

**Rentz's**  
**STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE**  
**IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

### ABOUT THE EDITOR

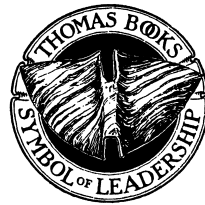
**NAIJIAN ZHANG** is Professor of Higher Education Counseling/ Student Affairs at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He received a B.A. in English from Xi'an Foreign Languages University, an M.A. in College Student Personnel and an M.A. in Counseling and Guidance from Bowling Green State University, and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology and Student Personnel Services from Ball State University. He has held positions of Acting Chair and Graduate Program Coordinator in the Department of Counselor Education at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Previous administrative positions were held in the Division of Student Affairs at Ball State University (Indiana). He is recipient of Travel Award from American Psychological Association (APA), Outstanding Research Award, and Outstanding Service Award from ACPA. He has served on the editorial board of the *Journal of College Counseling*. He is also a licensed psychologist in Pennsylvania.

Fourth Edition

Rentz's  
STUDENT AFFAIRS  
PRACTICE IN  
HIGHER EDUCATION

*Edited by*

NAIJIAN ZHANG & ASSOCIATES



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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**CATHY AKENS** is Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Assistant Professor in Higher Education at Florida International University. She received a B.A. from University of Toledo, an M.A. in College and University Administration from Michigan State University, and an Ed.D. in Higher Education from Florida International University. She previously served as Director of Residential Life and held other administrative positions at Florida International University and Bowling Green State University. She is a past Chair of ACPA's Commission for Housing and Residential Life and served as a member of the Editorial Board for the *Journal of College and University Housing*.

**TREY AVERY** is a Consulting Associate with Keeling & Associates (K&A), holds a Bachelor of Arts in American Cultural Studies from Fairhaven College at Western Washington University, where he was a peer health educator. Since joining K&A in 2006, he has worked on many projects related to student health programs and services for institutions and professional organizations in higher education in the United States and Canada. He is beginning graduate studies in neuroscience and education in New York City in 2010.

**IRVIN W. BRANDEL** has held the positions of Director, Associate Director, Training Director, and Psychologist at the Counseling Center of the University of Akron. He was also Director of the Career Placement Services concurrently for three years. He received an M.A. degree in College Student Personnel from Michigan State University and a Ph.D. in Counseling from the University of Akron. He has served on the Executive Board of the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies, the Accreditation Board of the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS), and as a site visitor for the American Psychological Association and IACS. He is an Emeritus member of the Association of University and College Counseling Center Directors.

**V. BARBARA BUSH** is an associate professor of higher education at the University of North Texas. She holds a Ph.D. in higher education administration from Claremont Graduate University and a master of education degree in college student personnel from Indiana University. Prior to her academic career, she served in various student affairs positions including director of student activities and programs at California State University and dean of students at Scripps College, Claremont California. She has presented papers at the national and international conferences, published articles relating to financial aid and other student services at community colleges, and coedited a book on African American women students.

**D. STANLEY CARPENTER** is Professor and Chair of the Educational Administration and Psychological Services Department at Texas State University, San Marcos. He holds a B.S. in Mathematics from Tarleton State University, an M.S. in Student Personnel and Guidance from Texas A&M-Commerce, and a Ph.D. in Counseling and Student Personnel Services from the University of Georgia. He has served as the Executive Director of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) and as Editor/Chair of the ACPA Media Board, as well as on the NASPA Board of Directors. He has received awards for teaching (Texas A&M's College of Education), scholarship (Senior Scholar of ACPA, 2000; SACSA's Melvane Hardee Award), and service (Distinguished Service Award from ASHE; Esther Lloyd Jones Award from ACPA).

**JENNIFER STEVENS MADOFF DICKSON, M.P.H., Dr. P.H.,** is Consultant and Director of Research for Keeling & Associates (K&A) and serves as Adjunct Lecturer in Narrative Medicine in the Department of Medicine (College of Physicians and Surgeons) and as Associate Research Scientist in the Department of Sociomedical Sciences (Mailman School of Public Health) of Columbia University in New York City. She leads K&A's research, writing, and professional development projects.

**MARY F. HOWARD-HAMILTON** is Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations, Higher Education Program at Indiana State University. She received her B.A. and M.A. degrees from The University of Iowa and a Doctorate of Education, Ed.D. from North Carolina State University. She has received the "Robert S. Shaffer Award" for Academic Excellence as a Graduate Faculty Member from NASPA and the Standing Committee for Women "Wise Women Award" from ACPA at the ACPA/NASPA 2007 joint convention.

