"Believe You Have a Mission in Life and Steadily Pursue It": Campus YMCAs Presage Student Development Theory, 1894-1930

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During the 20th century, the field of student affairs transitioned from a philosophy-based practice rooted in the Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 to a psychology-based profession, as researchers developed and practitioners accepted psychosocial theories that acknowledged and described the unique developmental features of the college experience. We contend that the student authors of the Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCAs) implicitly recognized developmental concepts and conveyed them to freshmen through the advice sections that were prominently featured in the campus YMCA student handbooks between 1894 and 1930. Without the technical verbiage, the "Y" men identified concepts that anticipated those of early developmental theorist Nevitt Sanford—some years before he articulated them in formal psychosocial terms.

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"Believe You Have a Mission in Life and Steadily Pursue It":[1] Campus YMCAs Presage Student Development Theory, 1894-1930

Since Harvard opened its doors in 1636 to its first few freshmen, first-generation students have struggled to find their way through the collegiate labyrinth. Similarly, educators have struggled to conceptualize and nurture the developmental experience of their charges. In the earliest days of U.S. higher education, students were often barely teenagers without experience away from home. The "Collegiate Way of Living" (Mather, quoted in Morison, 1936, p. 12), adopted by the colonial colleges provided *in loco parentis "extremis"* through the watchful correction of live-in tutors or faculty (Sheldon, 1901).

The student rebellions that occurred during this era were primarily ignited by the overbearing and condescending treatment of their tutors (Jackson, 2000). As society lacked a concept of adolescence, college students of the 18th century were neither children nor adults, and were caught in developmental limbo within the existing social structure. Thus, until psychology—and specifically educational psychology—emerged toward the end of the 19th century, student "disorders," such as campus riots and disruptive behaviors, were assumed to result from immaturity and irresponsibility (see Briggs, 1904; Mears, 1878). Researchers took most of the 20th century to reorient explanations of student behaviors from a correctional stance to a scientific mode that emphasized the developmental situations of college-aged youth.

As we discuss below, the history of the institutional roles of professional student affairs personnel recently has been the object of increased research. The explication of the early roles of the deans of men and women has extended the narrative about institutional, professional, and associational leadership. However, scholars have overlooked the concrete events that led to the organizational establishment of student affairs divisions and the advancements in student development knowledge that would come to form the paradigmatic basis for this burgeoning profession. Although we analyze the institutional patterns of divisional establishment elsewhere (Finnegan & Alleman, 2005), in this paper we address one of the seedlings of student developmental theory. We argue that students themselves, more than 50 years before the conceptualization of formal psychological theories, first identified characteristics about their own developmental experiences and disseminated their insights in the form of freshman advice columns

[1] From *Students' Handbook, West Virginia Wesleyan College*, by D. L. Moon (Ed.), 1908, p. 8.

in student handbooks published by campus Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCAs). First emerging during the 1890s, the home-grown student advice sections that the YMCA students accumulated for freshmen students predated not only the *Student Personnel Point of View of 1937* (*SPPOV*; Saddlemire & Rentz, 1986), but also the first fully-formed theories of student development offered by Nevitt Sanford in the early 1960s.

Sanford's theoretical work places him among the first of his peers to address student development issues. His theories owe much to the work of Freud, Erickson, and other psychologists who predated him. The adaptation of psychosocial categories to the experience of first-year college students in his landmark study at Vassar (Sanford, 1962) and the prescriptive implications for the type of community that best promotes student development that followed represent foundational points in student development research (McEwen, 2005; Parker, Widick, & Knefelkamp, 1978). Sanford's (1962) model of challenge and support and associated concepts find contemporary application in widely used student development textbooks (see Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). The enduring relevance of his concepts maintains his immediacy to the field. Thus, Sanford is an appropriate comparative subject for this project due to the historical timeliness of his scholarly activity and the consistent relevance of his significant and accessible psychosocial theory.

To provide context, we first situate the campus YMCA movement within the historical development of U.S. higher education. Similarly, we present the origins of student development theory and situate Sanford's place and theories within that context. Finally, in analyzing the YMCA handbooks, we demonstrate that the advice was a harbinger of the developmental concepts described by Sanford some 60 years later.

