

# 1984 Traverse City Statement: Toward the Future Vitality of Student Development Services

John S. Keyser

## I. Introduction

The American College Testing Program and the National Council on Student Development, an affiliate Council of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, convened a national colloquium on "The Future Vitality of Student Development Services in the Two-Year College," at Traverse City, Michigan, August, 1984. The colloquium was subsidized by The American College Testing Program and Northwestern Michigan College. Thirty-one two-year college student development leaders from the United States and Canada identified contemporary issues and challenges facing the profession and developed an agenda for action at both local and national levels.

The last national statement on Student Development Services in the two-year college, articulated in the Carnegie Study of the mid-'60s, was entitled *Junior College Student Personnel Programs: What They Are and What They Should Be*. Twenty-seven functions were identified which might comprise Student Personnel Services in the ideal junior college. The final report recommended a future review "... to chart new directions congruent with new circumstances."

Consistent with this recommendation and because of intervening changes in the environment, student development professionals should now

reexamine program priorities, college management and leadership roles, and the future direction of the profession. Two-year colleges are serving a student population that is increasingly older, more minority, more female, more part-time, and more in need of evening and weekend services. This diverse student population also represents an increasingly diverse range in ability and preparation.

Decreases in traditional full-time student enrollment and cutbacks in federal, state, and local funding have created financial crises for many institutions. As competition intensifies for a diminishing pool of resources, many student development services may be in jeopardy. Moreover, concerns about quality and competition for scarce resources pose a challenge to the traditional emphasis on "access." Colleges have modified their egalitarian commitment of being "all things to all people," and many may be forced to redefine the traditional "open door."

These environmental challenges suggest a new urgency for student development professionals to demonstrate their contributions to the achievement of student and institutional goals. At the

---

*John S. Keyser of Linn-Benton Community College is currently president of the National Council on Student Development.*

same time, the technologies of the “information society” provide opportunities to be more effective and efficient in *measuring outcomes*, managing information, and enhancing the quality of learning.

The 1984 Traverse City Statement, an outgrowth of professional dialogue, reaffirms the philosophy and purpose of student development services in the two-year college, defines the major issues facing the profession, and reaches some consensus on an agenda for local and national action.

## II. Philosophy and Purpose

Student development philosophy is grounded in the behavioral sciences, particularly human growth and development theory. In accord with this theory, student development professionals believe in:

- the dignity and worth of each person;
- the uniqueness of each person; and
- the opportunity for each person to realize his or her fullest potential.

The student development professional is an essential and integral member of the community of educators and, therefore, shares responsibility for creating and maintaining learning environments, providing valuable programs and services, and integrating these educational experiences to meet the life-skill needs of students and staff. The student development educator focuses on the growth of the person and provides leadership in bringing together college and community resources to achieve that end.

The student development educator designs and implements support systems to assist the college in becoming an effective educational community. These roles extend to the larger community and require addressing community needs for information, for human resources, and for recreational and cultural enrichment.

## III. Major Issues and Challenges

The Traverse City participants identified the following as fundamental priorities: quality and accountability, partnerships off campus, partnerships on campus, resource management, enrollment management and student persistence, educational technology, and integrating student development into the educational experience. They then analyzed each area to determine the actions

that should be taken on local campuses and through the National Council on Student Development. (The items are not listed in any priority order.)

### A. *Contributing to Quality Reaffirmation and Program Accountability*

Educational quality is best judged according to positive and measurable student outcomes. How can student development professionals improve the quality of student learning and goal achievement while promoting and supporting the “open door” concept of the two-year college?

