the Thinking (T) function to reach a conclusion. For student affairs leaders, this means that approximately 50% of any staff (the Feeling half) require workplace harmony, tact, and a sense of connectedness with their fellow workers in order to function effectively, while 50% (the Thinking half) respond to an organization that is logical and truthful, and rewards achievements. In addition to the MBTI research, leaders in education and business consistently cite the role that connectedness, partnerships, team building, and rewards play in the evolution of successful organizations (Baker, 1995; Culp, 1995; Helfgot and Culp, 1995; Hubbard, 1993; Myer, 1994; and Mohnman, 1995).

High touch leaders are aware of these research results and create environments that encourage connections, reward partnership initiatives, consciously build teams, and recognize that staff members are unique individuals who require reward systems tailored to their needs, not the needs of the institution. High touch leaders also realize that people are assets who need maintenance schedules, regular tune ups, and emergency road service as much, if not more, than cars and computers. They understand that without adequate mentoring, practitioners hired for their skills will be fired either for their personality (no “fit” with their campus and colleagues) or performance (inability to

produce at the required level). High touch leaders establish maintenance schedules for every staff member, interpret the campus culture to new employees, and employ a variety of hands-on management techniques to shape practitioners' on-the-job interpersonal skills and improve day-to-day performance. High touch leaders use an expanded definition of hands-on, one that includes e-mail, voice mail and any electronic approaches that allow them to communicate with their staff.

## Identifying the Skills Needed by High Touch Leaders

High touch leaders realize that they cannot do everything themselves, that power resides in the team, and that every employee is both an individual with unique ideas and needs and a team member who must learn to work with others to achieve common goals. Below are the twelve essential skills that successful high touch leaders need to master.

### Skills Needed by High Touch Student Affairs Leaders

**Access and Share.** Find and distribute information. Open doors for staff members, then invite them to use the doors to create programs and services.

**Allocate Resources.** Identify priorities. Distribute budget and personnel resources to support these priorities.

**Champion Student Affairs.** Spread the word about the relationship between student affairs and student success in an intelligent, ethical, and institution-appropriate manner.

**Delegate.** Share responsibility, authority, power and credit with those people or teams who get the job done.

**Focus and Forecast.** Work with staff to interpret data, identify opportunities and threats, and define priorities. Set clear goals. Establish outcome measures.

**Link and Leverage.** Connect student affairs staff to one another, the campus, and the community. Use these linkages to create programs and processes that increase the chances that students will succeed.

**Motivate and Monitor.** Identify the unique motivators to which each person responds. Develop and follow a professional development and a maintenance schedule for all staff. Gather data to monitor progress toward goals without interfering with the work of the team.

**Take Risks.** Help team members to identify and take reasonable risks—and to learn from their mistakes.

**Tie High Tech, High Touch, and High Quality Together.** Differentiate between those functions that require high tech and those that require high touch. Allocate resources accordingly. Use student success as a yardstick to measure program quality.

**Translate Learning into Action.** Help staff members and students translate what they know in an abstract way into concrete programs and services with the potential to increase the chances that students will succeed at the college and in life.

**Translate Research into Programs.** Help staff members keep up-to-date on research in adult development, the teaching-learning process, student affairs, and organizational management. Encourage them to use research results to create and pilot test new programs and services.

**Use Student Success as a Yardstick.** Provide practitioners with information about how their programs and services contribute to the institution's bottom line: student success. Translate outcomes data into terms easily understood by the campus, the community, and the college's funding sources: the percentage of students who define and reach their goals because of programs and services offered by the student affairs office.

## Defining the Responsibilities and Challenges Faced by High Touch Leaders

Volumes have been written about the responsibilities and challenges facing community colleges and student affairs in the twenty-first century (Bensimon, 1994; Boland, Stomatakos, and Rogers, 1994; Creamer, 1994; Culp, 1995; Dassance, 1994; Garland, 1993; Helfgot and Culp, 1995; Hudgins, Oliver, and Williams, 1993; Kladvko and Rostok, 1988; Moore, 1990; Pincus, 1994; and Richardson and Wolverton, 1994). Even more has been written about designing or re-designing effective organizations (Baker, 1995; Banner and Gagne, 1994; Block, 1987; Bolman and Teal, 1991; Dunn, 1977; French and Bell, 1990; Juran, 1989; Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Lawyer, 1995; Mohnman, 1995; Senge, 1990; Tapscott and Hill, 1993; and Yukl, 1994). But student affairs leaders need to focus on four high touch responsibilities that can make or break their professional lives, the practitioners with whom they work, and the students whose academic success often depends on connecting with a strong network of support services.

**Responsibility #1: Understand and Shape the Organizational Culture.** Before student affairs leaders can begin to understand and shape a campus culture, they must accept two basic premises: (a) organizations

are neither objective nor rational, and (b) since organizations are associations of people, people (not machines) will present the challenges with which leaders must deal on a day-to-day basis. Having said that, there are eight basic strategies that leaders can use to understand and shape a college's culture: (a) publish a mission statement for student affairs, (b) gather baseline data to determine how close student affairs staff come to living up to their mission, (c) develop procedures to demonstrate that student affairs programs are effective and that there is a link between these programs and student success, (d) infiltrate the academic and business office cultures to better understand how to communicate with each, (e) study resource allocation patterns to better understand the college's power structure and priorities, (f) create a three-to-five year plan for every department within student affairs, (g) educate campus and community leaders about the role student affairs must play in the life of a successful community college, and (h) create partnerships with campus and community leaders.

**Responsibility #2: Build Teams.** One person can make a difference, but one person cannot do it all, which is why teams are critical in student affairs. Effective teams have members who are inclusive, goal oriented, respectful of differences, and master negotiators and problem solvers. In the best sense of the term, effective teams become high-powered learning communities. What high touch strategies can student affairs leaders use to encourage these teams to develop? Once again, there are eight strategies: (a) help practitioners understand the college's vision for the future—and the part they will play in making that vision a reality, (b) provide team members with the training and the tools that they need to stay ahead of the curve, (c) schedule activities to build team trust and pride, (d) help team members master conflict resolution techniques, (e) teach teams to use partnerships to increase their spheres of influence, (f) coach teams to develop realistic implementation timelines and outcomes assessment techniques, (g) empower team members, and (h) allow team members to learn from their mistakes.

