Re-inventing the Extracurriculum: The Educational and Moral Purposes of College Student Extracurricular Activities and Experiences

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Reasons for Concern About College Extracurricular Student Activities

1. The part of college that students like best
2. Very important to parents
3. Important to employers
4. Linked to positive educational engagement and achievement
5. Has an important role in moral development in college
6. Has a “dark side” that can be debilitating to students and institutions
7. Confusion about the meaning of “extracurricular”
Origins of College Extracurricular Student Activities

1. Escape from boredom and discipline
2. Social purpose
3. An uninvited social system
4. Lack of control as an emerging problem
5. Changing dynamics of
   • Faculty and administration relationship
   • University and peer culture relationship
Competing Forces on Students

Centripetal

Centrifugal

Academic and Moral Mission

Administration, Faculty, & Staff

Peer Culture

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Moral Mission of Higher Education and Role of Extracurricular Activities

1. Shift in responsibility from faculty to student affairs

2. Reluctance of student affairs staff

3. Lack of clear, comprehensive moral mission in extracurricular settings

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Terms Used to Refer to Non-Academic Student Activities

1. Extracurricular activities
2. Out-of-class activities
3. Student life
4. College peer culture
5. Extracurriculum
6. Co-curricular activities
Classification of College Student Activities

1. School sponsored
2. School recognized
3. School affiliated
4. Community and other extra-college
5. Informal/personal
Why Have a Student Affairs Co-Curriculum?

1. Recognizes those student activities directly sponsored & coordinated by SA
2. Designed to promote the educational and moral mission of the institution
3. Distinguishes them from all other extracurricular student activities
Content of a Student Affairs Co-Curriculum

1. Co-curriculum core
2. Connected to institutional mission
   (Examples)
   - Combating dangerous and illicit behaviors
   - Promoting pro-social attitudes and behaviors
   - Encouraging academic and intellectual values
   - Promoting holistic personal development
   - Encouraging civic responsibility
Content of a Student Affairs Co-Curriculum (cont.)

3. Centralized, coordinated, comprehensive approach
4. Rigorous, design, implementation, evaluation
5. Student activities integrated with formal academic curriculum
6. Priority of resources/staff given to co-curriculum core
7. Flexibility and openness for ongoing improvement
Possible Limitations/Concerns

1. May diminish spontaneity and diversity of SA sponsored student activities
2. Requires resources/time which may be difficult to secure in a time of scarce resources
3. Some students may oppose
4. Some faculty may oppose
5. May have little impact on students
Student Affairs as the “Gatekeepers” of the Student Experience

- Play a critical role in helping to design and manage many of students’ most influential out of class experiences
- Can enhance the educational & moral impact of extracurricular experiences in college by means of a more intentional student affairs co-curriculum.
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