1. At the *local* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Participate in reviewing and redefining the college mission statement so that it is broadly understood and clearly communicated.
  - b. Encourage a college-wide review of the compatibility of present resource allocations to the college’s mission.
  - c. Design and implement comprehensive assessment and course placement strategies to enhance student success.
  - d. Develop programs and strategies to continuously upgrade professional and staff expertise and to renew their commitment to the college’s mission.
  - e. Work with instructional units to establish and communicate entry requirements, performance expectations, and competency-based outcomes for students.
  - f. Promote evaluation of all student development programs and services to determine their effectiveness and appropriateness in meeting student and community needs.
2. At the *national* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Plan and implement leadership development programs for chief student development professionals and for potential chief student development professionals.
  - b. Work with appropriate professional groups to plan and implement a recognition awards system for exemplary student development programs and for individuals who have made significant contributions to the profession.
  - c. Help to improve the quality and increase the quantity of published material relevant to the

needs and issues of the student development practitioner.

d. Participate in efforts to develop, for each major student development services area, a profile of competencies and standards to guide practitioners and graduate programs.

e. Design and implement a national project to identify the elements of student success and the programs that are models for promoting student success.

### *B. Strengthening Partnerships With Community Constituencies*

Providing services to meet changing educational needs requires that two-year colleges develop partnerships with a broad range of external agencies and groups. How can student development professionals assume a leadership role in developing and implementing these cooperative and collaborative arrangements?

1. At the *local* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Participate in developing community profiles (demographics, resources, attitudes) to assist in building linkages between the college and community constituencies.
  - b. Identify effective partnership models within the community and disseminate this information for effective utilization.
  - c. Assume a facilitating role in attempting to match the college mission with the needs of community constituencies.
  - d. Establish and maintain active liaisons with external constituencies that serve the interests and needs of students.
2. At the *national* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Assist with the formation of a coalition of professional organizations (NCSD, ACPA, NASPA) with the purpose of implementing a plan to maximize political and educational effectiveness.
  - b. Support efforts of the National Council on Student Development to collaborate with other councils of AACJC on joint programming efforts.
  - c. Formulate a statement of standards and guidelines to facilitate the transfer of students to other educational institutions.

d. Ensure the publication and distribution of information about successful “partnership” programming efforts.

### *C. Strengthening Partnerships With Internal (Campus) Constituencies*

Community colleges now function in rapidly changing environments that challenge their capacity for creative adaptation. How can student development professionals stimulate organizational vitality?

1. At the *local* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Assume a college-wide responsibility to promote high morale and create environments that foster student and staff satisfaction and achievement.
  - b. Develop close working relationships with other administrative units, particularly the instructional area.
  - c. Continue to increase involvement of students in meaningful campus governance and leadership development programs.
  - d. Assist in establishing a comprehensive human resource development plan designed to recruit, orient, evaluate, and develop the human resources.
2. At the *national* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Develop and participate in professional association activities that locate, study, and develop models for making students an integral part of institutional governance and leadership.
  - b. Develop a national exchange program so student development professionals have the opportunity to gain experience in different colleges.

### *D. Creatively Managing Resources*

Given increasing societal demands to be met with limited resources, resources must be creatively managed. What role should student development professionals play in meeting this challenge?

1. At the *local* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Encourage networking and partnerships both within the institution and surrounding communities, thus combining resources that expand service opportunities.

- b. Explore effective lower-cost staffing alternatives—such as peer tutors/advisors, volunteer programs, part-timers, and paraprofessionals—that will not diminish quality.
  - c. Secure additional funding support from sources such as foundations, grants, consortia, alumni, and fund raising drives.
  - d. Establish institutional contracts with businesses, industries, and community agencies to share costs and eliminate duplication of services.
  - e. Explore fee-based services as alternative resources.
  - f. Utilize annual program reviews to recommend cost-effective prioritization of programs and services.
2. At the *national* level, student development professionals should:
    - a. Include cost-saving ideas and alternative funding ideas in a national computer-based resource center (see F.2.a.).
    - b. Recognize creative resource management through professional association publications and activities.

