Retrospect and Prospect

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1 have never met an author with enough native arrogance to declare his or her aim to be the creation of a classic. While I can certainly not speak for Burns Crookston, it seems most likely that he did not plan for his article to be a classic, as I certainly did not for mine. I am honored that others think so, and I wish Burns could be with us to participate in this retrospective.

There are several similarities and differences between the two articles that merit comment.

The Either/Or Perspective

Burns and I did share a form of arrogance that was peculiar to the 60s and 70s. As champions of the emerging model of student development — in contrast to student personnel services—we tended to think in terms of black/white, good/bad, either/or. We believed that student development professionals were the only educators who wore white hats. There was a religious fervor reflected in the "Student Development Movement," and, in retrospect, I am embarrassed by some of my own earlier performances-especially one in which I declared Carl Rogers to be the Father, Arthur Combs the Son, Abraham Maslow the Holy Ghost, and Esther Loyd Jones the Holy Mother. The response to this particular speech at a national conference was an ovation, and the speech was published and circulated for years!

This need for being on the side of right is still with us in many ways. Several years ago, during the national conference in Chicago sponsored by ACPA, NASPA, and NAWDAC in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the statement on the "Student Personnel Point of View," Mel Hardee of Florida State University was one of the keynoters. In her usually creative fashion she gave an extraordinary and rousing address relating the 50-year-old statement to the novel *Gone With the Wind,* which was also celebrating its 50th anniversary. Building to a crescendo Hardee ended by saying, "Frankly, my dears, we are the ones who give a damn!" The audience rose to its feet in an outburst of pure religious fervor. We were one! We were on the side of right!

Hardee, however, was wrong; faculty, administrators, trustees, support staff, and many others in education also give a damn about students. She was wrong just as Burns and I had been wrong in a different context two decades earlier. Burns and 1 were wrong in our view that there was one best way to practice our profession, and both our articles were couched in the eitherlor perspective. I pitted faculty against counselors in terms of who should do academic advising. Burns pitted prescriptive advising against developmental advising in terms of how advising should occur. Prescriptive advising and faculty were the bad guys. In this regard we were reflecting the tenor of the times, the arrogant sureness that comes to those caught up in a movement.

In this retrospective, the analysts and critics reacting to our articles have set the record straight and have correctly pointed out the value in a both/and perspective rather than an eitherlor perspective. 'There is value in using the special skills of both faculty and counselors (and others) in delivering advising, or at least there is no significant difference between faculty and counselors, as Wes Hahley so ably demonstrates in his study of 60,000 students. As he says, "The bottom line is not who advises, but rather how well advising is done."

As for Burns's dichotomy, Ned Laff observes that "the line Crookston tries to draw between prescriptive styles and developmental styles may he irrelevant." Virginia Gordon recognizes that developmental advising is "the elusive ideal," and Lynda Fielstein notes, "It could be that some of the so-called prescriptive activities have been given a hum rap and are actually critical building blocks that enable developmental advising to evolve."

Chalk it up to youthful enthusiasm and the tendency of fervent idealists to view the world in simplistic ways. With some age on this author and also on the profession of academic advising, it is now quite clear that we need all the help we can get — from counselors, faculty, professional advisors, and others. And we also need the best process, whether that reflects the best of developmental advising or prescriptive advising.

The Gender Error

There are also similarities in the articles in our use of references to gender. Both Burns and I used only the masculine gender to refer to students and to advisors, as was the fashion of the time. That dates the articles and calls into question their "classic" character. None of us writing today would make that error.

The Contrast in Student Development Philosophy

On reading the articles again 22 years later, it seems to me there is a major difference in the tone and flavor of our messages as they relate to student development philosophy. In his opening paragraph, Burns recognized the "emergence of the student development philosophy" and used several basic assumptions from student development theory to provide the framework for his discussion of prescriptive versus developmental advising. Burns took the high road, the wider view, the theoretical track and created a classic.

In contrast, my article is rather pedestrian and utilitarian. It fails to couch the discussion in the charged language of student development philosophy that I championed in other contexts, although Tom Grites does recognize that "OXC28,4BanionXC28,4s approach to the process of academic advising clearly resembled the concept of the developmental approach presented by Crookston."

In the early 70s, Prentice-Hall had just published my first book written with April OXC28,4Connell, *The Shared Journey: An Introduction to Encounter*, used by hundreds of community colleges and universities throughout the 70s. I had also prepared a commissioned paper for the American Association of Community Colleges on "Community College Student Personal Work: An Emerging Model" that anchored several more of my books and had more impact on student development in the community college than this article on academic advising had on academic advising. In reflection I cannot fathom why I did not embroider this article with the student development perspective. Perhaps there is a clue in the reason I wrote the article in the first place.