**Responsibility #3: Create a Climate that Values Change.** Change is exciting but frightening, necessary but chaotic, an opportunity for some but a threat to many. High touch student affairs leaders realize that they have two main responsibilities in relation to the change process: (a) establish clear priorities, since everything cannot happen at once and happen well, and (b) identify the type of changes that the institution values. There are five high touch strategies that student affairs leaders can use to create a climate that supports change: (a) prepare staff members by helping

them acquire the skills needed to participate in the re-engineering process and become valuable members of the "new" team, (b) support the risk takers by recognizing and rewarding their successes and encouraging them to learn from their failures, (c) provide neutral staff members with data about proposed changes and encourage them to support the risk takers, (d) identify and neutralize the saboteurs by reassigning or removing them before they cripple the team, and (e) teach that conflict is healthy and show team members how to manage it.

**Responsibility #4: Know When to Lead and When to Follow.** Effective high touch student affairs leaders are good followers, guides, coaches, mirrors and cheerleaders. As guides, they hold the compass, but teach others to read it. As coaches, they develop the playbook, take the heat when the play does not work, and give credit to the team when the play is successful. As mirrors, they reflect campus and community realities and keep the team connected to the larger community. As cheerleaders, high touch leaders celebrate with the team—not for them—and never take credit for the team's accomplishments.

## Moving Forward: The Future for High Touch in Student Affairs

Is it possible for high tech and high touch student affairs programs to co-exist in the community college, or will limited resources force institutions to choose between these two delivery systems? There are four reasons why high touch programs and high touch leaders have a future in community colleges in the next decade: (1) the open door philosophy, (2) the faculty, (3) performance-based funding, and (4) Tech Prep.

**The Open Door.** Without high touch activities, the open door will continue to be a revolving door for at-risk students and students from underrepresented populations, many of whom lack access to or trust in the high tech world. Technology allows student affairs practitioners to create high touch programs for the student populations that need them rather than offering high touch options to all students. The time saved by computerizing basic operational activities allows practitioners to teach students when, where, why and how to use technology—definitely a high touch activity.

**The Faculty.** Across the country, community college faculty members are in pain as they struggle to teach students who do not look like, think like, or respond to the same motivational approaches as their predecessors. Population demographics change so rapidly in

some areas that new student profiles differ dramatically from term to term. Strategies that work one semester fail the next. Solutions begin with information and support, both of which are available through the student affairs office. Computers can generate much of this information (test scores, learning styles, personalized educational and support service plans, teaching approaches to which the student may respond); but someone has to gather the information, assist the faculty to understand and use it, help students apply skills gained in the classroom to the real world, and troubleshoot student problems. All of these are high touch activities.

**Performance-Based Funding.** As more and more states tie some or all of higher education's funding to student outcomes, community colleges that help students define goals, identify needed academic and support services, and deal with obstacles to goal achievement will be ahead of the game. Student affairs staff who use technology to gather basic data, provide routine services, and track progress toward goal achievement contribute to their institution's bottom line. Practitioners who create high touch interventions to recruit, support, and graduate at-risk students, particularly those from underrepresented populations, increase their institution's ability to benefit from performance-based funding.

**Tech Prep.** Hailed as the savior for the neglected majority (Parnell, 1985), Tech Prep was embraced by community colleges and public school systems across the nation, but problems are surfacing, particularly in areas where the K-12 system lacks a strong career counseling program. Tech Prep requires middle and high school students to identify a career at a point in their lives when they can barely order lunch, choose a movie, or select their clothes without input from a dozen friends! Community college student affairs staff can use Tech Prep not only to create career counseling partnerships with the public school system, but also to demonstrate how high tech and high touch can work together to produce a model career counseling program.

## Finding the Balance

How do student affairs leaders and the practitioners with whom they work balance high touch and high tech on a day-to-day basis? There is no magic formula, but there are some guidelines.

**1. Discard the Either-Or Mentality.** Practitioners need to know when to use high tech and when to use high touch, and they must feel comfortable moving between the two delivery systems.

- 2. Learn About High Tech.** Do student affairs leaders need to become systems analysts or certified network engineers? No! But they do need the skills to develop relationships with the programmers and the operating system experts, identify their technology needs, and work with the high tech staff to create systems that meet these needs. They also need timely, useful training in all operating systems and software applications.
- 3. Understand and Influence the Institutional Climate in Relation to Technology.** Too often, student affairs leaders are passive participants in the technology debate, accepting whatever equipment and operating systems they receive, taking "no" as a standard answer, and settling for systems and procedures that meet the needs of the data center staff rather than the needs of the students. High touch student affairs leaders shape campus technology decisions by clearly identifying and articulating their needs, participating on campus technology committees, and providing feedback to the institution on the effectiveness of the current technology.
- 4. Create High Tech-High Touch Partnerships.** Properly used, high tech frees staff members to provide intense personal service to those who need it. Figure 1 offers a few examples of productive high tech-high touch partnerships in place at community colleges across the country.
- 5. Tailor Leadership Strategies to the Individual.** When it comes to clothing, one size rarely fits everyone—and one leadership strategy does not bring out the best in every student affairs practitioner. Technology allows leaders to reach out and touch team members in new and unique ways. For example, one dean of students posts her weekly schedule on an electronic bulletin board, explains how each activity on her schedule benefits the college, summarizes the division's achievements for the previous week, and recognizes outstanding performances. Another uses e-mail to keep in touch with staff members when she is off campus and to monitor each team's progress and problems via electronic bulletin boards. Technology also enables leaders to use different approaches to train staff members. Given a computer disk and enough time, some staff members train themselves. Others need hands-on training, while the majority respond best to one-on-one coaching in the trenches.

## Expanding the Scope of the High Touch–High Tech–High Quality Debate

This discussion offered a definition of high touch leadership in student affairs, identified some of the responsibilities and challenges faced by high touch leaders, outlined the skills needed to meet these challenges, and built a case for the importance of high touch

programs and leaders in the community colleges of the future. Having said all of this, it is obvious that student affairs practitioners cannot conduct business as usual in the twenty-first century. The essential question is, how do student affairs staff balance high tech with high touch in order to achieve high quality outcomes for our students?

