



FIFTH EDITION

RENTZ'S

STUDENT AFFAIRS

PRACTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION



Naijian Zhang & Associates

Rentz's
STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ABOUT THE EDITOR

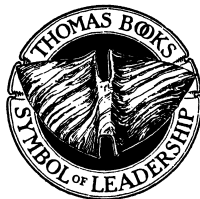
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**STUDENT AFFAIRS
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Edited by

NAIJIAN ZHANG & ASSOCIATES



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*This book is dedicated to Dr. Audrey Rentz who was a longtime professor
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PREFACE

The one who first decides on the battleground and there awaits the enemy has the easier task, and the one who comes after and has to hurry will tire himself. The skilled fighter makes others move, but is not made to move by them. Know your enemy and know yourself, you will never be defeated.

Sun Tzu

Although Sun Tzu speaks about strategies for war, these strategies can be perfectly applied to the practice of student affairs work in American higher education because today's college and university campus is no less serious than a battlefield. The landscape of student affairs in American higher education has increasingly become multidimensional due to more diversity of student population and more complex issues students bring to campus. Given this fact, student affairs professionals at colleges and universities are challenged to create an environment which is physically, socially, organizationally, and interpersonally conducive for student learning and development. To create such an environment, student affairs professionals need to understand and know well not only the philosophy, history, mission of student affairs, and that their practice is theory-based and outcome-oriented but also that their role and function are influenced by the shifts in philosophy, institutional mission and strategies, theories, and nature of American higher education. The fifth edition of *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* is designed to equip student affairs professionals with such knowledge and skills.

The fifth edition of *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* is designed for both Master's- and Doctoral-level students in need of an overview of student affairs functional areas. These students are completing graduate courses in the areas of college student affairs, college student personnel, college student development, higher education and student affairs administration, higher education leadership, and/or college counseling/student affairs. This edition can also be used as a teaching tool by middle- and high-level administrators who supervise interns or staff for professional development.

Finally, this edition can be quite useful to experienced student affairs administrators who wish to keep abreast of the current trends and issues in student affairs and systematically understand the development of student affairs function, its practice methods, and program models in higher education.

The value of this fifth edition first includes the highly qualified contributors. These contributors are all very experienced scholar-practitioners. Among whom there are a significant number of senior level administrators, for example, vice-presidents for student affairs, deans, senior directors, and current/former presidents of the national student affairs organizations, and experts in American higher education (see About the Contributors). These experts have offered their valuable insights and perspectives about student affairs in its past, present, and future both theoretically and practically through a researcher-practitioner's view. These precious insights and unique perspectives have further enriched the content of the book and made this revised edition most current and more comprehensive than the previous edition.

Second, to address the changing landscape of student affairs, the fifth edition of *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* has included three brand new chapters which cover the functional areas of fraternity and sorority life, collegiate recreation, and assessment and student learning. These three new chapters are very unique in that student affairs mission, values, and organizational structure are clearly presented about these functional areas. In addition to including these new chapters, this new edition has also expanded its content to international students, adult students, veteran students, and students with disabilities.

Third, this edition has been integrated with the most recent literature, professional standards (e.g., CAS standards 2015, ACPA & NASPA professional competencies), and critical issues in student affairs that have occurred since the publication of the previous edition in 2010. This new information will bring the reader up to date with the development of student affairs in higher education and prepare one for not being defeated but being more effective in "the battle field."

This book maintains its previous title. Maintaining this title is not only a continuation of the previous work but is also in memory of Dr. Audrey Rentz, acknowledging her contribution to the field of student affairs in higher education. Dr. Rentz was Dean of Women at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and University and Alma College and a long-term faculty member in the Department of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Bowling Green State University. She started the first edition of *Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* with her colleague Gerald Saddlemire in 1990. In the past 25 years, four editions of this book were published and each edition has been

a valuable tool to serve as a primer on current practice of student affairs in higher education to students, faculty, and student affairs professionals in their learning, teaching, and practice. This fifth edition is not only inheriting the wisdom of the original contributors but also flourishing the essence of the mission and values of student affairs in American higher education.

