



# Student Services

# NEWS

Volume 4, Number 2

July 2000

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## Letter from the Past Chair

Greetings.

Well, the evaluations are in, and those of you who were able to attend the Student Services Commission Conference in April gave the conference a “thumbs up.” Royce Ann Collins, Terri Beauregard, and the staff at Baker University were great hosts. We also owe much gratitude to CAAHE and IPD for their support. Without their support, many of us would not have been able to attend the conference. Also, a big thank you to our constant leader, Deanna Boe, and, last but not least, thanks to our planning committee (Terri, Deanna, Royce Ann, Carol, Catherine Strate, and Victoria Serrano).

## Letter from the Past Chair, continued

According to Michael Maginn in Effective Teamwork, teams are described as people coming together to work toward a common goal, bringing with them a variety of abilities, experiences, and backgrounds. Our conferences exemplify Maginn's statement. Every time I attend a Student Services Conference, I come away filled with excitement over experiencing our synergy. The certificate we received at the "Wizard of OZ" conference stated our attributes concisely. We in Student Services have the brains to help students make wise choices, the courage to face new challenges, and the heart to love what we do.

I enjoyed seeing many of you again at the CAAHE Conference in June. At that conference, we welcomed our new Student Services Chair, Catherine Strate (Albertus Magnus College). Catherine has been serving this past year as your Vice-Chair, and during the previous year she served as Secretary. Nancy Atkins (Averett College) has been selected as your Vice-Chair, and Victoria Serrano (Cardinal Stritch University) will serve again this year as Secretary.

As my term as Chair of the Student Services Commission comes to an end, I would like to thank all of you for your support. I am proud to be a part of such an outstanding group of people.

*Carol Dillon  
Fontbonne College  
Past Chair of CAAHE Student  
Services Commission*

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## Letter from the New Chair

To the Student Services Commission:

As the Chair of the Student Services Commission for 2000–2001, I look forward to the year with some trepidation. Following in the footsteps of Carol Dillon, under whose leadership the Student Services Commission has taken significant steps towards formalizing its mission, I feel the task at hand to be rather daunting. However, with the creativity and support of the other officers—Nancy Atkins, Vice-Chair from Averett College; Vicki Serrano, Secretary from Cardinal Stritch College; and Carol Dillon, Past Chair from Fontbonne College—I look forward to addressing the ever-present challenges within the realm of Student Services.

## Letter from the New Chair, continued

I believe that we are fortunate to be involved in the growth of one of the most interesting and innovative post-secondary educational programs in the nation. Our programs exist not only because they invite individual achievement, but also because they respond to a student's educational needs at a time when knowledge, skills, and abilities are key to an individual's career development and personal growth. We are fortunate to be able to make a tangible contribution to the lives of the people that we contact on a daily basis, and I believe we can make significant proactive contributions that will enhance the student's educational experience and, at the same time, make our jobs more effective and efficient.

As a consortium, CAAHE has an important mission to fulfill. Just like "ET," we exist to assure you that you are not alone. There are others that have experienced the day-to-day challenges and frustrations that you may be facing. Sometimes our past experiences can help resolve the "unsolvable." Similarly, the ideas and innovations that each of you generate in your individual programs can be of help to others. I cannot count the number of times that I have heard of an approach, philosophy, or strategy from a sister institution that has, with only minor fine-tuning, been a valuable addition to the Albertus Magnus College New Dimensions Program. We are not exactly alike in our programs and approaches, but it is this diversity that can give us new perspectives on our day-to-day and long-term operating problems. This makes CAAHE's Student Services organization of great value to each of us and our schools.

For those of you who did not attend the CAAHE conference in Phoenix, we discussed two projects that we would like to address during the next year. The first demands immediate attention. With the Department of Education's review of the accountability of study groups at the University of Phoenix, the Commission decided to develop a task force that would review existing methods of monitoring study groups and create suggested uniform guidelines that may be adapted to each school's systems.

The second project relates to the continued need for additional assistance to enhance our students' writing and math skills. Many of us have heard that there are computer-based tutorial programs available that could assist our students through self-study efforts. It was thought that we could review and evaluate some of these tools and publish a list, indicating the strengths and limitations of each program. Because few of us have the resources to have a person-to-person tutorial program, this could be a viable alternative to help our students.

The year ahead will be filled with challenges, just as the years past have been. I would like to respond to your needs and ideas by continuing to build our personal and professional relationships. Please email me at [cstrate@albertus.edu](mailto:cstrate@albertus.edu) with your comments or suggestions for our organization's future activities.

I look forward to an exciting and fruitful year.