HIGH TECH	HIGH TOUCH
<p>Automatic teller machines are placed at strategic locations across the campus. Students use the machines to access advising, records, and registration information.</p>	<p>Student affairs practitioners design the screens, identify the information each will contain, and determine when a student needs to meet with a human being rather than a machine. Practitioners teach students how to use the automatic teller machines.</p>
<p>New students complete a questionnaire evaluating their chances of success in college, identifying needed support services, and listing the clubs and organizations they would like to join. Responses are computer tabulated. Clubs and organizations receive printouts and mailing labels from interested students. Academic and non-academic support services receive printouts and mailing labels for students anticipating academic difficulty or requesting support services.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Faculty sponsors and club members contact students and encourage them to join their club or organization.</li> <li>2. Counselors contact at-risk students to encourage them to register for a College Success course and/or seminars in study skills, test-taking skills, and time management.</li> <li>3. Support service staffs schedule individual or group appointments with at-risk students to develop support service plans.</li> </ol>
<p>In cooperation with the faculty, the student affairs office develops a profile of the student least likely to remain in college and reach his/her goal. The computer scans the data base each semester to identify the new students whose demographic data fits the profile, tracks their academic progress, and provides term-by-term exception reports.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The college assigns each high-risk student to a counselor, advisor, or faculty mentor who connects these students to academic and non-academic support services before they run into academic difficulty.</li> <li>2. The college monitors its ability to meet the needs of these high-risk students by asking a random sample to keep diaries, participate in focus groups, or meet periodically with campus leaders.</li> </ol>
<p>Disabled student services sends a computer-generated letter to faculty members who have disabled students in their classes. Sent with the student's permission, the letter outlines the disabling condition, suggests teaching strategies to which the disabled student may respond, and asks the faculty member to provide bi-weekly progress information on the student.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff members who work with disabled students follow each letter with a telephone call or a personal visit to the faculty member to answer questions and troubleshoot problems.</li> <li>2. Staff members use the bi-weekly progress reports to intervene with students before they receive mid-term or final grades.</li> </ol>
<p>Career Center staff use DISCOVER to help undecided students identify their occupational interests.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Counselors offer small group sessions to help students understand their interest profile and identify some career options.</li> <li>2. Cooperative education staff provide students with opportunities to test out their career choices.</li> </ol>

Fig. 1. Examples of Productive High Tech-High Touch Partnerships

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## High Quality in Community College Student Services

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### Shifting The Student Services Paradigm

**P**ARADIGMS form the boundaries for the way in which we view the world. These boundaries can force us to be blind to other ways of viewing what we do, solving problems, and bringing about systemic change. We begin to accept what we are doing as the “only way” or doing the “best that we know how.” In these instances, we develop “paradigm paralysis.”

A new paradigm for community college student services should evolve from “providing services to students” to “fostering student development/learning through continuous quality improvement,” from access to success, from serving students to supporting student learning, from isolation to team work with faculty and support staff, from individual to group work, and from service orientation to resource management. The vehicle for this paradigm shift can be the quality education movement.

### Quality

Quality must be transformed from meaning “more and better of everything” to “searching relentlessly for means of improvement that reduce costs while maintaining or enhancing quality.” The quest for quality must become a structured system for creating organization-wide participation in the planning and implementation of a continuous improvement process that

exceeds the needs of the customers/clients. Total quality is a philosophy which engulfs every process, every job, and every person in the college.

### Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

The quality education movement is predicated on searching unceasingly for ever higher levels of quality by isolating sources of defects. CQI represents a systematic college-wide approach for continuously improving all processes that deliver the college’s services. CQI involves focusing the college’s activities on its customers, basing decisions on data and data analysis, and involving everyone in quality, as team members and individually. All processes within the student development area can and should be improved. A constancy of purpose must underlie the shift in the paradigm.

The “cycle of control” or the “plan, do, check, act” improvement cycle, can serve student development professionals as a means to strive for total quality through continuous quality improvement. This cycle is outlined below:

- Plan: define the system (flowchart)  
assess current situation  
analyze causes (root causes)
- Do: try out improvement
- Check: study the results
- Act: standardize improvements  
plan for continuous improvement

## House of Quality

The metaphor of a house is useful in describing quality in student development. The house consists of a series of systems and four pillars. People work in a system. The job of an administrator is to work on the system, to improve it continuously, with the help of the people who work in the system. There are three types of systems as discussed below:

**Social system** includes the reward system, the symbols of power, the relationships between people and among groups, the privileges, the skills and style, the politics, the power structure, the shaping of the norms and values and the “human side of enterprise.”

In order to change the culture of an organization one must address six aspects of the social system:

- environment
- service
- methods
- people
- organizational structure
- continuous quality improvement mindset

Obviously, the social system is complex and takes time to change. A long-range view is necessary when approaching the student development area’s culture. Constancy of purpose will serve as the focal point for social system change. Everyone should be focused on meeting and exceeding customer needs.

**Technical system** contains all of the tools and equipment, the practice of quality science, and the quantitative aspects of quality. The technical system contains these core elements:

- technology in use
- technology/people interface
- pursuit of standardization
- workflow, materials and specifications
- job definitions and responsibilities
- number and type of work steps
- availability and use of information
- decision making processes
- problem solving processes
- physical arrangements of people, equipment and materials

While the technical system has many components, it is relatively easy to change. People are often willing and able to change their work processes to help serve customers if they are given the opportunity to make real decisions and the expectation that “good enough” is not acceptable.

**Administrative system** is the leadership system and measurement system of the organization. There are four aspects of the administrative system:

- Strategy management—establish mission, vision, guiding principles and infrastructure.
- Process management—assure that all key processes are working in harmony to guarantee customer satisfaction.
- Project management—teams which plan, organize, implement, and control all resources and activities needed for successful completion of a project.
- Individual activity management to implement continuous improvement of process and systems under each employee’s work function and control. The tools of this part of the administrative system often involve quality journals, individual mission statements, and flowcharting.