I am proud to have served as editor of both the fourth and the fifth editions of *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education*. I strongly believe as a primer on the current practice of student affairs in higher education, this current edition will assist readers to become more competent in their practice and more cognizant in your professional identity development.

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I would first like to acknowledge all the contributors who have abundant knowledge about and practice experience in student affairs. Their talent of creation and ultimate concern about the profession are greatly appreciated. Second, I would like to acknowledge those who have not been able to make further contribution for whatever reasons but left their footprints in this book. Third, I would like to acknowledge Dr. William H. Arnold, Assistant Professor at Michigan State University, and Dr. Donna M. Talbot, Professor at Western Michigan University, who have provided valuable feedback about the fourth edition. Their feedback led to some of the changes in this fifth edition. Finally, I would like to thank Molly Topp, my graduate assistant, for her help in this editing process.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Preface</i>	xix
 <i>Chapter</i>	
1. THE PHILOSOPHICAL HERITAGE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS	
<i>Stanley Carpenter, Shannon Dean, and Paige Haber-Curran</i>	3
What Is Philosophy?	4
The Three Great Questions of Philosophy	4
Ontology	5
Epistemology	5
Axiology	6
Educational Philosophy	6
Major Philosophical Schools	7
Idealism	7
Realism	8
Neo-Thomism	9
Pragmatism	10
Existentialism	11
A Brief Philosophical History of Higher Education	12
Twentieth Century Philosophical Influences on U.S.	
Higher Education	15
Educational Philosophy and Student Affairs	17
Philosophical Shifts in Student Affairs	19
Shift from Student Services to Student Development	20
Shift from Student Development to Student Learning	21
Student Learning Imperative	22
The Principles of Good Practice	23
Learning Reconsidered	23
Building a Personal Philosophy of Student Affairs	24
References	25

2. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT AFFAIRS: TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATION—*Kandace Hinton, Mary Howard-*

<i>Hamilton, and Audrey Rentz</i>	28
Introduction	28
Colonial Higher Education (1636–1780)	29
The Plurality of Higher Education Institutions (1780–1865)	31
An Overview	31
Curricular Innovations	32
Women's Participation in Higher Education	35
The Beginnings of Black Institutions	37
Community Colleges	38
Antecedents of Student Personnel Work	39
A Period of Intellectualism (1855–1890)	41
The Pioneer Deans (1870–1920)	43
The Emergence of Student Personnel and Its Associations (1916–1936)	46
The Student Personnel Point of View (1936)	48
The Student Personnel Point of View (1949)	49
Student Personnel Practice	51
Student Development	51
The Move Toward a Developmental Perspective: COSPA	53
The 1987 NASPA Statement	55
Student Learning (1990s–Present)	56
Student Success	58
References	59

3. FROM ADMISSIONS TO ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT—

<i>Matthew Ward and Don Hossler</i>	62
Admissions—Then and Now	63
The Roles of Admissions Officers	63
The Admissions Officer as Gatekeeper and Salesperson	63
The Emergence of the Admissions Field	65
The Admissions Officer of Today	67
Enrollment Management—Origins and Ideas	68
The Changing Admissions Context	68
Defining Enrollment Management	69
The Evolution of Enrollment Management	70

Enrollment Management—The Concept	72
Resource Dependency Theory	72
Systems Theory	73
Revenue Theory	73
Revenue Maximization	74
Enrollment Management as Courtship	75
Rankings and Students as Institutional Image and Prestige ..	76
Enrollment Management—The Process	76
Planning and Research	77
Attracting Applicants and Matriculants	77
Influencing the Collegiate Experience	78
Orientation and Enrollment Management	78
Academic Advising and Enrollment Management	79
Course Placement and Enrollment Management	79
Student Retention and Enrollment Management	79
Academic Support Services and Enrollment Management ..	80
Career Services and Enrollment Management	80
Institutional Assessment and Enrollment Management	81
Other Roles of Student Affairs in Enrollment Management	81
The Faculty Role in Enrollment Management	82
Organizing for Enrollment Management	83
The Enrollment Management Division	83
The Enrollment Management Matrix	83
Student Affairs in the Enrollment Management Framework	84
Ethical Issues in Enrollment Management	85
Recruitment Practices	85
Standardized Tests and Admissions	86
Merit-Based Campus Financial Aid	87
The Impact and Uses of College Rankings	88
Technology and Enrollment Management	89
The Preparation and Training of Enrollment Managers	89
Enrollment Management Resources on the Internet	90
References	91
 4. ACADEMIC ADVISING— <i>Eric R. White and George E. Steele</i>	96
Introduction	96
History of Academic Advising	97

