

A STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
2004

### Introduction

With the recent name change from the Division of Undergraduate Affairs to the Division of Student Affairs at the University of California, Berkeley, an opportunity emerged to make clearer the philosophic foundations from which we operate as a division. While heretofore, there has been no substantive analysis of the theoretical basis for the work we do, it is safe to assume that each unit in Student Affairs espouses a similar mission. We exist primarily to successfully transition students throughout the various aspects of his or her trajectory into the academy, from pre K-12 to career development and beyond. How we actually do this requires further exploration, with student development theories serving as the lens through which we engage this topic.

Though many departments within Student Affairs have multiple stakeholders (faculty, parents, community members), it is true, however, that students are the primary clients for most, if not all, student affairs units. It is also true that in spite of having a set of agreed upon student development principles, student affairs units have been quite successful in providing effective and innovative programs and services. However, absent agreed upon, unifying guiding values, there is a greater risk of sporadic planning in reaction to real external and internal pressures.

Here then is an attempt to introduce various student development perspectives as championed by leading theorists in fields of college student personnel and higher education, with the hope that we as practitioners will give full consideration as to how these models can inform, if not enhance, our work with students. *We have made an attempt in this document to place selected Student Affairs office functions in alignment with specific theories/concepts. See blue highlights for those connections.*

***Note: Most of the text in the following four sections has been compiled from excerpts taken directly from the cited texts. Please see the reference list at the end of the document for additional information.***

### Background

*Excerpts from: Student Development in College: Theory Research and Practice, (1998)*

*In the late 1960s and the 1970s, professional associations, such as the Council of Student Personnel Associations (COSPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and private groups such as the Hazen Foundation, began to reconceptualize the role and mission of student affairs. The Hazen Foundation created the Committee on the Student in Higher Education (1968), which encouraged colleges and universities to “assume responsibility for the human development of [their] students” (p.5), something never asked of higher education before. The committee went on to proclaim that “our educational procedures rarely take cognizance of what we do know about human development” (p.5).*

*At the same time, Tomorrow’s Higher Education Project (T.H.E.), initiated by ACPA, explored the viability of student development as a philosophy of the profession (Brown, 1972) and specifically examined the student affairs profession’s “commitment to student development – the theories of human development applied to the postsecondary education setting- as a guiding theory, and the continued attempt to ensure that the development of the whole student was an institutional priority” (Garland & Grace, 1993, p.6.).*

*In his influential monograph Student Development in Tomorrow’s Higher Education-A Return to the Academy, Brown (1972) challenged college administrators and student affairs professionals to “hold up the mirror” to each other to confront the incongruities between the stated goals of higher education*

and what is happening to students. He questioned whether student affairs professionals should be the only ones on campus concerned about student development and, more important, whether student development can be nurtured without the support and influence of those in the academic domain. A forerunner of "The Student Learning Imperative" (1996), the T.H.E. project recommended that student affairs educators take action on such issues as moving from a focus on the extracurricular to an emphasis on the academic, improving teaching and learning experiences, reorganizing student affairs offices and functions, being accountable by conducting outcomes assessments, and developing new sets of competencies.

### Theories

Student Development Theories are most often based on psychological theories that have been applied to a traditional college age population. Over the last 10 to 15 years, some theories with a specific focus on women, underrepresented minority, LGB, or non-traditionally aged students have also emerged. Most student development theories are commonly categorized as psychosocial and identity development, cognitive-structural, and typology.

*Psychosocial & Identity Development (A sequence of developmental tasks and stages confronted by adults when their biology and psychology converge and "qualitatively change their thinking, feeling, behaving, valuing, and relating to others and oneself").*

Erikson's theory of identity and intimacy provided much of the foundation for the psychosocial theories. Yet, Chickering's Theory of Identity Development is one of the most well known theories in this category. This theory revolves around seven vectors of student development.

*Excerpt from Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession~3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (1996), (pp.168-169)*

1. **Developing Competence**-focuses on tasks of developing intellectual, physical and manual, and interpersonal competence. (*Academic Support Services, Residential Computing – 1<sup>st</sup> year*)
2. **Managing Emotions**-students develop the ability to recognize and accept emotions, and appropriately express and control them. (*Residential Living, student groups – 1<sup>st</sup> year*).
3. **Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence**-students develop increased emotional independence, self-direction, problem-solving ability, persistence, and mobility. (*Student Leadership, Residential Living, Campus Orientation, Community Service – all years*)
4. **Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships**-acceptance and appreciation of differences, and capacity for healthy and lasting intimate relationships. (*Residential Living, Student Leadership - all years*)
5. **Establishing Identity**-issues of comfort with body and appearance, gender & sexual orientation, sense of one's role and lifestyle, sense of social & cultural heritage, comfort with one's roles and lifestyles, secure self in light of feedback from significant others, self-acceptance, self-esteem, personal stability & integration. (*Gender Equity, student groups, Theme Programs – all years*)
6. **Developing Purpose**-clear vocational goals, making meaningful commitments to specific personal interests & activities. (*Career Planning, Community Service – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years*)
7. **Developing Integrity**- progressing from rigid, moralistic thinking to a more humanized, personalized value system that respects the beliefs of others. (*Student Leadership, Family Programs – all years*).