**R. MICHAEL HAYNES** is the Assistant Vice President for Student Life Studies at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas. He served as an assistant director of financial aid at the University of North Texas, and as the director of financial aid at the University of North Texas Health Science Center. He holds a bachelor of business administration degree from Baylor University and a master of science and a Ph.D. in higher education from the University of North Texas. His research interest includes participation in higher education by underrepresented groups. His work has been presented at the Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and the Association for the Study of Higher Education conferences.

**DON HOSSLER** is the Executive Associate Dean for the School of Education at Indiana University Bloomington. He is a Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and also serves as the Coordinator of the Higher Education and Student Affairs graduate programs. Other positions that he has held include the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services for Indiana University, Bloomington; the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services for the seven campuses of the Indiana University system; and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. His areas of specialization include college choice, student persistence, student financial aid policy, and enrollment management.

**RICHARD P. KEELING** is Principal and Senior Executive Consultant for Keeling & Associates (K&A), a comprehensive higher education consulting firm based in New York City. He received a B.A. in English from the University of Virginia and an M.D. from Tufts University School of Medicine. Before founding K&A, he served as Executive Director of University Health Services and Professor of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and as Director of the Department of Student Health and Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Virginia. He is a past-president of the American College Health Association and served two terms as Editor of the *Journal of American College Health*. Through K&A, he has worked with more than 75 colleges and universities to strengthen health-related services for students.

**MARIE LINDHORST** earned her A.B. in Religion from Vassar, her Master of Divinity from Yale, and her Ph.D. in Educational Theory and Policy from Penn State. She was a university chaplain and faculty member at Wesleyan University, Colgate University, and Lycoming College before coming to Penn State in 1989. Since 2002, she has been the Associate Director of the Division of Undergraduate Studies at The Pennsylvania State University.

**JOHN WESLEY LOWERY** is an associate professor of Student Affairs in Higher Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He received a B.A. in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia, an M.Ed. Student Personnel Services from the University of South Carolina, and earned his Ph.D. from Bowling Green State University in Higher Education Administration. He is also an affiliated consultant with the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management (NCHERM) and previously served on the faculty at Oklahoma State University and University of South Carolina where he earned his master's. He also coordinated student affairs programs at both institutions. His previous administrative positions include Director of Residence Life at Adrian College and University Judicial Administrator at Washington University in St. Louis.

**FIONA J. D. MACKINNON**, Ph.D. retired from Bowling Green State University, Department of Higher Education and Student Affairs as an Associate Professor Emeritus. While at Bowling Green she held the positions of Associate Dean in the College of Education and Human Development, Department Chair of Educational Foundations and Inquiry, Provost Associate, and Chair of Faculty Senate. In 1996, she was appointed Senior Fulbright Scholar at Beijing Normal University in Beijing, People's Republic of China. Over her 45-year career in academia and student affairs, she has served in the Career Center and Adult Learner Services at Penn State University, the College of Technology at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, the Counseling Center and President's Team Leadership Akron Grant at the University of Akron, Counseling Services at Syracuse University, Assistant Dean of Students at The Ohio State University, and Assistant Dean of Women at Denison University.

**VICKIE ANN McCOY** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Counselor Education at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. She received her B.A., M.S.Ed., and M.A. degrees from Monmouth University in New Jersey where she spent several years as the Coordinator of Counseling and Testing Services for Students with Disabilities. She earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from The University of Southern Mississippi where she served as the Behavioral Medicine Coordinator for the University Counseling Center and received the "Bill W. Shafer Memorial Award" for University Counseling Center Service.

**JEFF NOVAK** is the Associate Director of Housing and Residence Life at the University of Central Florida. He received a B.S. degree



in Psychology, an M.Ed. degree in Student Personnel in Higher Education, and Ed.S. degree in Mental Health Counseling from the University of Florida. Additionally, he received his Ed.D in Educational Leadership from the University of Central Florida. He has been active in ACUHO-I and in the SEAHO region for the last 13 years while at University of Central Florida, East Carolina University, and the University of Florida. He is the past chair of the ACUHO-I program committee and has served as the state of Florida representative on the SEAHO Governing Council.

**KEITH B. O'NEILL** is a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program at Bowling Green State University (OH). He earned his B.A. and M.Ed. from Loyola University (IL). Previous administrative positions were held at Loyola University and Saint Xavier University (IL). He has been active in the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, the Ohio Association of Student Personnel Administrators, and Sigma Pi Fraternity.