Definitions of Academic Advising	101
Professional Standards	103
Mission, Purpose, and Goals	103
The Faculty Advisor-Student Relationship	104
Administrative and Organizational Structures	105
Professional Development	110
Entry-Level Qualifications	111
Roles and Functions	111
Role and Application of Student Development Theory	112
Issues and Trends	114
Technology	116
Online Technology Resources	119
References	119
 5. CAREER SERVICES— <i>Lisa Severy</i>	125
Introduction	125
History	127
Placement	127
Career Planning	131
Networking	132
Purposes and Goals	132
Administration and Organizational Structures	135
Organizational Models	135
Reporting Structure	136
Funding	137
Types of Services	137
Career Counseling and Vocational Assessment	139
Career Counseling	142
Computer-Assisted Career Guidance Systems	144
Career and Life Planning Classes	145
Experiential Education Programs	146
On-Campus Recruiting and Career Fairs	147
Technology and Information Resources	149
Career Services Management Systems	149
Consortia	150
Information Resources	150
Qualifications for Career Services Employment	151
Challenges and Opportunities	153
References	156

6. COUNSELING CENTERS— <i>Naijian Zhang and Vickie Ann McCoy</i>	160
Introduction	160
History	160
Definition	165
Mission, Goals, and Purposes	165
Administration and Organizational Structure	167
Administration	167
Financial Support	169
Physical Facilities	170
Technology	170
Roles and Functions	171
Range of Services	171
Types of Problems	174
Staffing	176
Models	178
Professional Development	180
Entry-Level Qualifications	182
Role and Application of Student Development Theory and the Student Learning Imperative	184
Twenty-first Century Issues, Trends, and Implications	185
Issues	185
Trends	189
Technology Resources	192
References	193
7. STUDENT CONDUCT— <i>John Wesley Lowery</i>	203
Introduction	203
History	203
Definition, Purpose, and Scope of Student Conduct	207
Authority to Discipline and the Student-Institutional Relationship	207
Extent of Institutional Jurisdiction	209
Due Process	210
Constitutional Protections of Student Rights	212
Conflict of Resolution	213
Administration and Organization	213
Roles and Functions of Student Affairs Professionals in Discipline	214

The Nature and Scope of Campus Judicial Systems	214
The Management of Disciplinary Records	216
Student Conduct and Student Development Theory	218
Current Issues in Student Conduct	219
Balancing Legal Rights and Educational Purposes	219
Ongoing Concerns about Academic Misconduct	220
First Amendment Issues	221
Sexual Violence on Campus	222
Professional Associations	223
Entry-Level Qualifications	224
Technology	225
The Future of Student Conduct	227
The Changing Legal and Legislative Environment	228
The Continuing Need for Program Evaluation	229
The Profession and Discipline	229
References	230

8. MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL SUPPORT

SERVICES – <i>Mary Kay Schneider Carodine,</i> <i>Matthew Snyder, and Naijian Zhang</i>	243
Introduction	243
Diversity, Inclusion, Multiculturalism, and Social Justice	244
Needs	245
Racially/Ethnically Underrepresented Students	246
The History and Current Status of Underrepresented Racial/Ethnic Groups in American Higher Education	247
African American/Black Americans	247
Asian Americans	248
Hispanic/Latino Americans	249
American Indians/Native Americans	250
Summary	251
Special Support Services and Multicultural Affairs	252
Historical Overview	252
Expansion of Services	253
Biracial/Multiracial Students	254
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Students	254
International Students	255
Religious Diversity	257