*Catherine Strate  
Albertus Magnus College  
New Chair of CAAHE Student  
Services Commission*



## CAAHE: Minutes for the Student Services Commission

Thursday, June 15, 2000  
Phoenix, Arizona

### Attendance:

Deanna Boe	Institute for Professional Development
Carol Dillon	Fontbonne College
Catherine Strate	Albertus Magnus College
Royce Ann Collins	Baker University
Terri Beauregard	Baker University
Jeanette Schreffler	Olivet Nazarene University
Joan Dean	Olivet Nazarene University
Karen Fieg	William Penn University
D'Lanna Mason	Aquinas College
Janine Robinson-Combre	Shorter College
Art Hunborg	Fontbonne College
Margot Payne	Montreat College
Peg Asher	Thomas More College
Keshia Bailey	Averett College
Carmen Phelps	Averett College
Nancy Atkins	Averett College
Victoria Serrano	Cardinal Stritch University
Jim Schermerhorn	Averett College
Debbie Ellison	Averett College
Dan Holland	Southern Wesleyan University

Carol Dillon (Fontbonne), Chair of the Student Services Commission for 1999–2000, called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

The meeting began with the election of officers for the upcoming term. Carol presented the nominees that resulted from her “Call for Nominations.” They were Nancy Atkins (Averett) for Vice-Chair and Vikki Serrano (Cardinal Stritch) for Secretary. Peg Asher and Joan Dean were nominated from the floor for the positions of Vice-Chair and Secretary, but declined the nominations. Based on a unanimous vote, Catherine Strate (Albertus Magnus) was elected as new Chair, Nancy Atkins was elected as Vice-Chair, and Vikki Serrano was reelected as Secretary. Carol Dillon will serve as Past Chair. The primary duties of officers are to plan the Annual Student Services Conference, which is held in the spring, and to attend the Student Services Commission meeting held at the annual CAAHE conferences.

## **CAAHE: Minutes for the Student Services Commission, continued**

The meeting continued with Carol informing the commission that the results of the CAAHE Staffing Survey would be presented at 11:00 A.M. on Friday.

The commission decided to form a new task force on study group issues because of the recent Department of Education ruling on study group tracking. The main area that the task force will focus on is tracking attendance for Student Services and Financial Aid purposes. Task Force members: Royce Ann Collins (Chair), Peggy Asher, Keshia Bailey, Debbie Ellison, Janine Robinson-Combre, Catherine Strate, Deanna Boe, and Carol Dillon.

Nancy Atkins said that she felt that Averett has an effective form for tracking study group attendance and participation. She will email a sample to Catherine Strate for review.

Commission members were urged to attend Session 13 and Session 16, which would provide information on Department of Education reporting requirements.

Discussion then shifted to common problems regarding student involvement in activities and the need to create a sense of belonging with the institutions. Nancy Atkins stated that at Averett they were trying a variety of activities, including a "Family Day" and free informational business symposiums. Catherine requested that Nancy provide the commission with feedback on the results of these events, because many institutions have had problems with minimal turnout at student events.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Victoria Serrano  
Secretary 2000–2001

### **Bulletin Board**

"A New Era of Learning," Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) 2000 International Conference, November 16–18, Chicago, Illinois  
Pre-Conference Workshop, November 14–15, "Managing Online Education Partnerships: Plain Talk and Practical Tools for Internet-Based Consortia"

IPD Student and Academic Services Orientation sessions will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, November 29–30, 2000.



## **Retention of Students in CAAHE Programs**

**By Amy Foster, Cardinal Stritch University**

Retention of students has always been an issue for academic institutions. An improved retention rate would give CAAHE institutions a competitive edge over other academic institutions competing for new students. CAAHE schools are experiencing a high level of competition and a moderate level of growth, which increases the importance of improved retention.

### **Definition**

Retention, as defined by the Student Right-to-Know Act, indicates that students are considered retained if they complete their degree within 150% of full-time continuous enrollment (i.e., six years for a four-year degree). Typically, programs within the CAAHE format are not included within this definition because this Act only applies to first-time freshmen. It would be impossible to define 150% for all of the students within CAAHE programs, since students enter these programs with a varying number of college credits.

### **CAAHE Retention Efforts**

One way CAAHE institutions can maximize retention effectiveness is to create one retention definition that all CAAHE schools find acceptable. Each institution defines its own acceptable retention rate within the CAAHE retention rate. A few questions all institutions should consider when determining an acceptable retention rate are the following:

- Is the above definition (Student Right-to-Know Act) an acceptable way for CAAHE schools to define retention?
- If CAAHE programs do not accept this definition, could the above definition be adjusted to include students within CAAHE programs?

If the CAAHE schools work together to define retention and determine what retention rates should be, a standard could be created to measure an institution's retention performance and determine if there are needed improvements.

### **The Cardinal Stritch University Experience**

At Cardinal Stritch University, Educational Counselors are committed to the retention of current students, but due to high student-to-counselor ratios are unable to reach out to inactive students because of time restraints, lack of retention information, and no organized process to motivate students to return to the University.