*Excerpts from: Student Development in College: Theory Research and Practice, (1998), (pp.123-126)*

*Cognitive-Structural Theories – illuminate changes in the way people think, not what they think. (Derived from Piagetian psychology (Piaget, 1952), these theories stress the importance of heredity and environment in intellectual development and reveals the various ways and individual develops cognitively. (Judicial Affairs/Student Conduct)*

*Excerpts from: (pp. 176-178)*

Three popular theorists in this category are Kohlberg, Perry, and Gilligan. Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development lays a foundation for this category. His theory, developed in the 1950s has relied on many aspects of Piaget's (1952) child development theory.

Kohlberg's model employs a hierarchical, sequential progression.

I. Preconventional Level

Stage 1. Punishment and obedience orientation—the individual acts to avoid punishment.

Stage 2. The instrumental—relativist orientation—decisions are based on equal exchange.

II. Conventional Level

Stage 3. The interpersonal concordance orientation—good behavior is identified as that which pleases others.

Stage 4. The “law and order” orientation—actions are based on upholding the system and obeying the rules.

III. Postconventional, or Principled Level

Stage 5. The social contract, or legalistic, orientation—individuals are bound by the social contracts into which they have entered.

Stage 6. The universal ethical principle orientation—Self-chosen ethical principles, including justice, equality, and respect for human dignity, guide behavior. Principles take precedence over laws

Because Kohlberg's research did not include women, Gilligan's work in the 1980's lead to important updates to the genre of moral development theories. She “asserted that Kohlberg's theory, with its focus on justice and rights, did not take into account the concern that women have with care and responsibility for others.” Gilligan's model of moral development consists of three levels and two transition periods.

I. Orientation to Individual Survival—decisions center on self and one's own desires and needs.

1. From Selfishness to Responsibility—desire to take care of oneself remains but is in conflict with a growing sense that the right thing to do is to take care of others.

II. Goodness as Self-Sacrifice—Acceptance by others becomes the primary criteria...one's own desires are relegated to a secondary position.

2. From Goodness to Truth—the concept of responsibility is reconsidered in an effort to include taking care of oneself as well as others

III. The Morality of Non-Violence—“...comes to understand that the prohibition against hurting includes not hurting herself as well as not hurting others. This principle of non-violence becomes her main guiding force.”

(p. 130)

Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development concerns itself with the structures that shape how people view their experiences. He described his system as beginning with simplistic

forms in which the individual interprets the world in “unqualified polar terms of absolute right-wrong, good-bad” (Perry, 1968, p. 3). Perry has labeled his positions as follows:

*Excerpts from How College Affects Students, (1991), (pp.28-30)*

Perry’s Theory of Intellectual & Ethical Development “is clearly a stage model, although he prefers the term *position* because it implies no assumptions about duration...”

- “Dualism Modified (positions 1-3). In the early position, students order their worlds in dualistic, dichotomous, and absolute categories. Knowledge is presumed to be absolute and known to authorities...”
- Relativism Discovered (positions 4-6). ..Recognition of multiplicity in the world leads to understanding that ‘knowledge is contextual and relative’. Analytical thinking skills emerge...
- Commitments in Relativism Developed (Positions 7-9)...Commitments are made to ideas, to values, to behaviors, to other people...” (p. 29)

*Excerpts from Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice (1998)*

*Typology Theories - reflect individual stylistic differences in how students approach their worlds. Unlike the psychosocial and cognitive-structural theories, they are not truly developmental in that they do not consist of stages through which individuals progress...typology theories also help explain interpersonal interactions and provide guidance in working through conflicts...” (pp. 204- 205)*  
*(Career Services)*

Theories commonly referred to as typology include Myers-Briggs and Holland.

- The Myers-Briggs model is solidly based on Carl Jung’s theory of psychological types.
- “Holland’s theory of vocational choice examines both people’s interests and the characteristics of work environment. According to Holland, vocation is an expression of personality...” (Komives, Woodard, & Assoc, 1996, p. 181)

### **Models**

*Excerpts from How College Affects Students, (1991)*

This set of models is referred to as “College Impact Models of Student Change”. “...’impact models’ concentrate not so much on any particular internal process or dimension of student change as on the processes and origins of change.” (p. 50)

*Astin’s Theory of “Involvement” (Student Groups/Residential Living/Dining/Community Service)*

“Astin’s conception occupies something of a middle ground between psychological and sociological explanations of student change. ...the institutional environment [is assigned] a critical role in that it affords students a great number and variety of opportunities for encounters with other ideas and people.” “...the student clearly plays a central role...in determining the extent and nature of growth according to the quality of effort or involvement with the resources provided by the institution.” (p. 51)

*Tinto’s Theory of Student Development (Admissions, Orientation, Financial Aid, Registration, Dining experiences, Office of Student Development, student’s first year).*

“Tinto theorizes that students enter a college or university with varying patterns of personal, family, and academic characteristics and skills, including initial dispositions and intentions with respect to college attendance and personal growth. These intentions and commitments are subsequently modified and reformulated on a continuing basis through a longitudinal series of interactions between the individual and the structures and members of the academic and social systems of the institution.” (p. 51)

*Pascarella's General Model for Assessing Change (All functions in Student Affairs).*

This model is “a general causal model that includes more explicit consideration of both an institution’s structural characteristics and its general environment...Pascarella suggests that growth is a function of the direct and indirect effects of five major sets of variables.”