Adult Students . . . . .	.258
Students with Disabilities . . . . .	.259
Veterans . . . . .	.260
The Roles of Multicultural Affairs Offices and Centers	
Today . . . . .	.261
Missions . . . . .	.262
Professional Standards . . . . .	.263
Administration and Organization Structure . . . . .	.263
Organization Structure . . . . .	.264
Administrative Role . . . . .	.264
Programs and Services . . . . .	.265
Staffing . . . . .	.266
Current Special Support Services . . . . .	.267
Professional Development . . . . .	.269
Professional Organizations . . . . .	.269
Conferences . . . . .	.270
Training . . . . .	.270
Journals . . . . .	.270
Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Technology . . . . .	.270
Interactive Websites . . . . .	.272
Alternative Modes of Service . . . . .	.273
Marketing and Communication . . . . .	.273
Online Diversity Resources . . . . .	.273
Student Development Theory and Student Learning . . . . .	.274
Future of Multicultural Affairs and Special Support Services:	
Trends and Issues . . . . .	.276
Conclusion . . . . .	.278
References . . . . .	.278
9. ORIENTATION— <i>Wanda I. Overland and Margaret L. Sarnicki</i> . . . .	.288
Introduction . . . . .	.288
History . . . . .	.290
Definitions . . . . .	.293
Professional Standards . . . . .	.294
Mission, Purpose, and Goals . . . . .	.295
Administration and Organizational Structures . . . . .	.298
Program Delivery . . . . .	.299
Funding Models . . . . .	.300
Facilities . . . . .	.300
Program Models . . . . .	.301

The Pre-enrollment or Orientation Model . . . . .	.302
The First-Year Seminar Model . . . . .	.302
Assessment . . . . .	.303
Professional Development . . . . .	.304
Entry-Level Qualifications and Human Resource	
Management . . . . .	.305
Role and Application to Student Development Theory . . . . .	.307
Issues and Trends . . . . .	.308
Technology . . . . .	.309
Implications for Practice . . . . .	.311
Parent/Guardian and Family Orientation . . . . .	.312
On-line Learners . . . . .	.312
Transfer Students . . . . .	.313
Ethnic Minority Students . . . . .	.313
Veterans . . . . .	.314
Students with Disabilities . . . . .	.314
Commuter Students . . . . .	.315
Nontraditional Students . . . . .	.315
International Students . . . . .	.315
Graduate Students . . . . .	.316
Community College Students . . . . .	.316
Additional Resources . . . . .	.316
Web Resources . . . . .	.316
Print Resources . . . . .	.317
References . . . . .	.317
10. RESIDENCE HALLS— <i>Cathy Akens and Jeff Novak</i> . . . . .	.326
Introduction . . . . .	.326
The History of Residence Halls . . . . .	.327
The Colonial Period . . . . .	.327
Middle to Late Nineteenth Century . . . . .	.328
Twentieth Century . . . . .	.329
Mission and Purpose . . . . .	.332
Staffing Patterns . . . . .	.335
Programs and Services . . . . .	.338
Community . . . . .	.339
Programming . . . . .	.340
Living and Learning Communities . . . . .	.341
Residential First-Year Student Programs . . . . .	.342

International Students	342
Applying Student Development Theory	343
Influence of Residence Halls on Students	344
Select Legal Issues	347
Fire and Safety	348
Physical Facilities	349
Program Supervision	349
Weapons on Campus	350
Therapy and Service Animals	350
Professional Development	351
Trends	353
Consumer Needs and Community Development	353
Financial Challenges	354
Technological Improvements	357
Staffing Challenges	357
Additional Resources	358
References	359
 11. STUDENT LIFE PROGRAMS— <i>Edward G. Whipple, Keith B.</i>	
<i>O'Neill, and Maureen E. Wilson</i>	365
Introduction	365
History	365
Definition	369
Professional Standards	370
Mission, Purpose, and Goals	371
Administration and Organization Structure	372
Professional Development	375
Entry-Level Qualifications	376
Roles and Functions	377
Student Government	377
Student Organization Services	378
College Union Programs	380
Leadership Development	380
Civic Engagement and Service Learning	382
Parent and Family Programs	384
Graduate Student Services	384
Commuter Students	385
Role and Application of Student Development Theory	385
Issues and Trends	387