#### *E. Creatively Managing Enrollments and Contributing to Student Persistence*

Changing demographics, projected enrollment declines, and enrollment-driven budget processes make enrollment management one of the most critical issues facing community colleges. How can student development professionals promote access to the college while responding to the learning needs of the individual and varied needs of the communities served?

1. At the *local* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Develop a systematic marketing process to assess community needs, and develop programs and services, delivery systems, and appropriate promotional messages to respond to these needs.
  - b. Design and implement research strategies to track student progress from entry to post-enrollment to reentry.
  - c. Maximize student success through services such as diagnostic and self assessment, course placement, orientation, academic advising, career planning, counseling, financial aid, and job and transfer placement.
2. At the *national* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Collect and disseminate information on comprehensive recruitment and retention plans.
  - b. Recommend that a national journal (e.g., the *AACJC Journal*) focus on the theme of creating campus environments that foster student satisfaction and success.

#### *F. Using Educational Technology*

Advances in telecommunications and computer technologies have the potential to improve student services. Community colleges need to incorporate these advances into the delivery of programs and services. How can student development professionals use technology for both educational and administrative purposes without compromising the human dimension?

1. At the *local* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Develop a comprehensive and integrated student data-based management system to include, but not be limited to, a data-base tracking system.
  - b. Provide opportunities for *all staff* to become conversant and competent in the use of advanced technologies.
  - c. Develop automated systems to improve the delivery of services such as career exploration, course selection, job placement, transfer articulation, registration, and financial aids.
  - d. Develop electronic information linkages with external agencies and institutions to enhance the capacity to provide information and services to students.
2. At the *national* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Develop a computer-based resource center to provide access to model programs and services, professional consultants, and software menus.
  - b. Identify colleges with model automated systems that facilitate student goal identification and achievement and make this information available to the public.

*G. Integrating Student Development Into the Educational Experience* (Editor's Note: Submitted by the Maryland Deans of Students)

Throughout the past two decades, student development professionals have placed great importance on their leadership role in facilitating student development as part of students' educational experiences. This challenge emphasizes collaboration with faculty and other campus educators to incorporate student development concepts into the college mission, academic program competencies, co-curricular programs, and, ultimately, course objectives. The increase in the diversity of student populations and student needs and the resultant diversity of academic programs call for innovative and heightened efforts. How can student development professionals make two-year colleges more effective at integrating student development into the educational experience?

1. At the *local* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Assume leadership roles in integrating student development concepts into college missions and expected student outcomes.
  - b. Assess student needs in terms of student development.
  - c. Provide for student development through co-curricular programs.
  - d. Collaborate with instructional leaders in integrating student development competencies into academic programs and courses.
  - e. Enhance their own knowledge and competencies in student development.
2. At the *national* level, student development professionals should:
  - a. Work with national professional organizations to provide programs on facilitating student development in two-year colleges.
  - b. Encourage and assist graduate training programs to incorporate and emphasize knowledge and skills in both pure and applied student development theory.
  - c. Help to improve the quality and increase the quantity of published materials on the application of student development theory in two-year colleges.
  - d. Recommend that a national journal (e.g., the *AACJC Journal*) focus on the theme of integrating student development into the total educational experience.
  - e. Identify colleges that have made significant efforts in this area and make this information available.

#### IV. Summary

This Statement emerged from a shared feeling of urgency about the future vitality of student development services. It is based on the conviction that, as partners with other community college leaders, student development professionals should engage in a thorough reassessment of their role in an environment undergoing constant and dramatic change. It is also based on the premise that student development professionals need to be at the forefront in influencing that change.

This Statement is only a beginning, designed to provide community college leaders with an impetus and a framework for debating the issues and challenges ahead. Although the Statement constitutes an ambitious plan of action for the student development professional and needs refinement if it is to serve as a guidepost for the practitioner, we hope that the Statement will impart to student development professionals throughout the country the sense of renewal, commitment, and energy with which it was written. If this energy is sustained and applied, the future of student development services in two-year institutions holds great promise.