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Review: The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration, 3rd Edition

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Reynolds' presentation of what student affairs professionals need to know about helping skills does move both the counseling and the student affairs professions further in that discussion.

Student affairs preparation faculty no longer have to rely on a piecemeal of books and articles with caveats about how these theories or skills are used differently in our profession. I highly recommend *Helping College Students* as a fitting main text for Microcounseling/Helping skills courses that are specifically for student affairs professionals in preparation programs. It is also a useful resource for trainers who are facilitating in-service workshops for professional development of current student affairs professionals. This text acts as a good overview and refresher of helping skills and related issues. Faculty teaching courses of this kind will still need to supplement this book with information that elaborates on the specific Microcounseling techniques (e.g. listening, paraphrasing, and reflecting feelings) as well as detailed group facilitation and supervision skills. When using this text, facilitators should make a point to refer students/participants to the original sources for more comprehensive discussions of counseling theory and development of a counseling relationship. Additionally, faculty teaching this material should build on the points made throughout the book on the distinction between the role of trained counselor clinicians and that of student affairs professional.

Helping College Students has daily utility for both practicing and future student affairs professionals. This book thoroughly covers the essential helping skills in an accessible way for those commencing their professional journey and can simultaneously serve as a refresher or reference resource for seasoned student affairs professionals.



The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration, 3rd edition

(Sponsored by NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education)

George S. McClellan, Jeremy Stringer, and Associates

San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009, 671 pages, \$75.00 (hardcover)

Reviewed by Maureen E. Wilson,
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Now in its third edition, the *Handbook of Student Affairs Administration* is a "practical and informative resource for those interested in the student affairs profession" (p. xxi). Using a new organizational framework of professional practice, the book has six sections. Of the 31 chapters, 27 are updated from the second edition, one appeared in the first edition, and three are new. Two from the second edition were cut; some of that content was incorporated into other chapters.

Ten more than the second edition, 48 authors contribute to the third edition and 37 of them are new to the *Handbook*. Of the 11 who return from the second edition, some present an update on the same chapter while others take on new chapters. Half of the chapters have two or more authors. Although many familiar names from earlier editions are absent, the new line-up is a mix of prominent and rising scholars and practitioners from a diverse array of backgrounds and institutions.

Recognizing that student affairs work takes place "in a variety of economic, historic, political, and social contexts" (p. 1), the first section of the text is called "Contexts of Professional Practice." In it, James Rhatigan, George Kuh, and John Schuh return with chapters on the history of student affairs administration, campus environments, and financial pressures, respectively. Joan Hirt writes the chapter on institutional mission, a topic on which she has written extensively. New

chapters on accountability by Sherry Mallory and Linda Clement and internationalization by Kenneth Osfield and Patricia Smith Terrell round out the first section. This is one of the two largest sections of the book.

“Frameworks for Professional Practice” is the focus of the second section. Lori Patton and Shaun Harper write about theory-to-practice in student affairs. Ethics are discussed by Jon Dalton, Pamela Crosby, Aurelio Valente, and David Eberhardt. Jan Arminio handles professional standards while Nancy Evans and Jessica Ranero tackle professional associations in student affairs.

The third section of the book, “Students: The Reason for Our Professional Practice,” represents a significant shift from the last edition. In the second edition, just one chapter focused exclusively on students (“Who are the New Students”) and another on “Supporting People, Programs, and Structures for Diversity” and these were in the final section called “Challenges for the Future.” Now, an expanded and arguably more positive focus on students occurs earlier in the text. The theme in this section is the “solitary purpose” of the profession: “to support the success of our students through services and programs to foster their development and learning” (p. 223). George McClellan and Jim Larimore write about the changing student population. Jason Laker and Tracy Davis present the chapter on multicultural campus communities. After its absence in the second edition, the chapter on health and wellness issues returns and is written by John Dunkle and Cheryl Presley. The chapter on online students by Anita Crawley and Christine LeGore is new.

Because staff are the primary resource for achieving the profession’s primary purpose, supporting students, the fourth section focuses on human resources. Linda Kuk writes about organizational models within student affairs. Michael Jackson, Larry Moneta, and Kelly

Anne Nelson focus on management of human capital. Donald Mills returns with his chapter on middle managers. Professional development is discussed by Susan Komives and Stan Carpenter and Mary Howard-Hamilton and Randy Hyman author the chapter on doctoral education.

Given its pivotal role in successful student affairs practice, “Interpersonal Dynamics in Professional Practice” is the theme of the fifth section of the *Handbook*. In it, Adrianna Kezar focuses on supporting and enhancing student learning through partnerships with academic colleagues. Jeremy Stringer discusses the political environment for administrators in student affairs. Shannon Ellis covers campus and community relationships and Dale Nienow and Jeremy Stringer address conflict.

In another large section (but smaller than in the second edition), a number of skills and competencies that are necessary to a wide array of functional areas in student affairs are covered. Included in the section are chapters on budgeting and fiscal management (Margaret Barr), legal issues (Beverly Ledbetter), implementing assessment to improve student learning and development (Marilee Bresciani), program planning and implementation (Michael Cuyjet and Sue Weitz) facilities planning and development (Jerry Price), technology (Kevin Kruger), and campus crisis (Keith Miser and Cynthia Cherrey). The book concludes with an epilogue by McClellan and Stringer. It briefly addresses themes such as change, values, and student learning.

Ambitious in scope, the *Handbook* is intended for entry-, mid-, and senior-level student affairs practitioners, those coming to the profession through non-traditional paths, as well as faculty and graduate students in professional preparation programs. The inclusion of entry-level practitioners and master’s degree students is another change

from the prior edition. Readers may find considerable overlap in content and purpose between the *Handbook* and another Jossey-Bass publication, *Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession* (Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 2003). Although *Student Services* is not explicitly targeted to mid- and senior-level professionals, I suspect both books find their largest audiences in graduate preparation programs.

The stated purpose of the *Handbook of Student Affairs Administration* is very broad and so is the resulting focus, or lack thereof. Although I appreciate the overarching organizational framework of professional practice, the chapters in some sections fit together more logically than others. The *Handbook* honors the history of the student affairs profession, addresses current issues and challenges for practitioners, and anticipates developments on the horizon. To be expected in a text such as this, it offers more breadth than depth. It does, however, present a broad overview of the contexts and frameworks of professional practice as well as theoretical and practical perspectives on students, human resources, interpersonal dynamics, and skills and competencies. Reference lists at the conclusion of each chapter point readers to a wealth of additional scholarship that will add depth of content.

Also to be expected with so many diverse authors, the writing style varies considerably

across chapters. Some chapters include case studies that bring concepts to life and provide tools for classroom instruction. Others offer explicit advice to practitioners. Some are especially useful in helping readers understand the relationship of student affairs to the larger campus community. It seems unlikely that most users would read the *Handbook* cover to cover but would instead utilize it as an introduction to particular topics or issues.

CAS standards for master's-level student affairs preparation programs (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2009) call for the inclusion of several topics that are included in the *Handbook* (e.g., historical foundations of higher education and student affairs, organization and administration of student affairs). Combined with additional readings, this text could find a home in a variety of courses at the master's and doctoral levels. The *Handbook* is a solid resource that should appeal to a variety of readers in different institutional and functional settings, particularly those newer to the field who are striving to understand student affairs administration and the context of higher education in which it operates.

REFERENCES

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