Changing Student Demographics	387
Adult Learners	387
First-Generation Students	388
Generation Z	388
Legal Issues	389
Funding	391
Other Issues	392
Technology	392
Implication for Practice	393
References	395
 12. FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE— <i>Edward G. Whipple,</i> <i>Keith B. O'Neill, and Maureen E. Wilson</i>	399
History	400
Professional Standards	402
Mission, Purpose, and Goals	403
Administrative and Organization Structures	403
Campus Administrative Structures	404
Fraternity and Sorority Headquarters	404
Governing Organizations	405
Professional Development	407
Entry-Level Qualifications	408
Roles and Functions	408
Leadership	410
Community Service and Development	412
Understanding Diversity and Appreciating Inclusion	413
Role and Application of Student Development Theory	414
Issues and Trends	416
Question of Value and Purpose	416
Risks and Liabilities	417
Diversity and Inclusion: Organizations Especially Slow to Change	418
Institutional Resources: Finances, Staffing, and People-Power	419
Technology	420
Implications for Practice	420
Additional Resources	422
References	423

13. COLLEGIATE RECREATION— <i>Cara W. McFadden and</i>	
<i>Danielle Molina</i>	426
Introduction	426
History	427
Definition	430
Strategic Values	430
Mission, Purpose, and Goals	431
Professional Standards	431
CAS Standards	432
NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation Core	
Competencies and the Registry	434
Opportunities for Continuing Education	435
Administration and Organization Structures	436
Administration and Organization at the Institutional	
Level	436
Roles and Functions at the Departmental Level	438
The Management Branch of Collegiate Recreation	438
Facilities	438
Inventory	439
Risk and Safety	439
Budgeting	439
Human Resources	439
The Programs Branch of Collegiate Recreation	440
Intramurals and Sports Clubs	440
Fitness and Wellness Instruction	440
Outdoor Recreation	441
Special Events	441
Design at the Operational Level	441
Variations in the Design of the Physical Environment ..	442
Variations in the Design of Administrative Staffing	443
Collegiate Recreation and Student Development Theory	444
Entry-Level Qualifications	445
Technology and Resources	447
Future Considerations and Implications for Practice	450
Institutional Imperatives for Recruitment and Retention ..	450
Expansion of Health and Wellbeing Initiatives Beyond	
Students	451
Continued Press for Accountability	452

Conclusion	453
References	453

14. STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PRACTICE—A CHANGING

LANDSCAPE— <i>V. Barbara Bush and Eileen K. O'Leary</i>	459
Introduction	459
History of Financial Aid	460
Philosophy and Purpose	464
Compliance	464
Services to Students	464
Enrollment Management	465
Institutional Eligibility	465
Student Eligibility	467
Student Financial Assistance Program Funding Sources	469
Federal Student Aid Programs	469
Loan Programs	470
William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan	470
Federal Perkins Loans	471
Grant Programs	471
Federal Pell Grant Program	472
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program	472
Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher (TEACH) Education Grants	472
Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grants	473
Work Programs	473
Federal Work Study	473
State and Institutionally Funded Aid	474
Administering Student Financial Assistance	475
Sound Financial Aid Practice	475
Responsibilities and Roles	478
Structure and Staffing	479
Technology and Online Resources	481
Government Websites	482
National Center for Education Statistics	482
Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance ..	482
National Student Loan Data System	483
Nongovernmental Organizations and Professional Associations	483

National Association of Student Financial Aid	
Administrators	483
National Association of State Student Grant and Aid	
Programs	483
National Council on Higher Education Resources	483
The College Entrance Examination Board	484
General Information Websites	484
Professional Development	484
National Professional Associations	484
Regional and State Associations	485
Issues and Trends	486
Escalating Costs	486
Financial Aid Programs	487
Student Aid Post September 11, 2001	487
Conclusion	488
References	489

15. STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT—*Richard P. Keeling*

<i>and Joseph Desanto Jones</i>	493
Introduction	493
Role and Application of Student Development Theory	494
History	496
Service to Learning Orientation	496
Specialty-Oriented Departments to Holistic Divisions	497
Individual to Collaborative Working Styles	497
Assessment: From Operations to Learning	498
Definitions	499
Student Learning	499
Student Development	499
Student Learning Outcomes	499
Direct and Indirect Measures of Learning	500
Operational Effectiveness	501
Professional Standards	501
Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher	
Education (CAS)	501
AAC&U Liberal Education and America's Promise	
(LEAP)	503
Learning Reconsidered	503
ACPA and NASPA Professional Competency Areas	505

