MILLENNIALS, MAYHEM & MIRACLES: Navigating the Floods of Change in Higher Education

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Growing Generational Gap

- College students today were born after 1980.
- In their lifetime AIDS has always existed.
- The Vietnam War is as ancient history to them as WWI or WWII, or even the Civil War.
- President Kennedy’s assassination is as significant to them as that of Lincoln or Garfield.
- They do not care who shot J.R. and have no idea who J.R. is.
- The New Kids on the Block are over the hill.
- Bert and Ernie are old enough to be their parents.
- Barbie has always had a job.

Growing Generational Gap

- Computers have always fit in their backpacks.
- “Spam” and “cookies” are not necessarily foods.
- “Ctrl + Alt + Del” is as basic as “ABC.”
- “Coming out” parties celebrate more than debutantes.
- A “45” is a gun, not a record with a large hole in the center.
- Yugoslavia has never existed.
- Banana Republic has always been a store, not a puppet government in Latin America.
- Yuppies are as old as hippies.
- With a life expectancy of 77, they will live until ~2060.

Millennials as Contradiction

- High-achieving & high performing versus Low autonomy & emotional intelligence
- Technologically facile & connected versus Alienated & disengaged
- Community/volunteer service orientation versus Self-interested & sense of entitlement
- Respect for authority & traditions versus Lack of ethical & moral center (“whateverism”)
- Renewed interest in spirituality versus Materialism & consumerism
- More savvy (violence, sex, drugs, diversity) versus Fewer coping & conflict resolution skills

Source: UCLA Higher Education Research Institute; Howe & Strauss, 2000
Health Status of Millennials

- Increased levels of incivility & interpersonal violence
- Alcohol and other drug use continue to be the top student life concern
- Higher incidence of mental health disorders & mental health-related concerns
  - September 11th, 2001
  - Availability of psychotropic medications
  - Reduced stigma associated with counseling

Sources: UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, 2002; Centers for Disease Control, 1997; Benton, et al., 2003
Demographic Trends

- Increasingly more racially ethnically diverse – from 15% to 28% from 1976-2000
- Increasingly more female – 14% rise from 1990-2000 (compared to 7% among males)
- Growing diagnosis of learning & cognitive disabilities, including attention-deficit disorders

Source: National Center for Education Statistics
Beyond the Campus

- Increasing number of unfunded federal policy mandates that have little input from IHE’s
- Shrinking public investments in higher education
- Increased accountability to external constituents, including State legislatures, Boards of Supervisors, etc.
- Linkage of outcomes assessment with resource allocation
- Attacks on affirmative action and diversity programs
- Greater litigiousness: legality overrides learning
- Exponential growth of information & educational technology
- Public loss of faith in higher education
- Tolerance of mediocrity & unextraordinary leadership
Institutional Context:
Change vs. Status Quo

- Supremacy of the scientific method
- Medical model
- Decentralization
- Shared governance
- Unexamined cultural hegemony
- Intellectual arrogance & the myth of liberalism
- Organizational & fiscal inefficiencies
So What Needs to Change?

• Return to historical roots of higher education: holistic student development & learning
  – Preparation for active citizenship in an international society
  – Development of a spiritual core & humanist value system
  – Ability to be critical consumers & leaders for social change
  – Capacity to lead healthful lives

• Genuine, purposeful efforts to foster social justice
  – Enhances the learning experience for ALL students
  – Strive for multicultural organization (Jackson & Holvino, 1986)
  – Implement “transformed” curricula & co-curricula (Marchesani & Adams, 1992)
  – Change the processes for creating & conveying knowledge, not just the content of what we teach
So What Needs to Change?

• Support the lifelong learning continuum
  – Seek professional development & training to hone new competencies
  – Reframe conflict as opportunity rather than danger
  – Openness to expertise from other contexts (corporate, community-based organizations, etc.)

• Demand & demonstrate organizational effectiveness
  – Acknowledge the problem of “they” is really “us”
  – Analyze before jumping on professional “bandwagons”
  – Emphasis on responsibility (vs. rights) and accountability (vs. blame)
  – Nurture “extraordinary leaders” (Zenger & Folkman, 2002)
  – Renew/rejuvenate the profession: recruit & mentor young/new professionals
Defining Leadership

A leader is “anyone – regardless of formal position -- who serves as an effective social change agent.”

“...the value ends of leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life; to expand access and opportunity; to encourage respect for difference and diversity; to strengthen democracy, civic life, and civic responsibility; and to promote cultural enrichment, creative expression, intellectual honesty, the advancement of knowledge, and personal freedom coupled with social responsibility.”