**WANDA I. OVERLAND** is the Vice President for Student Life and Development and Affiliated faculty member in the Higher Education Administration Program at St. Cloud State University (Minnesota). Prior to assuming her current position, she served as the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Bowling Green State University and held other student affairs administrative positions at North Dakota State University. She received her B.S. and M.S. at North Dakota State University and Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Bowling Green State University (Ohio).

**AUDREY L. RENTZ** is Professor Emeritus of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Bowling Green State University (Ohio). She received her A.B. from the College of Mount St. Vincent (Mathematics), M.S. from The Pennsylvania State University (Counselor Education), and Ph.D. in Counseling, Personnel Services and Educational Psychology from Michigan State University. She has served on the editorial boards of *Initiatives* (NAWE), *The Journal of College Student Development* (ACPA), and *The Journal of Psychological Type* (JPT). She was honored by OCPA as the recipient of the Philip A. Tripp Distinguished Service Award.

**MARGARET L. SARNICKI** is a Program Coordinator in the Division of Student Life and Development at St. Cloud State University (Minnesota). Previously, she was the Director of Adult and Continuing Education at Simpson College (Iowa). She received her B.S. from Minnesota State University–Mankato and is a candidate

in the Higher Education Administration M.S. program at St. Cloud State University.

**LISA SEVERY** is the Director of Career Services at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Before moving to Colorado, she worked at the University of Florida for seven years in various career counseling roles. She received a B.A. in psychology from Indiana University and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Counselor Education from the University of Florida. Lisa has coauthored two books: *Making Career Decisions that Count* with Darrell Luzzo and *Turning Points: Managing Career Transitions with Meaning and Purpose* with Jack and Phoebe Ballard. She has been designated a Master Career Counselor and honored with many awards including both the NCDA Merit and Presidential Awards. She is a Nationally Certified Counselor and a Licensed Professional Counselor in Colorado.

**BETTINA C. SHUFORD** currently serves as the Interim Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at Bowling Green State University. She previously served as the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Director of the Center for Multicultural and Academic Initiatives on the same campus. Prior to coming to BGSU, she held positions in residence life, and served as an Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Minority Student Affairs at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology from North Carolina Central University, her master's in Guidance and Counseling from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and her doctorate in Higher Education Administration from Bowling Green State University.

**EDWARD G. WHIPPLE** is Vice President for Student Affairs and adjunct Associate Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He received a B.A. from Willamette University (OR), an M.A.T. from Northwestern University, and his Ph.D. from Oregon State University. Previous student affairs administrative positions were held at Montana State University–Billings, the University of Alabama–Tuscaloosa, Texas Tech University, and Iowa State University. He has published a number of articles and book chapters related to student affairs programs and services. He has served in leadership position at the national level with the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, the Association of Fraternity Advisors, and Phi Delta Theta International Fraternity.

**ERIC R. WHITE** received a B.A. in History from Rutgers University and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. He is the Executive Director of the Division of Undergraduate Studies and Associate Dean for Advising at The Pennsylvania State University. He has served as president of NACADA (2004–2005) and the Association of Deans and Directors of University Colleges and Undergraduate Studies (1993). He is also an Affiliate Assistant Professor of Education at Penn State and the recipient of NACADA's Virginia N. Gordon Award for Excellence in the Field of Advising and Penn State's Administrative Excellence Award.



## PREFACE

The fourth edition of *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* has been designed for both Master's- and Doctoral-level students completing graduate courses in the areas of college student personnel, college student affairs, college student development, higher education administration, and/or student affairs counseling. This edition was also designed to assist practitioners who may not have sufficient background knowledge in these fields and student affairs professionals who may use the book for continuing professional development. Finally, this edition may be quite useful to experienced student affairs practitioners and administrators who desire a reference book which systematically describes the development (particularly trends and patterns) of student affairs function, its practice methods, and program models in higher education.

The mission in writing *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education*, Fourth Edition, is to:

- Provide the reader with a solid foundation in the historical and philosophical perspectives of college student affairs development
- Assist the reader in understanding the major concepts, mission, and purpose of student affairs' practice, methods and program models
- Enable the reader to conceptualize the theme, or the fundamental framework of student affairs administration, its roles and functions in higher education
- Start the new professional on the journey toward skilled student affairs practice
- Facilitate the reader's comprehension of the trends and issues of each respective division of student affairs in higher education

The fourth edition of *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* follows a similar pattern of organization as the previous edition. However, six chapters have been completely rewritten. The new chapters are Chapter 4 "Academic Advising," Chapter 5 "Career Services," Chapter 10 "Residence

Halls,” Chapter 12 “Financial Aid,” Chapter 13 “Student Health Centers,” and Chapter 14 “Afterward.” In these chapters, the most recent information on student development and student affairs practice in each area is included.