## Pillars of Quality

There are four pillars to the “house of quality.” Each pillar is vital to maintain the balance needed for a house to stand. One weak pillar will eventually affect the strength of the entire house.

**Serving The Customer:** There are two basic types of customers for student development staff. Internal customers are the students, faculty/counselors, administrators, staff, departments/divisions, and programs served by the staff of the student development area. The second type of customer, external customers, contains both direct and indirect customers. Direct external customers include trustees, employers, other colleges/universities, and feeder schools. Indirect external customers include the legislature, community, accrediting agencies, alumni, and donors. Serving the customer provides a unifying focus on what the college does and who it serves.

**Continuous Improvement:** This pillar is both a commitment and a process. Commitment is a statement of dedication to a shared mission and vision and the empowerment of all participants to incrementally move toward the vision. Process consists of small, short-term projects and tasks throughout the organization which work to achieve the mission. Process depends on two elements; (1) learning appropriate processes, tools, and skills, and (2) practicing these skills on projects.

**Managing with Facts:** “In God we trust, all others bring facts.” Collect objective data to have valid information and make decisions according to the information using the quality tools of:

- fishbone diagrams
- affinity diagrams
- brainstorming
- flowcharts
- interviews
- force-field analysis
- pareto diagram
- surveys

**Respect for people:** The quality of output goes hand-in-hand with the quality of work. Administrators must create a sense of purpose in the student development area by:

- keeping people informed and involved
- educating and developing people
- helping people communicate well
- delegating responsibility and authority downward, so people take the initiative to make things better.

## Barriers to Implementing Quality in Student Development

There are, at least, seven barriers to implementing quality in the student development area:

**Skepticism**—Another educational “fad!” We don’t produce widgets! What works in business, won’t work in education!

**Time**—Another “add-on!” We are too busy providing services! This is unproductive time!

**Language**—Jargon laden! Inappropriate for education setting! “Customers,” “quality control,” “performance measures” are all terms foreign to educators. Euphemism for “downsizing.”

**Tradition**—Higher educational institutions are the longest lasting societal institution except for the church. We are doing it the best anyway! We are in good shape, we don’t need it, others do!

**Shared governance**—Subunits do their own things. The faculty/counselors are the decision makers, not the administrators. Anything takes forever to begin. All initiatives get “watered-down” in the committee system.

**Dysfunctional units**—Will remain dysfunctional. This system is not for the purpose of curing the ills of poor units.

**Attitude**—“We are the best!” “Are you questioning our ability?” “We are professionals, we know what we are doing!” “Who says we need improvement?”

## Initiating the Paradigm Shift in Student Services

The following five strategies will assist student development professionals in bringing about the paradigm shift in student services.

1. Provide support from the top. There should be a firm commitment from the chief executive officer and chief student services officer to bring about change. This strategy is critical for success. Administrators must “walk the talk.”
2. Use teams. Appoint, train, empower, and hold people accountable. Build the team through the stages of forming, storming, norming, and performing. Focus the team on the tasks to be performed and the importance of team maintenance to insure team cohesion.
3. Just do it! Don’t study it to death. Pick an area that is easy to do, or important to do, and start now!
4. Be the champion! Get it going, keep it going, and make sure changes (solutions) are made. Don’t just “walk the talk,” “run it!”
5. Use “breakthrough planning.” Do first things first. Develop the vision and mission, identify and clarify the customers and the critical processes and priority breakthrough items. Focus efforts on processes which really make a difference.

## Systems That Support High Quality Student Services

Student Services units that are striving for continual improvement require support systems that will enhance their ability to be effective and efficient in fostering student development. Some of these systems or processes can be developed internally with in-house stakeholders or customers and others require partnership efforts with external customers. The key issue is that collaboration and teamwork are central to any development and implementation of quality strategies.

There are several indicators of student services support systems that contribute to an environment in which continuous quality improvement can be sustained. Many of these systems are interrelated and most require the involvement of student services staff at all levels and staff from other units on a campus. Increasingly, multi-unit efforts contribute to building stronger ties with community agencies, business and industry, and other segments of education. It is also through intra- and inter-unit cooperation that

territorial barriers are diminished on a campus and a comprehensive focus is given to problem solving and program development.

The following five systems represent ones that are essential for continuous quality improvement of student services programs:

### **1. Student Database**

Development of a strong student database is essential in supporting student services in areas such as program planning and development, staff in-service, program review, and quality improvement. Planning improvement strategies and checking results after implementation require not only quantitative data but qualitative measures as well. A comprehensive database should include the following elements:

- Student demographic data and other information including educational goal, declared major, matriculating status, employment status, income level, plans after community college, and day/evening attendance;
- Educational outcomes data, such as course completion rate, retention and persistence information, and basic skills assessment and course placement data;
- Services data including declared need for services; services received; service provider(s); and referral to services;
- Changing student demographics necessitate the collection of additional data, such as first language indicator, first generation college student, and type of disability.

Data collection systems and data retrieval processes are critical issues facing student services professionals in the establishment of continuous quality improvement mechanisms. Developing a strong database involves staff from student services working with instruction, assessment, research, and computer services staff.

### **2. Student Services Mission and Goals**

Establishment of mission and goals for student services provides a focus and vision for the unit and can serve as a mechanism to connect all staff to the visions of others. Mission and goal statements can guide daily decisions that are necessary to address fast changes occurring with frequency in the institution. Working under a set of common values supports an environment for team approaches to problem solving and development of quality strategies.

Mission statements for student services could address the following areas: 1) support for student learning and for achievement of educational and career goals; 2) provision of quality service through teamwork; and 3) enhancement of personal and professional growth for all student services staff. Some of the goals that would strengthen the functions of student services components are:

- Provide quality student services and activities that support student learning and success toward the students' goals;
- Promote coordination with other functional units on campus;
- Implement a continuing process for student services program review;
- Develop and implement computer systems and technology that support efficiency of student services' operations;
- Support staff development activities of student services personnel;
- Review and revise facility plans for student services components;
- Strengthen collaborative efforts with external agencies such as feeder schools, senior transfer institutions, community agencies, and private sector organizations;
- Promote diverse student participation in all student services programs and activities.