## Exercising Personal Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POWERLESS</th>
<th>COERCIVE POWER</th>
<th>UTILITY POWER</th>
<th>PRINCIPLE-CENTERED POWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threaten &amp; punish</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bargain &amp; compromise</td>
<td>Faith &amp; respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubt &amp; despair</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Honor</td>
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### Leading in the Knowledge Era

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAGMENTED OR HIERARCHICAL ORIENTATION</th>
<th>NETWORKED ORIENTATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parts perspective</td>
<td>Whole system perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinct boundaries</td>
<td>Blurred boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear causality</td>
<td>Non-linear causality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change incrementally</td>
<td>Dynamic flux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-facet complexity</td>
<td>Multi-faceted complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be controlled</td>
<td>Can be influenced</td>
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*Source: Allen & Cherrey, Systemic Leadership: Enriching the Meaning of Our Work (2000)*
New Ways of Relating, Influencing Change, Learning & Leading

• Capacity to build/maintain effective, cooperative relationships across internal & external boundaries
• Ability to think relationally
• Development of emotional intelligence
• Application of organic strategies which respond to non-linear dynamics of networked systems
• Understanding where the key points of leverage exist within the network
More New Ways...

- Infusing diverse perspectives into organization’s collective intelligence and integrating new capacities
- Facilitate development of shared learning
- Communicate ideas and connect people in ways that cross boundaries
- Use new forms of cohesion that help organizations retain direction and coherence without control

Emerging Roles for Student Affairs Professionals

- Lead campuses in understanding & responding to changing student populations, new learning styles & different student needs
- Create & implement systems, structures & processes that provide a focus, or center, for learning
- Foster inclusive, supportive & respectful living-learning-working environments
- Serve as “learning managers” to facilitate relationships among individual students, student living groups, & student organizations, as well as between students & faculty, administrators or other staff

“Along with a few other highly visible administrators and a shrinking number of student-centered faculty members, student affairs staff model how students should handle obligations, opportunities, and responsibilities in an academic community. Student affairs staff are more likely than faculty members to be present during the many ‘teachable’ moments that occur out of the classroom and are in a better position to encourage students to take advantage of such moments.”

Principles of Good Practice

• Engage students in active learning
• Help students develop coherent values & ethical standards
• Set & communicate high expectations for learning
• Use systematic inquiry to improve student & institutional performance
• Use resources effectively to achieve institutional mission & goals
• Forge educational partnerships to advance student learning
• Build supportive & inclusive communities

Impacting Student Learning & Development Across the Continuum

- College choice, recruitment, application, & admission
- Orientation, advising, & registration
- First-year experience
- Retention
  - Departure
  - Reentry
- Career planning & graduation preparation
- Commencement & post-graduate life
Goals of the Curriculum & Co-Curriculum

- To impart knowledge or information
- To promote the discipline
- To enhance cognitive skills
- To enhance academic skills
- To connect students to realities of the work world
- To transition students from X to Y
- To facilitate attainment of a degree
- To foster personal & social development of students
- To prepare students to function in a pluralistic society
- To prepare students to be 21st century citizens
Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

- KNOWLEDGE; of specifics, of terminology, of categories
- COMPREHENSION; interpretation & extrapolation
- APPLICATION
- ANALYSIS; of relationships, of organizational principles, of unstated assumptions, of consistency
- SYNTHESIS; producing a communication; deriving abstract relations
- EVALUATION; judging internal & external criteria.

21st Century Citizenship

- Global literacy
- Accelerated technology
- Social responsibility & activism
- Organizational networking (horizontal vs. vertical)
- Expanding international consumer markets
- Increasingly multicultural communities & organizations
- Empowerment-oriented training and policy
- Analyze of process barriers to goal accomplishment
- Foster teamwork in organizations
- Understand philosophy of total quality management (TQM)
- Use creative problem-solving in multiple settings & contexts
- Acquire general, specific & contextual communication skills

Adapted from: James Anderson, PhD, Vice Provost, North Carolina State University (2000, March 10).
What Is Needed for Change

- **Courage**: to make difficult decisions, persevere, capitalize on teachable moments, and intervene
- **Accountability**: to our educational mission, to each other, and to our constituents
- **Risk-Taking**: to dream about possibilities, step out of your comfort zone, not be afraid of failing
- **Integrity**: role-modeling our self-stated values; exercising professional & personal ethics
- **Empowerment**: asserting personal power when able; seeking social justice so more have power
- **Connection**: not privileging the mind, but also nurturing the heart, body and spirit
- **Extraordinary Leadership**: with vision and honor
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