## **Retention of Students in CAAHE Programs, continued**

Firsthand experience has shown that students who withdraw from the University and reenter at a future date usually need a level of service similar to first-time students. Such services include an ID card, financial aid, a reentry application, a transcript, program start information, a mini-orientation, and phone calls to motivate these students to start and remind them of upcoming course start dates. Because of the difficulty of integrating the reentry process into Student Services, a Re-entry Specialist was hired on January 1, 2000, to focus attention on the reentry of inactive students.

The Re-entry Specialist coordinates all reentry activities and makes recommendations to improve retention. A tracking mechanism was created to trigger the contact of students who have withdrawn and to measure the success of reentry retention. These efforts ensure an increase in University enrollment, which increases income. It is expected that this improved service to inactive students will also contribute to the University's fulfillment of its Franciscan Values and public relations, and ultimately will increase new student enrollment through the praise of Stritch by satisfied alumni.

Retention of students presents CAAHE institutions with a great opportunity—the opportunity to surpass prior expectations and achieve better retention, higher graduation rates, and satisfied students.

For further information, contact Amy Foster, Re-Entry Specialist at Cardinal Stritch University, at (414) 410-4445, or email [afoster@stritch.edu](mailto:afoster@stritch.edu).



## **What Are the Counseling Needs of the Adult Learner?**

**By Nancy Atkins, Averett College**

A recent research study that involved Averett College adult learners in Richmond, VA, reveals that, because of the stress associated with juggling family, work, social obligations, and college, increasingly students are seeking counseling or encouragement from counseling centers (Wilson, Mason, Ewing, 1997). Of the 157 adult learners surveyed, 63% said that they needed to know about education, occupations, and employment opportunities. Gammon (1997) points out that the adult learner needs help in “defining a goal that is strong enough to pull on through the rough spots” (p. 31).

In 1966, Van Kaam argued that adult learners want counselors to listen when they say (without speaking), “Please leave your self-presence for a moment. Please be with me, make my world for once the center of your attention, your sympathy, your kind understanding” (p. 22). As Giczkowski and Allen (1994) point out, “On the one hand, the adult learner is the determined, self-confident executive; and on the other, the frightened, insecure, disoriented individual” (p. 15). They are also meticulous consumers of education who handle multifaceted lifestyles.

## What Are the Counseling Needs of the Adult Learner, continued

What drives the adult learner to return to the classroom? He or she returns for a variety of reasons. Backes (1997) argues that “a quest for knowledge and a desire to learn new skills, either by choice or by necessity, due to displacement, are among the many reasons that adults find themselves back in a classroom” (p. 29).

Student Services providers and faculty can be of enormous assistance to the adult learner when they understand the adult learner’s profile, according to the experts. One particular concern of the faculty is the interrelational study group dynamic. Of the survey respondents, 65% said that they had a need to resolve conflicts with others; this included study group members, coworkers, family, and friends.

The high percentage of adult learners responding to counseling need-based questions supports the hypothesis that adult learners have a need to discuss personal concerns. The survey results confirm the assumption that adult learners need emotional assistance within the institution of higher education in addition to having their normal academic expectations met.

For further information on the Adult Learner Research Profile, contact

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## North Central Publishes New Policy on Institutional Records of Student Complaints

By Mary Ann Holtz, Director of Regulatory Services, IPD

The North Central Association Commission on Institutions of Higher Education established a new policy regarding institutional records of student complaints earlier this year. The policy states:

“To comply with federal regulations, the Commission expects an affiliated institution to make available to a comprehensive evaluation team an account of the student complaints it has received.” (Policy IV.B.4)

This federally mandated requirement focuses primarily on complaints from students. The Department of Education is asking the NCA evaluation teams to “be aware of major complaints or categories of student concerns.” Therefore, the institution should be prepared to present an accounting of student complaints and their disposition for the evaluation team during the reaffirmation visit.


Specifically, the Commission is looking for an account of the complaints filed “formally in writing, signed by a student, and addressed to and submitted to an institutional officer with the responsibility to handle the complaint.”

Furthermore, institutions should be prepared to include information for at least the past two years of operation preceding a comprehensive evaluation visit. The types of complaints should include both nonacademic and academic complaints made by current or recent students. Complaints from parents, employers, alums, or other groups do not need to be reported.

The Commission is asking the evaluation teams to review student complaints in two ways. First, teams “should consider whether institutions generally deal with complaints in a timely manner, according to their policy or procedure or practice...and in a way that demonstrates fairness to students.” Second, teams have been asked to “look for any pattern to the complaints that suggests problems with institutional quality or with factors related to the General Institutional Requirements or Criteria for Accreditation.” The team will not be reviewing decisions made regarding specific complaints.