### **3. Student Services Component Plans**

Based on the mission and goals established, each student services component should develop a short term plan that can be reviewed and revised on a yearly basis. It is important to spend time planning with all staff involved, but most of the effort should be dedicated to piloting, reviewing, refining, and implementing quality processes and systems. Although long term strategic planning has been the established process for many community college campuses in the last decade, it is the shorter term plans that provide more immediate tangible results and the most flexibility for team approaches to address complex issues and problems.

Clearly delineated component plans also allow for involvement of other campus units as well as external customers. Accountability measures, as well as teams and leaders responsible for implementation of strategies, are better identified when plans are specific and measurable.

#### 4. Program Review Process

Categorically funded student services programs such as financial aid are subject to federal and state reviews and audits that primarily respond to legal mandates. This type of program review seldom addresses the issues of quality improvement and the processes that are essential to fostering student development, teamwork and team decision making, customer service, and collaborative approaches. Yet, many student services programs continue to function without internal program assessment or review systems in place.

Traditionally, student services professionals have maintained that it is difficult to measure the impact of our “product” on student outcomes unlike the instructional function. But in the last ten years, greater emphasis has been placed on measuring institutional effectiveness incorporating all the major functional units of college campuses.

Few models have been developed for reviewing student services programs specifically. Therefore, the commitment for determining appropriate processes for internal program assessment remains with the individual college campuses. In developing an internal program review process, it is important to consider the following guidelines:

- Start a pilot project of program review with one of the least complex programs.
- Internal program review is just that—internal. It should be developed by the staff who are providing the services. The questions must first be posed by the people who work in the institution to support student development.
- Use surveys to ask the questions of students, faculty, administrators, and staff.
- Build a cycle to review each program at least every three to four years.
- Once the model is developed, put it out for consultation with the total campus community. If appropriate, have the model reviewed by external customers.
- Use the results for planning and for developing team approaches to program improvement.

#### 5. Staff Development

As the paradigm shifts to community based, customer based, and learner based student services, the need increases to provide comprehensive staff development activities on the campus. In particular,

student services staff must become more involved in professional development programs campuswide to maintain an institutional perspective and to contribute to the college agenda for student development and community awareness.

Recent student demographics point out that community college students have multiple commitments including family, employment, and education. More than ever, students are becoming “in and out” customers of community college services as they respond to the many demands in their lives. No longer do students place education as a top priority when economic, social, and family pressures demand their attention. Increasing number of immigrant students and other students with special needs also require new, different, and intensive approaches to service delivery. In addition, the new Welfare Reform Act enacted in 1996 poses new challenges for community colleges to provide short term training and life skills to customers that will access higher education for the first time.

As community colleges become more learner centered, greater demands are placed on human resources. Staff development, then, plays a key role in educating college staff in new approaches to student development. Above all, it is critical that staff development activities not be developed in isolation but rather with campuswide representation and involvement from all units. Comprehensive and inclusive planning for staff development supports the tenets of quality improvement for educational programs and services, and is essential to institutional effectiveness and efficiency.

#### Models for the Future

As we approach the 21st century, it becomes evident that community colleges face new challenges with old levels of resources. At the national, state, and local levels the shift is toward new and stronger partnerships among public and private agencies and educational institutions. Some of the recent models include School to Work, Tech Prep Programs, One Stop Career Centers, and Service Learning.

Local initiatives on college campuses are supporting partnerships between instruction and student services faculty in areas such as team instruction, career planning, learning skills development, and mentoring activities.

Greater emphasis is being placed on cooperative activities with feeder school districts, including curriculum articulation, team teaching projects, college orientation courses offered at high school sites, on-site admissions and registration for high school seniors, and joint staff development activities.

Employer/college relations are expanding to include student internships, career awareness, employment preparation, and advisory councils to determine appropriate curriculum and student services.

Community colleges and universities have developed Transfer Center models where the presence of university representatives is used to provide student information and in-service activities for community college faculty and staff. Data is exchanged on potential transfer students to facilitate the transfer process.

It is expected that collaborative approaches will continue into the next decade, providing an excellent opportunity for student services to form new partnerships in support of student development. Traditionally, Student Services has been considered the functional unit on a campus that is focused more on process and on a holistic approach to students. The concept of continuous quality improvement supports both these approaches and should prove compatible with the nature of the student services "business." The new models indicate that holistic approaches, team strategies, and process are the mechanisms that are going to be essential to support student learning and success.

## **PART II**

### **Balancing High Tech, High Touch, and High Quality — A Summary of Group Sessions**



## *High Tech Work Group Summary*

**Facilitators: Thomas Flynn and Jonathan Bacon**

### **Discussion Highlights**

#### **Leadership**

- Student Services must be an integral part of the high tech, high touch, high quality learning community of the future.
- Student Services is in a unique position to serve as the catalyst for change. Information provides the key to change, and Student Services should be the collector of data related to student needs, student success, and the effectiveness of high tech, high touch, high quality student development systems.

#### **Organization**

- The future requires a collaboration between Student Services, Institutional Research, and Information Services. This combination of student centered services, data, and technology is crucial for the success of educational institutions.
- The centralization vs. decentralization of technological support is an issue that must be addressed by institutions striving to integrate technology into the curriculum and into Student Services. A strictly centralized model is often derived from business environments and may not effectively serve educational institutions.
- Information technology should enable the end user rather than creating a dependency on the Information Services Department.
- Institutional funding priorities must avoid creating a two-class system of technology “haves” and “have nots.” Technology can be either a leveling or a stratifying influence. It can create an environment of shared vision, shared goals, and shared data. Or

technology can create a class system, where information is power and technology is either the conduit or the roadblock to power.

#### **Students**

- No single approach meets the needs of all students. Student Services must provide high tech as well as high touch processes for those who need it.
- Technology will allow us to address student differences: 1/3 need no help in navigating the system; 1/3 need some help; 1/3 need a lot of help.
- A balanced use of high tech with high touch can free Student Services from the chains of time and place-bound service to students.
- The assumption is that current and future students will have increasingly greater access to and familiarity with technology (personal computer applications, e-mail, the Web/Internet, etc.). If these assumptions can be validated by institutional research, plans should be made to utilize technology in recruitment, registration, advising, and other areas of Student Services.