The Genesis of a So-Called Classic

After teaching English several years in south Florida high schools, I began my career as a 24-year-old dean of students at Central Florida Junior College in Ocala. Academic advising at Central Florida was serious business, and it was always at the top of our staff agenda. Our only reference in the literature was Mel HardeeXC28,4s *Thr Faculty in College Counseling,* a classic in its time. We learned a great deal about the process of advising from Hardee, applying what we could from the university model to the community college context.

The majority of us had received our degrees in counseling from the University of Florida where the emphasis was on counseling psychology, and we were steeped in humanistic psychology and Rogerian client-centered therapy. We strongly disagreed with Hardee regarding her position that it is the faculty who do the advising. We were convinced that counselors needed to bring their great skills and insight into the academic advising process to make it more substantive for students.

So, not knowing better (I was 24, and my colleagues not much older), we experimented with our academic advising program and evaluated student satisfaction with our various experiments. The first year we used all faculty to advise. The second year only selected faculty, who were interested and who participated in training, advised. The third year only counselors advised. On our follow-up, students expressed no more satisfaction with one model than another, so in the fourth year we allowed students to self-advise or see a counselor or faculty member of their choice. Student satisfaction remained the same.

Our models were fairly pure, and our survey of student satisfaction was fairly sound. There were obvious faults in the approach, but we were not sloppy, and as a gross program evaluation we were probably fairly much on target.

These outcomes intrigued me and led me into becoming a student of academic advising as my original entree into the professional student development world. Later I conducted the first national study of academic advising in the community college and made my first professional speeches on this topic. If who did advising made little difference to students, then what was the question? For me, the question expanded into what is academic advising and what skills and knowledge are required by whoever does it? That perspective focused my attention for several years and led me to develop the five steps that make up the process of academic advising. I think the five steps are obvious, but making

them clear must have filled a void at the time. There is an appearance of logic to the steps, but what our students want and need, and when, may not be at all related to this sequence. As Diane Strommer observes in her article in this issue, "In the real hours of real days, advising often becomes whatever can be done to get through most expediently." Tom Grites notes that the model is actually upside down in actual practice; "In reality students seek advice in the reverse order." There is much truth in what he says.

If the five steps, however, have been helpful to college staff in designing academic advising programs, perhaps they need "stretching" to fit the needs of todayXC28,4s students and institutions. Cheryl Polson has some excellent suggestions along these lines, and I hope she will reengineer the model for future application.

Although acknowledged several times by reviewers in this retrospective, I have always felt that practitioners often overlooked the identification of skills, knowledge, and attitudes required by academic advisors for each of the five steps. The five steps were designed so that these characteristics could be identified. And that is perhaps why this article is not laced with student development philosophy. I was interested in a simple, pragmatic question and kept the article clearly focused on answering this question. Perhaps clarity is one of the hallmarks of a classic article.

The characteristics required for those who provide academic advising need updating, and if I were designing an academic advising program today, the revised list of desired characteristics would be my beginning point. The conceptual framework of the steps and characteristics allows for a lot of questions to be asked; that is probably why some consider the piece to be a classic. The model programs developed at Seminole Community College and St. Louis Community College at Meramec, described in this issue, have been developed by creative leaders who knew how to ask the right questions.

If I were updating the five steps and the characteristics of advisors today, I would carefully review the impact and potential of technology on the model. I believe the model would change in fundamental ways if it incorporated some of the technological elements reviewed by Mike Rooney. Of all the respondents, he is the most visionary in suggesting how technology can expand and enhance the advising process. I am surprised that more reviewers did not underscore this theme.

Robert Heterick, president of EDUCOM, believes that technology is "the primary vehicle by which institutions of higher education are going to reengineer the teaching-and-learning process." If this is true for teaching, then why not for advising?

Conclusion

We are beginning to know — with assistance from such leaders as Astin, Tinto, Cross, and others — that tinkering around the edges of our institutions is not going to make any significant improvement in student learning. We can tighten up a weak process, batten down a loose connection, revise a worn out list, and assign a new name to an old program, but it will still be business as usual. It will really not make much difference if the entire academic advising system is totally reengineered, if most everything else remains the same.

For real change to occur in educational institutions––change that will expand and increase opportunities for students to broaden and deepen their learning — systemic change is required. "In reality, who does advising is probably not as important as the philosophy of the institution that supports the academic advising program and the commitment and understanding with which the counselor or instructor approaches the process." Realigning the philosophy of an educational institution and increasing the commitment and understanding of faculty and staff regarding advising, teaching, or any other educational activity is beyond the pale of any one group in an institution. Unless great leaders come forward or major social crises force change, educational institutions will not change radically for the better.

In the meantime, academic advising professionals have carved out an important niche in the current educational landscape. If academic advising did not exist, it would have to be invented. If we could reinvent our educational institutions around what we now know about student development and reinvent academic advising in that context, I wonder how it would differ from the academic advising we know and practice today?

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