Implications for Practice	505
Mission, Purpose, and Goals	505
Types of Assessment	506
Student Academic Performance	506
Operational/Institutional Effectiveness	507
Student Learning	507
Assessment Practice	508
Administration and Organizational Structures	508
A Culture of Assessment	509
Roles of Student Affairs Leadership in Assessment	509
Professional Development and Training	510
Implementing Assessment in Student Affairs	511
Phases of Student Learning Assessment	511
Levels of Learning Outcomes	513
Methods of Assessment	514
Quantitative Methods	515
Surveys	515
Qualitative Methods	516
Technology	517
Uses of Assessment Data	518
Program and Service Improvement	518
Program Reviews	519
Use of Negative Results	519
Reports	520
Strategic Planning	520
Performance Review and Improvement	520
Issues and Trends	521
Additional Sources of Information	522
References	523
 16. STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES— <i>Richard P. Keeling and</i> <i>Jennifer S. Dickson</i>	524
Introduction	524
History	525
Mission and Purpose	526
Health and Learning	527
Mental and Behavioral Health and Learning	529
Prevention-Oriented Health Services	529

Student Health Programs, Services, and Resources	530
Approach	531
Broad Principles	532
Organization and Administrative Structure	534
Scope of Services	536
Human Resources/Staffing	540
Professional Development	542
Confidentiality and Protection of Personal Health	
Information	544
Quality Improvement and Risk Management	545
Standards and Accreditation	547
Standards	547
Accreditation	549
Technology	550
Organizational and Operational Effectiveness	552
Roles and Responsibilities of Students	553
Peer Educators	554
Students' Sources of Health Information	554
Financing College Health Programs	555
Sources of Revenue	555
Health Insurance	558
Trends: Successful Campus Health Programs	561
Additional Online Sources of Health Information	562
General Resources	562
Mental Health Resources	563
References	563
 17. IMAGINING THE FUTURE FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS AND THE STUDENT AFFAIRS EDUCATOR—	
<i>Frank Shushok, Jr. and Patricia A. Perillo</i>	566
Unprecedented and Ubiquitous Change	566
How Will We Negotiate the New Complexity?	567
How Will We Facilitate the Transition from Knowledge	
Centers to Indispensable Problem-Solving	
Communities?	568
Students Affairs as Transdisciplinary Facilitators	569
A Case Study: Virginia Tech	571
What Tools Inspire and Facilitate Educational Innovations? . .	572

How Can Graduate Preparation Programs be Reinvented? . . .	574
Conclusion	575
References	576
<i>Name Index</i>	577
<i>Subject Index</i>	583

Rentz's
STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Chapter 1

THE PHILOSOPHICAL HERITAGE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

STAN LEY CARPENTER, SHANNON DEAN, AND PAIGE HABER-CURRAN

Og, our mythical Neolithic ancestor, had a problem. To be sure, he and his tribe had lots of problems, but this was the most vexing yet. Although they did not know it or even construct the problem that way, the issue really was that their brains were too big and too differentiated. Having a good brain was an advantage and necessary for survival. Og's people were not very big or very fast compared to other animals. They were not particularly strong or keen of sight, smell, or hearing. But they could think and plan and remember. The problem was that this ability to conceptualize caused them to wonder—to need to know, to speculate, and to be unhappy when they did not have answers. Perhaps it was something poignant, like the death of a child, or just the mundane cycle of the seasons that first elicited a search for a larger meaning to life, but whatever it was, the quest could have soon led to depression, insanity, and death for the members of the tribe and therefore the tribe itself.

Thus was philosophy invented or, as some would say discovered, in an attempt to supplant powerlessness with knowledge. It did not matter that the knowledge was “incorrect” (in modern terms)—simply that it explained otherwise terrifyingly uncertain and uncontrollable things like fire and rain, death and birth. It was necessary to have something to believe and to strive to learn more.