#### **Staff**

- Student Development professionals will require training and retraining, both in specific technical skills and the technical culture that is increasingly pervasive.
- Technology should be used to support, not supplant people. In Student Services, the addition of technology does not mean a reduction of staff; technology will enable the staff we have to keep up with the ever-increasing needs of our students for information and services.

- Most institutions will be required to address the issue of training value vs. productivity as staff learn by “playing” with technology. For example, surfing the Web may be a good vehicle for discovering the capabilities of the Internet, but it can also drain productivity if staff fail to focus on the Student Services mission of the institution.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### The Student Development Leader’s Responsibility: Linking High Tech with High Touch

- Technology should be used to automate the mundane so Student Development professionals can concentrate on the humane!
- Technology is the ultimate answer to “one stop shopping.”
- With the increase in distributed education and distance learning, Student Development professionals should explore and recommend systems (such as remote advising, counseling, etc.) to support “virtual students” and provide them with high touch services.
- Student Services professionals should work with faculty as they plan the adoption of text books and instructional materials and encourage the adoption of tutorial software and adaptive technology that meets the needs of students with special needs.

### The Student Development Leader’s Responsibility: Linking High Tech with High Quality

- High tech is not a panacea for all the resource needs in Student Services. The acquisition and integration of high tech needs to be balanced with the needs of students, the needs of Student Development professionals, and the needs of the institution. Only by achieving this balance will quality be assured.
- More technology is not necessarily better. Technology is a tool that must be managed. It is crucial to first determine the goals of any technological implementation and then determine the level of technology required to support the predetermined goals.
- Evaluation and review of effective uses of technology must be continuous because the impact on resources will affect programs, staff, and services.
- Technology should be used to “invent” mass customization to meet individual needs rather than to force a “one size fits all” system.
- Student Development professionals must personally and professionally address the ethics of technology. We must demonstrate and advocate an ethical approach to issues of security, privacy, and information access. Student Development professionals

should be actively involved and take a leadership role in the development of institutional policies which facilitate and manage student and staff uses of the Web, e-mail, and other emerging technologies.

### The Student Development Leader’s Responsibility: Staff Technology Training

- Continuing education departments and institutional tuition reimbursement policies should be used to provide staff technology training.
- Staff development programs should address the human dimension of technology, including staff burnout and the maintenance of mental sanity as change is heaped upon change.
- Explore using students to assist with staff training. Students can learn from assuming the teaching role, and Student Development professionals can benefit from an easily tapped resource.
- Consider encouraging select individuals in each department to serve as “technology coaches.” They would participate in special training to enable them to provide coaching and support for staff in their area.

### NCSD’s Leadership Role

- The National Council on Student Development should play a leadership role in sponsoring or co-sponsoring a national conference on applied technology and student services.
- NCSD should consider offering a summer technology institute for student services professionals. Program tracks should be provided to address the various levels of expertise.
- Future NCSD forums and workshops should provide an opportunity for Student Development professionals to interact with Information Technology professionals from their own colleges. Such an approach provides an opportunity for Information Technology and Student Development professionals to build an understanding of their respective roles in meeting student needs.
- NCSD should continue to focus on technology issues and the use of technological resources. For instance, NCSD should develop guidelines for an institutional technology audit plan for Student Services.
- NCSD should take a leadership role in encouraging graduate schools offering degrees in Student Development to begin immediately to incorporate technological literacy into the curriculum. Technical competency is a prerequisite for Student Services professionals.

## *High Touch Work Group Summary*

**Facilitators: Jack Becherer and Maggie Culp**

### **Discussion Highlights**

#### **Leadership**

- Historically, educational leadership has been a hands-off, low touch activity characterized by the “I hire good people and get out of their way” philosophy.
- Although community colleges began as high touch institutions, they evolved into low touch bureaucracies.
- To remain true to their mission and to increase the chances that their institutions and their students will succeed, community college administrators must return to their roots: a high touch leadership style.

#### **Organization**

- Many community colleges settle for mediocrity, especially in student affairs programming. Incompetent staff are warehoused, competent staff are overwhelmed with work, and responsibilities are assigned based on a person’s ability to get the job done, not his/her job description.
- Projects take on a life of their own and remain in place years after they should have ended, consuming resources needed for new initiatives.
- Many community colleges search for the quick fix. Distance learning, for example, is viewed as an easy, quick source of FTE. It is not!

#### **Students**

- Community colleges portray themselves as high touch, student centered institutions, but many students discover that the high touch ends when they enroll.
- Members of the MTV generation want their educational experiences to be perfect, instant, and easy (the PIE approach to learning) and are shocked to discover the effort involved in obtaining an education.
- At-risk students arrive at the community college with no clear educational or career goals, undeveloped academic skills, or low motivation, and leave at the first sign of adversity.

#### **Faculty**

- This is the group with a very clear picture of what community colleges need to do to improve—and most of the improvements involve the Admissions Office, the Business Office, the Financial Aid Office, or the Counseling Department. Many faculty do not perceive themselves as part of the problem, yet students spend more time in the classroom than anywhere else.
- Faculty do perceive themselves as high touch, but they narrowly define who and how they touch. Many faculty members do not know how to actively involve students in the learning process or to deal with unmotivated, unprepared students.

- Community colleges must become high touch learning communities for the faculty as well as the students. Strategies that institutions can use to accomplish this goal include:
  1. Train faculty to teach Freshman Seminar or College Success courses;
  2. Sponsor workshops to help faculty enhance their teaching skills;
  3. Celebrate and reward good teaching;
  4. Arrange for faculty to meet and share teaching strategies that work;
  5. Encourage faculty to take reasonable risks in the classroom;
  6. Expose faculty to student development theories and techniques.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### **The Student Development Leader's Responsibility: Linking High Touch and High Tech**

- Leaders need to ask the right questions to generate high quality information, then decide when to use low tech/high touch and when to use high tech/low touch.
- Leaders must provide staff members with the right kind of high tech training, usually hands-on, over-the-shoulder training, and help them design studies and gather data to draw conclusions about program effectiveness.
- Leaders must create, manage, and monitor a technology plan for student affairs.
- Most of all, leaders need to understand that leadership is and always will be a high touch activity—and technology provides another vehicle for “touching,” even if the touching is via the Internet.