- Set 1—Students’ background and pre college characteristics— and Set 2—The structural and organizational features of the institution—shape the 3<sup>rd</sup> variable set—A college’s or university’s environment.
- The cluster of sets 1, 2, and 3 influence the 4<sup>th</sup> cluster—Interactions with Agents of Socialization (e.g. faculty & peers).
- The 5<sup>th</sup> set of variables—Quality of Student Effort— is in turn shaped by the four preceding sets.

These five sets of variables “explain changes in student’s learning and cognitive development...” (pp. 54-55)

### **Other Influences**

The influence of Ernest Boyer does not come from theory but rather from his observations, research, and philosophical sway as the president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In his 1987 book entitled *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, Boyer says “...the claims of community must be vigorously affirmed. By community we mean an undergraduate experience that helps students go beyond their own private interests, learn about the world around them, develop a sense of civic and social responsibility, and discover how they, as individuals, can contribute to the larger society of which they are a part.” (pp. 67-68)

The Boyer Commission has been critical of America’s research universities for a lack of attention to the development of civic & social responsibility in undergraduates.

### **Limitations**

While we recognize the inherent value in using theory to help make sense out of what we do, as it has the power to describe, explain, predict, and control, there are limitations as to how or why they should be considered at UC Berkeley.

- Because UCB no longer offers graduate training in College Student Personnel or Higher Education, there is currently little institutional knowledge and value for the theoretical precepts that guide our work with students.
- Because UCB Student Affairs division is so multi-faceted, it may be very difficult, if at all appropriate, to focus primarily on the traditional college-aged student.
- The theories themselves are based on the findings of a narrow population (mostly white, upper to upper middle class, traditional-aged men).
- The theories “focus on individual development to the exclusion of community-oriented values such as altruism and interdependence”. (King, 1994 cited in Evans, Forney, Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p.281).

### **Conclusion**

As we seek to thoughtfully describe what we do in Student Affairs, partly based on a set of theoretical assumptions that are currently utilized by many comparable institutions across the country, we recognize that further interrogation is necessary for us practitioners to fully embrace, if at all, the precepts described here. We recognize, however, that opportunities abound for student affairs to position itself within the academy in respect to two major areas, the division that has expert knowledge of students, their needs, wants, motivations, etc. and we conduct research and assessment on student behaviors and learning outcomes. We know that we are not the only division

at UCB that has this set of expertise, still, it is accurate to conclude that staff in Student Affairs preside over the most encompassing set of student services on the campus thus, strengthening our role as the requisite experts in student development practice, regardless of our ability to aptly articulate the associated theory out of which our training originates

Jerlena Griffin-Desta, Executive Director, Office of Student Development  
Je Nell Padilla, Manager, Research and Planning, Office of Student Development

## REFERENCE LIST

### Primary References

Boyer, E. L. (1987). *College: The undergraduate experience in America*. New York: Harper & Row.

Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Komives, S. R., Dudley, B., Woodard, Jr., (1996). *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pascarella, E. T., Terenzini P. T., (1991). *How College Affects Students*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

### Secondary References

Astin, A. (1985). *Achieving educational excellence: A critical assessment of priorities and practices in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, R. D. (1972). *Student development in tomorrow's higher education—a return to the academy*. Alexandria, VA: American College Personnel Association.

Garland, P.H., & Grace T.W. (1993). New perspectives for student affairs professionals: Evolving realities, responsibilities, and roles (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 7). Washington, DC: George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

King, P. M. (1994). Theories of college student development: Sequences and consequences. *Journal of College Student Development*, 35, 413-421.

Pascarella, E. (1985). College environmental influences on learning and cognitive development: A critical review and synthesis. In J. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 1). New York: Agathon.

Perry, W. G., Jr. (1968). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Piaget, J. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York: International Universities Press.

Schroeder, C. (1993). *The student learning imperative: Implications for student affairs*. American College Personnel Association.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research*, 45, 89-125.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

#### Other Selected Student Development Foundations

Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Chickering, A. W. (1969). *Education and identity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kohlberg, L. (1969). Stage and sequence: The cognitive-developmental approach to socialization. In D. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research* (pp. 347-480). Chicago: Rand McNally.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

#### Selected Psychological Foundations

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.

Piaget, J. (1948). *The moral judgment of the child*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press