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## Review: Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession

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### *Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession*

John H. Schuh, Susan R. Jones, Shaun R. Harper, and Associates

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011, 570 pages, \$80.00 (hardcover)

Reviewed by Maureen E. Wilson,  
Bowling Green State University

First published in 1980, *Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession* has been a mainstay in graduate preparation programs. The focus of the book has remained on helping practitioners provide strong educational experiences for college students. As in the previous two editions edited by Susan Komives and Dudley Woodard, new editors John Schuh, Susan Jones, and Shaun Harper grappled with the title, noting that “student services” is outdated and rarely used to describe contemporary practice in student affairs. However, they retained the title “to be true to the roots” (p. xii) of the book.

This book represents a generational shift. Nobody who contributed to the first edition authored a chapter in this one (or the last). Only George Kuh and Schuh contributed to the second and all subsequent editions. In all, 12 writers return from the fourth edition and half them brought in a co-author. Whereas only the final chapter was previously co-authored (by the editors), 18 of 31 are jointly written here and 35 people are writing for *Student Services* for the first time. In contrast to the fourth edition in which all of the authors were widely-known and held a doctorate and most were faculty or senior administrators, the current writers include early-career scholars and practitioners, some without doctorates, and several without high-level administrative experience. The group is also more racially diverse.

Regular users of the textbook will find a very familiar structure to the fourth edition. The book contains six parts. The first three follow the same order, sometimes with revised titles. Part 4 has been shuffled with one chapter splitting into two and others relocated to or from other sections. Parts 5 and 6 are largely the same with one chapter moving into each section and another moving out. Additionally, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) professional practice standards and the American College Personnel Association’s (ACPA) ethics statements have been cut. As both are easily accessible online, that is a reasonable way to cut 20 pages of text to help manage the cost of the book. Indeed, this volume has 154 fewer pages. It is also available for download to electronic readers at a lower cost than the hardcover version.

Part 1 provides a historical and contemporary context for student affairs practice. In the first chapter, John Thelin is joined by Marybeth Gasman to present a historical overview of American higher education. The chapter follows Thelin’s framework from the last two editions, with updates as necessary. In chapter 2, Kimberly Griffin joins Sylvia Hurtado to focus on institutional variety (vs. diversity in the 4th ed.), including Carnegie classifications and institutions serving specific populations (e.g., HBCUs). This chapter has been shortened and topics such as for-profit institutions have been cut. The third chapter has been renamed “Campus Climate and Diversity,” and has three authors new to the book, Mitchell Chang, Jeffrey Milem, and Anthony Iling Antonio. While covering some similar territory, it is substantially different and has a greater focus on application of a multidimensional framework to improve campus climates for diversity.

Professional foundations and principles are the focus of part 2 and with just one author returning to the section, readers will find differences. Gwendolyn Dungy and Stephanie Gordon wrote the chapter on the development of student affairs, using a structure similar to the last edition. In chapter 5, Robert Reason and Ellen Broido discuss philosophies and values of the profession. They draw heavily the history and literature of student affairs to situate these concepts well for readers new to the field. Fried returns with her chapter on ethical standards and principles and includes good cases for discussion. Another new contributor, Gary Pavela, has written the chapter on legal issues and focuses on civility, troubled students, and risk management. Although he presents very important concepts, some may miss the inclusion of topics such as sources of the law, constitutional and civil rights issues, liability, and others that Margaret Barr addressed in prior editions, especially if they do not have a full course on legal issues in their curriculum.

Part 3 is about the theoretical bases of the profession. Jones and Elisa Abes provide a very useful overview of the nature and uses of theory. The next six chapters address theories about psychosocial and cognitive structural development (Nancy Evans), identity development (Vasti Torres), student learning (Marcia Baxter Magolda and Patricia King), organizations (Adrianna Kezar), campus ecology and environments (Kristen Renn and Lori Patton) and student success (George Kuh). Although just three authors return to this section, all have contributed extensively to the theory literature. The topic of each chapter (or a combination of some) is often the focus of an entire graduate course so they are obviously abbreviated treatments of the content. They are, however, very helpful in setting a foundation from which readers can learn about theory. I have found the overview and student learning chapters especially helpful

with audiences beyond student affairs such as in a course on college teaching.

In part 4, the organization and management of programs and services are addressed. Typically under the purview of more senior administrators, the content is intended to provide a rudimentary understanding of topics critical to student affairs professionals. In chapter 15, Kathleen Manning and Frank Michael Muñoz present six academic cultures to frame student affairs practice. This framework is new to *Student Services* and seemingly replaces a focus on common functional areas within student affairs from the fourth edition. In another change, Schuh's prior chapter on strategic planning and finance has been broken apart. Here, Harper discusses strategy and intentionality in practice, but not formal strategic planning processes. He refers readers to other sources to learn more about formal strategic plans and instead provides examples on being "thoughtful, systematic, and intentional in educational practice" (p. 272). Schuh then focuses on financing student affairs in chapter 17. More and more, staff at every level are affected directly by campus and departmental budgets and must begin to develop skills in financial management and be good stewards of limited resources. Schuh makes this point clear to readers. Similarly, Marilee Bresciani's practical chapter on assessment and evaluation provides definitions, purposes, and components of those processes. Although graduate students and new professionals are not likely to play a major role in funding decisions or large-scale assessment and evaluation, these practical overviews will help them better understand the need to develop these skills and understand how they affect student affairs practice.