Over time a tribal culture developed, encompassing all the beliefs, knowledge, and skills that made the group unique and contributed to survival. The culture was inculcated into the children by formal means and informal means in a process of education not materially different than what is in place today. As the tribe became a village, then a city, then a sovereign

state, philosophical knowledge grew and differentiated. Eventually, it became necessary to attend to the higher learning of some members to prepare them to lead, to teach, and to press the search for new knowledge. Student affairs professionals are the direct descendants of early educators and hence heir to a long tradition of thinking and writing about educational philosophy. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the impact of philosophy generally and several specific philosophical positions upon higher education and the practice of student affairs work, as well as to consider the history of student affairs more generally.

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

At first all learning was philosophical. The word “philosophy,” from the Greek *philosophia*, literally means love of wisdom or learning. Only in the past 200 or so years has there occurred a separation of “natural philosophy” (or sciences such as chemistry and physics), “mental philosophy” (or psychology), and “moral philosophy” (political science, economics, and sociology, for example) from the general concept (Brubacher, 1982). For thousands of years, the study of philosophy was the same as advanced learning, a wide-ranging intellectual quest. The knowledge explosion and specialization have changed that, but philosophy is still a broad and deep field.

Philosophy is a poorly understood term. People begin sentences with “My philosophy on that is . . .” and proceed to give unsupported opinions, sometimes inconsistent with their behaviors or facts. Philosophy can be thought of as simply a general approach to the world or it can be a process of disciplined inquiry. Gracia (1992) thought “Philosophy may be interpreted . . . as a set of ideas or beliefs, concerning anything, that an ordinary person may hold [or] . . . as a view of the world, or any of its parts, that seeks to be accurate, consistent, and comprehensive [or] . . . as a discipline of learning” (p. 56).

This chapter concerns itself primarily with the second meaning (a view of the world), but with elements of the third (a discipline of learning). Readers should be concerned with applying the information presented (a view of the world), using the proper methods (through the discipline), to modify their beliefs in such a way that they are accurate, consistent, and comprehensive.

The Three Great Questions of Philosophy

Originally, philosophy was concerned with virtually all knowledge, but in modern times it has come to consist of three main (very large and important) questions: What is real? How do we know? What is of value?

Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the ultimate question of existence. Some people also call it metaphysics (literally “beyond physics”). All people since Og’s tribe have hungered to know what was real and what was ephemeral. Is the universe friendly, neutral, or malevolent? Is there order in the universe, or only probabilistic chaos? Is physical existence real or is only our intellect, the goings-on in our minds, real? What is life? Is there a God or some other supernatural entity? Is this all there is?

Such questions are overwhelming and demand a systematic and satisfying answer. Just as clearly, they call for speculation, at least in the early stages of theory building and maybe for a long time after that. Every action taken by an individual, every decision, every thought will be colored by beliefs about the nature of reality.

Ontology can be usefully broken up into other areas of questions (Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, & Johansen, 1969). Anthropology concerns the nature of the human condition. Are people innately good or evil? What is the relation between the mind and the body? Is there a soul or spirit, and does it have precedence over the worldly flesh of the body? Do humans have free will?

Cosmology involves the study of the nature and origins of the universe including questions about time, space, perceptions, and purpose. Theology considers questions of religion. Some ontological theories depend heavily upon theological theories. Relatedly, teleology, or the study of purpose in the cosmos, cuts across the other areas mentioned. Is the universe a chance event or is there some larger purpose? Much of what troubled Og’s tribe, and continues to trouble humankind, is the province of ontology.

Epistemology

Epistemology examines the nature of knowledge itself, sources of knowledge, and the validity of different kinds of knowledge. Generally, knowledge can be gained from sensory perception (empirical knowledge); revelation (knowledge from a supernatural source or being); from an authority or by tradition; reason, logic, or intellect; or by intuition (nonsupernatural insight, not resulting from reason). These sources of knowledge are all subject to criticism. What is truth? Is truth subjective or objective, relative or absolute? Is there truth external to human experience? Can finite beings understand infinite truth?

One fundamental issue is whether truth is unchanging or varies with the situation or the individual, thus whether truth can be “discovered” or “constructed.” Some philosophers hold that some truths are always and univer-