Taking over the editorship of this book has been a challenge. First, both Dr. Audrey Rentz and Dr. Fiona MacKinnon were my professors when I was a graduate student in the College Student Personnel Program at Bowling Green State University 20 years ago. They remember very well where I was back then. I still remember that I knew little about student affairs in the United States since I came from China, a country where the profession of student affairs does not exist. Second, all the chapter authors in the previous edition were their colleagues, thus a connection and a working relationship had already been built before the actual writing of the book. As the Editor of this fourth edition, I personally do not know any of the authors who contributed to the third edition and thus, I do not have the advantage of an existing working relationship. Third, some of the previous authors have passed away, retired, or chosen not to continue to write their chapters for various reasons. Therefore, identifying qualified and competent new authors became the most challenging task in the process of developing this edition.

In addition to the nine returning experts from the previous edition, fourteen new experts from the field of student affairs joined me on this project. The authors of the fourth edition offer the reader a clear picture of student affairs in U.S. higher education. Chapter 1 “Philosophical Heritage of Student Affairs” presents a brief introduction to the major philosophical schools of thought and philosophical beliefs about U.S. higher education and student affairs and an understanding of how these philosophical beliefs have affected student affairs practice. Chapter 2 “Student Affairs: A Historical Perspective” describes the origins of student affairs, its theoretical development, and the major events in the field from the 1600s to the present. Following these two chapters are the 11 chapters pertaining to the function areas of student affairs: Chapter 3 “From Admissions to Enrollment Management,” Chapter 4 “Academic Advising,” Chapter 5 “Career Services,” Chapter 6 “Counseling Centers,” Chapter 7 “Student Conduct,” Chapter 8 “Multicultural Affairs,” Chapter 9 “Orientation,” Chapter 10 “Residence Halls,” Chapter 11 “Student Activities,” Chapter 12 “Financial Aid,” and Chapter 13 “Student Health.” All of these chapters basically contain the following sections: Introduction, History, Definition, Purpose and Goals, Administration and Organizational Structure, Programs and Services, Staffing, Models, Professional Development, Entry Level Qualifications, Technology, Issues and Trends, and References. Three major issues, which are woven into the majority of these chapters, are the current economic downturn, the increasing use of technology, and the plethora of diversity issues that have affected student affairs and its practice. Chapter 14 “Afterword” presents the overall

issues and challenges facing student affairs in higher education as a profession now and in the future.

I have been fortunate in securing the collaboration of knowledgeable experts who have performed admirably. I wish to express my gratitude to all contributing authors, to my colleague, Dr. Vickie Ann McCoy, and to my graduate assistant, Kara Baxter, who have provided me with great assistance in the preparation of this edition. My special gratitude goes to Dr. Fiona MacKinnon who offered me her experience and expertise in editing the third edition. Finally, I'm deeply grateful to Dr. Audrey Rentz who was my thesis advisor and mentor while I was a graduate student in the College Student Personnel Program at Bowling Green State University between 1990 and 1993. Her support and guidance were both personally and professionally empowering. I sincerely hope that the *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* will continue to be of value to students, practitioners, and researchers in the area of student affairs practice.

I would also like to invite anyone who has read or used this book to send me the feedback and suggestions for the Fifth Edition at [nzhang@wcupa.edu](mailto:nzhang@wcupa.edu).

NAIJIAN ZHANG





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**Rentz's  
STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION**



## Chapter 1

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL HERITAGE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

STANLEY CARPENTER

Og, our mythical Neolithic ancestor, had a problem. To be sure, he and his tribe had lots of problems, but this was the most vexing yet. Although they did not know it or even construct the problem that way, the issue really was that their brains were too big and too differentiated. Having a good brain was an advantage and necessary for survival. Og's people were not very big or very fast compared to other animals. They were not particularly strong or keen of sight, smell, or hearing. But they could think and plan and remember. The problem was that this ability to conceptualize caused them to wonder—to need to know, to speculate, and to be unhappy when they did not have answers. Perhaps it was something poignant, like the death of a child, or just the mundane cycle of the seasons that first elicited a search for a larger meaning to life, but whatever it was, the quest could have soon led to depression, insanity, and death for the members of the tribe and therefore the tribe itself.