### **The Student Development Leader's Responsibility: Linking High Touch and High Quality**

- Student affairs leaders must work with the faculty to create shared definitions of quality, and the definitions must recognize the importance of student affairs in the life of the institution.
- The effective student affairs leader assists institutions to include non-classroom activities in their definition of student success, to broaden their definition of quality to focus on both internal and external customers, to identify measurable outcomes for all programs and services, and to include student affairs components in all productivity formulas.

### **Defining Quality**

Quality is a process that involves the pursuit of excellence as defined by a specific institution. During the past few years, the definition of quality has changed from an emphasis on effort (documented by how many people were served) to an emphasis on success (determined by how the effort made a difference). Community colleges need to stop defining quality from a parochial perspective and recognize that high tech and high touch contribute to high quality which, in turn, is measured by student success.

## High Tech-High Touch Models for Student Success

### The Tapestry Model

In this model, student success involves helping students form unique tapestries from the threads of needs, possibilities, and opportunities through timely and appropriate high touch and high tech interven-

tions. Some students need all of the threads, while others need just a few. Some produce a beautiful work; others leave half-finished with threads hanging. The role of the leader in this model is to create a system that allows students to assess their needs, identify their strengths and weaknesses, understand and use appropriate support services, and monitor their progress toward their goals.

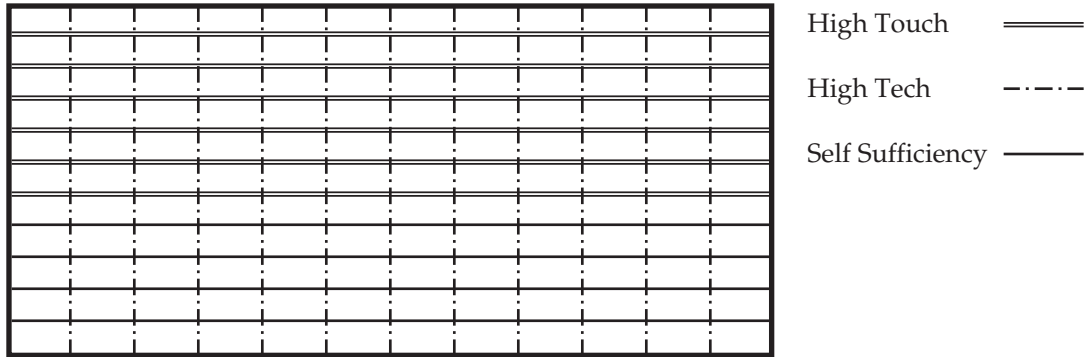


Fig. 2. Students Need All Threads and Become a Finished Product

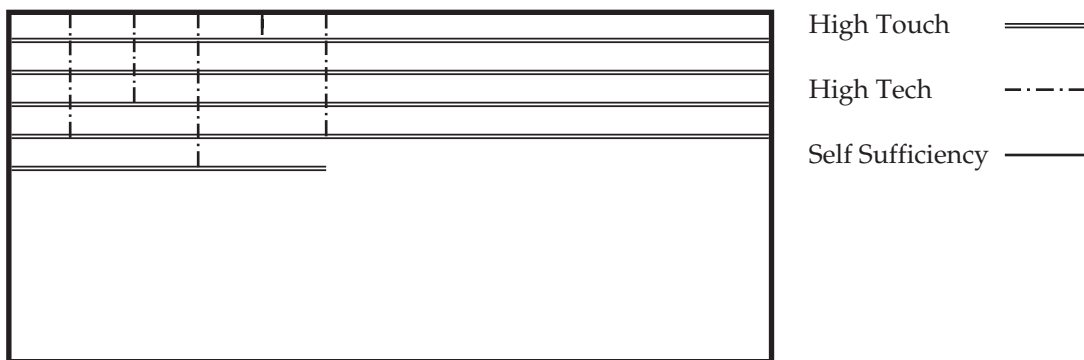


Fig. 3. Students Who Leave Half-Finished with Threads Hanging

**The Fulcrum (“See-Saw”) Model**

This model focuses on helping students maintain a balance and moving them from needy to independent on the high touch scale. In the beginning, students require frequent high touch interventions to remain balanced,

but as they move through the system, they require fewer and fewer interventions. The role of the leader in this model is to continually assess, relieve pressure points, allocate resources, and define and measure quality.

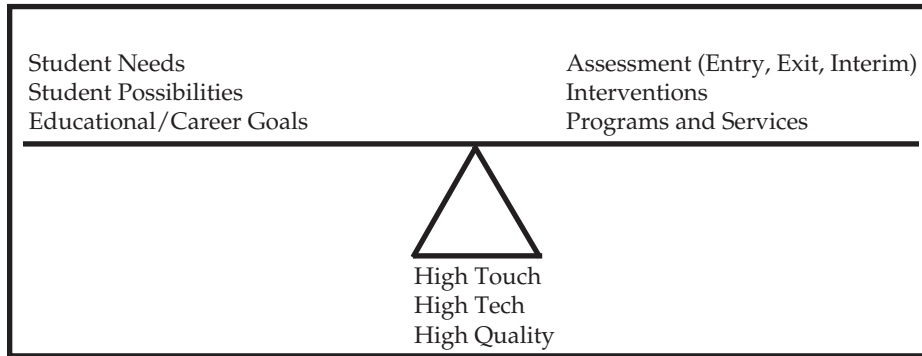


Fig. 4. Maintaining the Proper Balance

**The Infinity Model**

The definition of success is quite simple in this model: students define and reach their educational goals. But the road to success is fairly complex because student needs are infinite and changing, while resources are finite and often fixed. The leader’s challenge is to foster a system that is responsive to the needs of many students by using the human and technological resources in a flexible manner. Some students may

need little or nothing to achieve quality outcomes. Others initially may require a great deal of personal intervention, and then gradually rely on technological tools to address their needs. Still others will use all possible resources and wish that more were available. The goal is to increase the chances that all students will achieve quality outcomes, thus quality characterizes every student affairs program, service or activity.