In part 5, the longest section, essential competencies of the profession are addressed in 10 chapters: multicultural competence (Raechele Pope and John Mueller), leadership (Susan Komives), staffing and supervision (Joan

Hirt and Terrell Strayhorn), teaching in the co-curriculum (Peter Magolda and Stephen John Quayle), counseling and helping skills (Amy Reynolds), advising and consultation (Patrick Love and Sue Maxam), conflict resolution (Larry Roper and Christian Matheis), community development (Dennis Roberts), professionalism (Jan Arminio), and academic and student affairs partnerships (Elizabeth Whitt). The editors note that these 10 competence areas are not exhaustive or indisputable, but that expertise in them will “likely lead to the enactment of institutional missions, increased gains in student learning and development, and great legitimacy for student affairs work” (p. 335). These areas have some overlap with the professional competencies document released recently by ACPA and NASPA (2010).

The final section of the book, part 6, focuses on the future of student affairs. Linda Sax and Casandra Harper stress the importance of using research to inform practice, particularly findings on the conditional effects of college, or how environments might affect students differently based on their race, class, or gender, for example. Exemplars from recent studies illustrate key concepts well. In Chapter 30, Ana Martínez Alemán and Katherine Lynk Wartman discuss student technology use in the practice of student affairs. The focus is largely on social media (e.g., Facebook) and its use in various functional areas. This is a change from the fourth edition where information technology was presented as an essential competency and focused more on technological skills and processes. Finally, the editors complete the volume with “Shaping the Future,” a chapter in which they reflect on pressing issues and trends in society and their influence on higher education and student affairs. They conclude with advice to emerging professionals in student affairs.

As stated in my recent review (Wilson, 2010) of *The Handbook of Student Affairs*

*Administration* (3rd ed., McClellan, Stringer, & Associates, 2009) readers will find considerable overlap of content, audience, and authorship in these two publications—both published by Jossey-Bass. Similar chapters are contained in both, including a history of student affairs, legal issues, and assessment. In contrast to one another, a full section of seven chapters is devoted to the theoretical bases of the profession in *Student Services* while a section of the *Handbook* contains 5 chapters human resources. This is one example of a strong focus on theory and foundations in the former and administration in the latter, perhaps reflective of the primary intended audiences for each. The earlier edition of the *Handbook* was intended for first-time middle or senior managers in student affairs or doctoral students (Barr, Desler, & Associates, 2000), but expanded to include graduate students and entry- and mid-level practitioners. *Student Services* has always been targeted primarily to graduate students and professionals new to student affairs although the current editors hope their ideas resonate with senior administrators and faculty. Ten authors contributed to both books, sometimes on the same or related topic.

As a reader, I wish some things would have been challenged in the editing process. For instance, in a discussion of school shooters, it is stated that “in nearly one-quarter of the cases, the attackers were not White” (p. 128). That means in over three-quarters of the cases, the attackers *were* White. Although this is a quote from another source and not the author’s own words, this reinforces negative stereotypes and assumptions of people of color and crime. Since the majority of attackers were White, it should be stated as such and that can be accomplished through paraphrasing. Elsewhere, errors slipped through such as referring to the landmark *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* as a Supreme Court case although the decision was rendered in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

*Student Services* has entered its fourth decade of use in graduate preparation. “The Green Book,” as it is affectionately called, has introduced generations to the student affairs profession. Dr. Lou Stamatakos assigned the first edition to me to read as a graduate student and I have assigned editions 3-5 to students I teach. Sections of the text are suitable for a variety of graduate courses, particularly an introductory course on student affairs. By design, it is a broad overview of the profession and additional material is necessary to develop more complex understandings of its concepts. Building on its long history, the book lays a very strong foundation for learning to become a professional in student affairs.

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### ***Culture Centers in Higher Education: Perspectives on Identity, Theory, and Practice***

L. D. Patton (Editor)

Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2010, 212 pages,  
\$27.50 (paper), \$21.99 (ebook)

*Reviewed by* Dafina Lazarus Stewart,  
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Through her scholarship, professional practice, and consulting, Lori Patton has demonstrated the continued viability and necessity of culture centers in higher education. Now, Patton has produced a text “to offer an in-depth understanding of culture centers and their role

in higher education” (p. xiv). The contributing authors include noteworthy scholars, emerging scholars, and practitioners who bring their professional experiences and expertise to bear on the topic at hand. This combination of rich theoretical and practical perspectives strengthens the book.

The text is organized in three sections. Part One includes chapters that describe and review the work of race-specific culture centers and each chapter in this section focuses on a particular cultural group. Each chapter concludes with a listing of campus culture centers serving the group highlighted in the chapter and the years they were established. The authors in this section include Adele Lozano (Latino/a culture centers); William Ming Liu, Michael J. Cuyjet, and Sunny Lee (Asian American culture centers); Heather J. Shotton, Star Yellowfish, and Rosa Cintron (an American Indian culture center); and Patton (two Black culture centers). These initial chapters feature reviews of the literature, case studies, and empirical findings. Although providing a rich tapestry of ways to explore and discuss culture centers, the eclectic nature of this section does not lend itself well to readers who may be interested in drawing out parallel information across the student communities discussed. Nevertheless, in their own way, each chapter demonstrates how students in these racial and ethnic groups commonly experience predominantly White campus environments, and the roles culture centers fulfill. These roles include supporting the retention and success of students who identify with these racial and ethnic groups, as well as engaging the broader campus (and in some cases, the local) community in building the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to live in a diverse community.

Following this direct exposure to the character and work of culture centers, part 2 engages the reader in considering theoretical perspectives that support the current role and