

**Humboldt State University**

**The Role of Student Affairs in  
the Academy Now and in the  
Future**

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# Flow

- Who are we?
- Where are we?
- Why are we here?
- What must we get done?

# Our Context

- The wonders and mysteries of youth;
- The attractions and dynamism of the college experience;
- The power and potential of education;
- Personal stories emerge and evolve;
- Recurring opportunities for teaching, learning, personal and institutional transformation.

# Who we are?

- Educators
- Providers
- Translators/Interpreters
- Conveners
- Mediators
- Architects

# Where are we?

- The most aspiration-rich spaces on earth;
- Laboratories for creation, discovery, re-invention and transformation;
- Spaces of serious work, play, experimentation, testing and verifying...;
- Mission-inspired and values-informed environments;
- Places where both character and character flaws are developed and revealed;
- Interaction-intensive, dependent environments.

**Why are we here?**

# Fulfill Our Position Description

- To realize the promise of our mission;
- Ensure all students receive the educational benefits of attending college that are rightfully theirs;
- To translate institutional beliefs into practice;
- To construct and carry out organizational ethos;
- Responsibly manage that with which we have been entrusted.

# Make Meaning and Create Sense of Place

- Make meaning of relationships
- Foster connections among the isolated
- Give audibility and visibility
- Promote human dignity and institutional integrity
- Achieve high-level connection with our colleagues and institution
- Create space for important conversations
- Strengthen foundations of community



# Exercise Leadership

- Create and apply our unique professional frame
- Name and own organizational issues;
- Balance the dynamic tensions
- Heal, repair, reconstruct
- Model hope and optimism
- Be generative
- Nurture breakthroughs in awareness
- Work with seriousness of purpose and lightness of touch

**What must we get done?**

# Dialogue with Ourselves

- *Who are we?*
- *How do we know that we are who we think we are?*
- *Why are we here?*
- *What do we hope to get done?*
- *What does the world most need from us?*

# Construct a Congruent Self-Narrative

- Be graceful and gracious;
- Manage our conversations in a manner that reflect our commitments;
- Care for the dignity of others as we would care for our own;
- Let our words, actions and relationships reflect our desires;
- Be good company on the journey.



# Enhance Student Affairs Contributions to Learning

- Consider how we use our knowledge, energy, influence and relationship capital;
- Provide leadership that emphasizes the importance of *student success* and *community health and well-being*



# Contributions to Learning

- Engage in powerful partnerships to create learning-enhancing relationships and expand the impact of student affairs' mission and value
- Shift our focus from training to teaching to learning
- To function as a learning organization and in the process acquire a common language with faculty



# Contributions to Learning

- Thoroughly audit the physical spaces for which we have responsibility and identify where and what type of learning happens
- Explore ways to use these sites as places for integrated, transformative learning
- Commit to on-going assessment

# Contributions to Learning

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# Current/Future Focused Dynamics

1. Globalization
2. Mass Demand for Higher Education
3. Achievement Gaps
4. Technologies
5. Economic Fluctuations and Higher Education

# Globalization

- Increasingly integrated economies
- Connections through an international knowledge network
- Linkages through communication and information technologies
- Millions of students and scholars move about the world and come to our campuses to learn, teach, research and disseminate knowledge and culture

# Demand for Higher Education

- Driven by the shift to post-industrial and knowledge-driven economies
- Growth in demand for education has spurred the expansion of education around the globe
- Student enrollment in college has expanded worldwide
- Life expectancy is expected to continue to rise, thus prompting world's population and demand for education to increase accordingly

# Achievement Gaps

- Anticipated increases in participation of individuals from underrepresented minority and lower socioeconomic groups creates new opportunities
- Widening gap in the U.S. in literacy and numeracy skills among school-age and adult populations with substantially different proficiency
- Largest increase in population will be those of Hispanic or Latino origin creating more need to understand multiple cultures
- Gross inequities in access to educational opportunities continue to plague higher education – we must address these inequities.

# Technologies

- Electronic mechanisms are expanding the manner and speed at which communication occurs
- The experience that meeting in person may still be desirable though perhaps no longer essential has implications for how teaching, learning, and services are offered
- Technologically knowledgeable students present differing values around issues of engagement in social networking and may participate more through cyberspace venues than in physical venues

# Economic Fluctuations and Higher Education

- Economic fluctuations restrict public funding, has not and is not expected to keep pace with rising costs of higher education
- The view of higher education as a private benefit shifts the cost of education to the individual and requires heightened levels of accountability for student services that may not be seen as central to the educational core
- Lower levels of funding means greater reliance on tuition and fees as well as private support at the same time pressure to increase access, make education more affordable, and improve quality is increasing
- Initiatives from legislative bodies rarely come with commensurate funding; yet, these legislative mandates and compliance typically increase institutional expenses.

# Redefining Student Affairs Work for the Future

- Rethink Roles And Structures
- Consider Success For All Students
- Create Partnerships Without Borders
- Make Data-driven Decisions
- Rethink What Is The "Campus."

# The Promise of the Future

- Environmental turbulence is unprecedented;
- Opportunities to bring new and unimagined value;
- Opportunities to re-imagine, reinvent and re-create;
- Opportunities for new clarity and growth – strengthen who we are, why we're here and, what we hope to get done.



# Broad Social Responsibility

- Increased attention on higher education's role in securing social and economic justice, survival of natural resources, and perpetuating democracy.
- Provide educational access and success to all populations, especially under-represented populations.