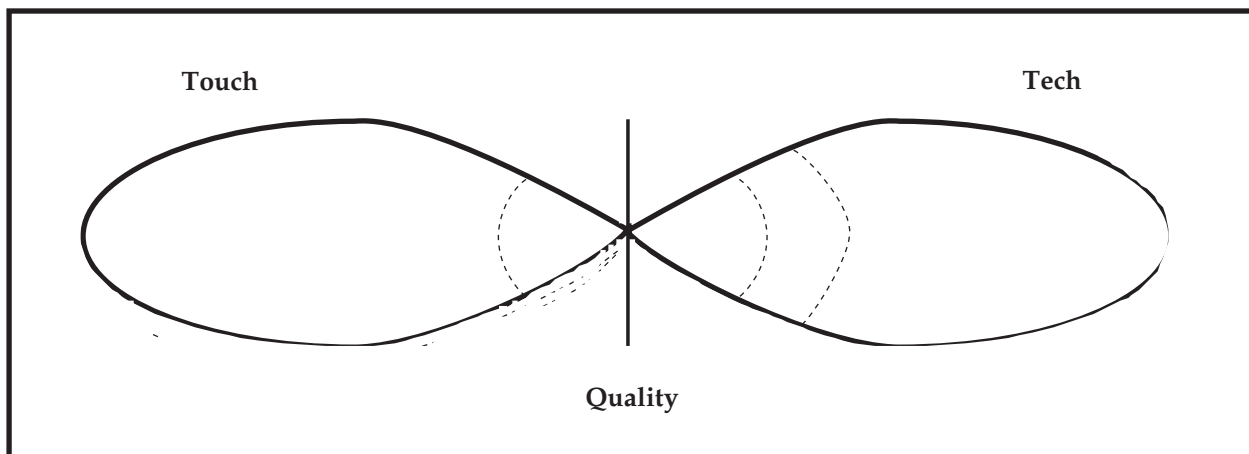


Fig. 5. Flexible Resources to Meet Changing Needs

## *High Quality Work Group Summary*

**Facilitators: Norma Hernandez and William E. Piland**

### **Discussion Highlights**

#### **Leadership**

- Student services leadership must be prepared to undertake new challenges posed by financial constraints, changing student demographics, competing demands (i.e., Welfare Reform, diverse student needs, transfer activities, etc.), technological development, and shared governance.
- Leaders are called upon to implement programs and services that are high quality, customer centered, and efficiently run, and that support student success as measured by legislated student outcomes—all of this with limited resources.
- Student services leaders of today must focus on building teamwork with various constituencies on campus and on forming partnerships with outside agencies and other segments of education. They can help to create a paradigm shift from “providing student services” to “fostering student development, leadership and learning.”

#### **Organization**

- Community college governance should be a shared process but on many campuses it is interpreted as a shift in power from administration to faculty. Organizational climate needs to support team approaches and shared accountability in order to produce quality programs and services.

- Colleges that place students as the central focus of the institution tend to develop organizational structures with functional units that work in concert to support student success. The college mission, vision, and goals would reflect the commitment of the institution to the student as the primary customer, and to instruction and student services as the products to be delivered.
- The traditional organizational structures based on hierarchical models are still operating in most educational institutions. Under these structures, there is always competition for resources, lack of coordination among key units or departments on campuses, segmented decision making, and lack of common goals and planning.

#### **Students**

- In order to continually improve quality of programs and services, colleges need to address the question: What skills and needs will students bring in the next five to fifteen years and how can our colleges respond in the best interest of students?
- There will continue to be an increase in student ethnic diversity and students who are the first in their families to attend college. Greater differences in academic skills will be evident between the “haves” and the “have nots” as the economic gap widens in our society.
- More students will be “in and out” due to their commitments to supporting their families and to their jobs. Colleges will have to adjust programs to meet the students’ needs.

## Faculty

- Instructional and student services faculty need to work together to support the learning process for students. On most college campuses, there is a lack of understanding of the role and functions of the counselors and a fragmented working relationship between instructors and counselors.
- Some faculty do not see their functions extending beyond the classroom. Yet, students respond positively to faculty mentoring and role models to keep them motivated through their college experience.
- Staff development for faculty is essential to maintaining quality in instruction and student services, particularly in such areas as diversity, learning styles, and teaching and learning strategies.
- All faculty need to be involved in such areas as the students' career development, leadership training, mentoring, and academic advising.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### The Student Development Leader's Responsibility: Supporting High Quality

- To develop indicators for continuous quality improvement of programs and services, Student Development leaders need institutional support systems, such as: a comprehensive student database; staff development resources; clear mission and goals for student services; program review; and a planning process that encompasses short term and long term objectives for each student services component.
- A technology plan for Student Services is an essential component of a comprehensive institutional plan. The plan should be developed with involvement from faculty, staff, administration, and students.
- A set of principles or beliefs should be established as the cornerstone for quality student services programs and put into practice by all student services staff. Some of these beliefs could include:
  1. Support for students in all aspects of their academic, career, and personal development;
  2. Commitment to the individual worth of every student;
  3. Protection of individual rights such as freedom of expression and the right to learn;
  4. Development of leadership skills in all students;
  5. Value for different cultures, languages, and traditions;
  6. Empowerment of students to develop responsible behavior and self-determination toward achievement of their educational goals.

### The Student Development Leader's Responsibility: Linking High Touch, High Tech, and High Quality

- The integration of technology into student services can provide for more efficient use of human resources and more interaction with students in the areas of academic, career, and personal counseling.
- Collaborative efforts with instruction and student services to mentor students and to measure academic progress toward their educational goals should be supported by technology that eliminates clerical recordkeeping for faculty and releases them to reach students in more meaningful ways.
- Partnerships with K-12, other colleges and universities, business and industry, and community service agencies are essential linkages for Student Development programs in addressing students' academic, career, and personal needs. It is through collaboration with external customers that community colleges can deliver quality programs and services. Student Development leaders need to explore the uses of technology to strengthen these partnerships, such as electronic transcripts, distance counseling via telecommunications, interactive college orientation, and general college information.

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