Thus was philosophy invented or, as some would say discovered, in an attempt to supplant powerlessness with knowledge. It did not matter that the knowledge was “incorrect” (in modern terms)—simply that it explained otherwise terrifyingly uncertain and uncontrollable things like fire and rain, death and birth. It was necessary to have something to believe and to strive to learn more.

Over time, a tribal culture developed, encompassing all the beliefs, knowledge, and skills that made the group unique and contributed to survival. The culture was inculcated into the children by formal and informal means in a process of education not materially different than what is in place today. As the tribe became a village, then a city, then a sovereign state, philosophical knowledge grew and differentiated. Eventually, it became necessary to attend

to the higher learning of some members to prepare them to lead, to teach, and to press the search for new knowledge. Student affairs professionals are the direct descendants of early educators and hence heir to a long tradition of thinking and writing about educational philosophy. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the impact of philosophy generally and several specific philosophical positions upon higher education and the practice of student affairs work.

### WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

At first all learning was philosophical. The word “philosophy,” from the Greek *philosophia*, literally means love of wisdom or learning. Only in the past 200 years has there occurred a separation of “natural philosophy” (or sciences such as chemistry and physics), “mental philosophy” (or psychology), and “moral philosophy” (political science, economics, and sociology, for example) from the general concept (Brubacher, 1982). For thousands of years, the study of philosophy was the same as advanced learning, a wide-ranging intellectual quest. The knowledge explosion and specialization have changed that, but philosophy is still a broad and deep field.

Philosophy is a poorly understood term. People begin sentences with “My philosophy on that is . . .” and proceed to give unsupported opinions, sometimes inconsistent with their behaviors or facts. Philosophy can be thought of as simply a general approach to the world or it can be a process of disciplined inquiry. Gracia (1992) captured it this way:

Philosophy may be interpreted . . . :

- I. . . . as a set of ideas or beliefs, concerning anything that an ordinary person may hold.
- II. . . . as a view of the world, or any of its parts, that seeks to be accurate, consistent, and comprehensive.
- III. . . . as a discipline of learning.
  - A. Activity whereby a view of the world or any of its parts, that seeks to be accurate, consistent, and comprehensive, is produced.
  - B. Formulation, explanation, and justification of rules by which the production of a view of the world, or any of its parts, that seeks to be accurate, consistent, and comprehensive, is produced (philosophical methodology). (p. 56)

This chapter will concern itself primarily with the second meaning (a view of the world), but with elements of the third (a discipline of learning). The



reader should be concerned with applying the information presented (a view of the world), using the proper methods (through the discipline), to modify his/her beliefs in such a way that they are accurate, consistent, and comprehensive.

### **The Three Great Questions of Philosophy**

Originally, philosophy was concerned with virtually all knowledge, but in modern times it has come to consist of three main (very large and important) questions: What is real? How do we know? What is of value?

#### ***Ontology***

Ontology is concerned with the ultimate question of existence. Some people also call it metaphysics (literally “beyond physics”). All people since Og’s tribe have hungered to know what was real and what was ephemeral. Is the universe friendly, neutral, or malevolent? Is there order in the universe, or only probabilistic chaos? Is physical existence real or is only our intellect, the goings-on in our minds, real? What is life? Is there a God or some other supernatural entity? Is this all there is?

Clearly, such questions are overwhelming and demand a systematic and satisfying answer. Just as clearly, they call for speculation, at least in the early stages of theory building and maybe for a long time after that. Every action taken by an individual, every decision, every thought will be colored by beliefs about the nature of reality.

Ontology can be usefully broken up into other areas of questions (Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, & Johansen, 1969). Anthropology concerns the nature of the human condition. Are people innately good or evil? What is the relation between the mind and the body? Is there a soul or spirit and does it have precedence over the worldly flesh of the body? Do humans have free will?

Cosmology involves the study of the nature and origins of the universe including questions about time, space, perceptions, and purpose. Theology considers questions of religion. Is there a God? More than one God? A “good” God or an indifferent one? Is God all-powerful? All-knowing? Some ontological theories depend heavily upon theological theories.

Teleology, or the study of purpose in the cosmos, cuts across the other areas mentioned. Is the universe a chance event or is there some larger purpose? Much of what troubled Og’s tribe, and continues to trouble human-kind, is the province of ontology.