Finally, it is important that the institution have some mechanism for protecting the privacy of students and other parties. Student names and/or the names of any other parties need not be reported to the evaluation team.

The new policy was published in the March 2000 Addendum to the Handbook of Accreditation, Second Edition. For further information on this policy, please contact the North Central Association at (800) 621-7440 or <http://www.ncacihe.org>.



## Assessment of Prior Learning: Awarding College Credit for Language Proficiency

By Deanna Boe, Director of Student Services, IPD

Does your institution offer entering students who are fluent in another language the opportunity to earn credit through assessment? Let's explore several options for language assessment available to your institution.

### CLEP Examinations

The College Board's College Level Examination Program (CLEP) offers exams in French, German, and Spanish, Levels I and II. Students may earn 6 or 12 credits per exam, depending upon the level of proficiency. Vocabulary mastery, grammatical skills, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension are measured. IPD recommends using the American Council on Education's recommendations on passing scores. (See pages 95–97, 109, and 128–129 in ACE's *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination*, 4th edition, for further information.) Many CAAHE institutions regularly offer CLEP exams to students. Ninety percent of the institutions responding to the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning's recent national survey on PLA (*Prior Learning Assessment: A Guidebook to American Institutional Practices*, CAEL, 1999) use CLEP exams to assess prior learning.

### DANTES Examinations

The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Subject Standardized Testing Program offers exams in German I and II, Italian I and II, Spanish I and II, and French I and II. Students may earn 3 credits per exam. IPD recommends using the ACE recommendations on passing scores. (See pages 131–134, 137–138, and 160 in ACE's *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination*, 4th edition, for additional information.) A growing number of CAAHE institutions regularly offer DANTES exams to students. Eighty percent of the institutions responding to CAEL's recent survey on PLA use DANTES exams to assess prior learning.

### Defense Language Institute

The Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, provides language instruction to U.S. military personnel. Proficiency testing is offered for 18 languages. Languages are categorized according to difficulty, and students are tested on listening, reading, and speaking. Students who have attended the Defense Language Institute should submit appropriate military documentation at the time of admission. A student may obtain the official DLI test results and score report from the Defense Language Institute. ACE's Credit by Examination Program has evaluated the DLPT Program and published credit recommendations for selected exams taken after September 1, 1995. (See pages 163–170 in ACE's *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination*, 4th edition, for further information.)

# Assessment of Prior Learning: Awarding College Credit for Language Proficiency, continued

## Institution-Based Assessment

For assessment of languages not covered by CLEP or DANTES exams or taught at your institution, consider establishing an agreement with an institution that specializes in teaching languages. The University of Phoenix, for example, has had an agreement with the Berlitz Institute for many years.

When using an outside service for language evaluation, the following procedures are recommended:

- 1) a student's language evaluation must be approved in advance by your institution;
- 2) the exam must be performed by a qualified instructor approved by the institution at an appropriate testing site; and
- 3) official results of the language evaluation must be sent directly from the testing institution to the Director of Prior Learning Assessment.

Typically, the Director of PLA or a trained faculty evaluator will interpret the exam scores and recommend the appropriate credit award. Your institution will set policy on the amount and level of credit awards. Typically, the student may receive up to 12 lower-division credit hours for conversational skill and some reading and writing ability. Up to 6 additional credit hours may be awarded for an excellent rating in all language evaluation areas. The evaluation should be one hour in length and should include spoken conversation, reading, and writing.

A language evaluation form filled out by the evaluating instructor serves as the official test score. The student submits a copy of the form in the Documented Learning section of the Prior Learning Portfolio. Additionally, the institution may require the student to write a Learning Outcomes Statement describing how the language was acquired and analyzing how speaking another language has contributed to personal and professional growth and how it has been applied in the workplace and/or other settings.

## Identifying Candidates for Language Assessment

Once your institution's language evaluation policies and processes are in place, the Director of PLA or Student Advisor can assist the student in

- 1) determining whether he or she has the knowledge and skills necessary to earn credit for the language;
- 2) selecting the appropriate assessment method; and
- 3) scheduling the language exam.



## We Need Your Input!

Thank you to everyone who contributed articles and information for this issue. We encourage anyone who wishes to submit articles for the September issue to do so by August 15, 2000. Please email your contributions to Deanna Boe at [deanna.boe@apollogrp.edu](mailto:deanna.boe@apollogrp.edu) or Norman Larson at [norman.larson@apollogrp.edu](mailto:norman.larson@apollogrp.edu).

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The Student Services Newsletter is produced and distributed by the Institute for Professional Development (IPD), a higher education development and management corporation that assists private colleges and universities in developing unique adult-oriented degree programs. IPD is a member of the Consortium for the Advancement of Adult Higher Education (CAAHE).