Higher Education Expansion and the YMCA

At the end of the Civil War, just over 400 colleges existed, serving only 63,000 students. Over the next 40 years, enthusiasm for college seeped into American culture. By the end of the 19th century, almost 1,000 colleges enrolled more than a quarter of a million students (Snyder, 1993). However, as enrollments increased, few new students inherited a family collegiate legacy. Denominational colleges, primarily in the South and Midwest, attracted small regional enrollments—especially from their own faithful—and managed with limited human and physical resources (Malkmus, 2002). The land-

grant colleges, made possible by federal resources, extended utilitarian education to children of average families. Unlike the generations of elites who benefited from informal familial socialization to higher education, this new breed of students was less self-assured and less confident of success in college (Klein, 1930). Concurrently, 19th-century faculty members increasingly sought graduate education, first in Europe and gradually at domestic universities as graduate programs emerged. As faculty attention turned toward exploring specializations through research, publication, and lecturing, their interest shifted away from the oversight of students' social lives (Cowley, 1940). Since few colleges and universities at the end of the 19th century had the personnel or financial resources to address the non-academic needs of their students, the students relied on their own solutions.

Student organizations were not, of course, new at the end of the 19th century. Students first devised Phi Beta Kappa at The College of William and Mary in 1776 (Adams, 1887) and continued through the 18th and 19th centuries to engage each other in fraternal, religious, literary, and eventually athletic clubs and competitions with no adult oversight. However, no student organization addressed campus-wide student imperatives as did the YMCA. None garnered a more pervasive influence, or gained more consistent and sustained support from their institutional administrations and many faculty members, than did the YMCA (Klein, 1930; Setran, 2007; Sheldon, 1901). At a time when many colleges and universities wrestled with growing secularization, the YMCA, as a student-initiated and operated group, assuaged uneasy prospective students, parents, and administrators by offering religious activities and gradually broadening their enterprise to include services for freshmen specifically, students generally, and the institution tangentially (Burtchaell, 1998).

The Campus YMCA Movement

In 1858, inspired by the activities of the nascent urban YMCA movement, students at the Universities of Virginia and Michigan, within months of each other, established the first two campus YMCAs (Shedd, 1914; Spence, 1870). The Universities of North Carolina and Rochester both founded associations prior to the Civil War, but further proliferation halted until after the conflict ended. By 1878, 60 associations existed across the country, and by 1912, 772 campuses boasted YMCAs (Hopkins, 1951; Wishard, 1879). The campus YMCA (and subsequently the Young Women's Christian Association, or YWCA) movement was a non-denominational Christian, grass-roots

phenomenon that permitted college men (and women) to participate in a locally-based group with ties to recognized and well-organized national confederations. Successive generations of students learned and practiced effective leadership skills and efficient organizational methods through their participation in their campus Y and Y-sponsored summer leadership camps, and they shared their gained knowledge with each other through the intercollegiate newsletters sponsored by the national YMCA office (Finnegan & Alleman, 2005).

At most late 19th-century colleges and universities, the campus YMCA members initiated programs that served the needs of not only their own members, but also those of their peers and institutions—and were appreciated by both. The mission and activities of the campus YMCAs during the1860s and 1870s were primarily religious. Student members provided peers with Bible classes and spiritual guidance, later expanding their mission though evangelical services held off campus in surrounding communities (see Setran, 2007).

The associations' activities soon broadened to incorporate social and service activities. Campus YMCA groups mimicked their urban YMCA counterparts that were already operating a variety of social services for naïve rural young men who were tempted by city attractions. Similarly, by the early 1880s, since campuses offered only classes and no auxiliary services, new male students were left to their own devices (Cowley, 1934). Fulfilling distinct student needs, the Y men ran employment and housing offices, assisting their fellow students in finding proper rooming situations, and employment opportunities to help pay their educational bills. But their services did not end there.

Starting in 1883, at least four different campus YMCAs published student handbooks to orient incoming freshmen to their institutions (see Finnegan & Alleman, 2005). Within a few years, most of the YMCAs at other campuses followed suit, producing pocket-sized, leather-bound handbooks, subsidized by local business advertisements. The handbooks were distributed during the summer so freshmen would have access to relevant information prior to arriving in September. Alerted to look for Y men at the station, the new students received assistance from the moment they alighted from their bus or train. With a fold-out map inserted in the handbook, new first-year students could study the layout of their campus, and with a list of churches in town included, parents knew that their sons could continue their proper spiritual life.

The utility of the handbooks did not end when freshmen arrived; they were meant to help new students understand how to negotiate collegiate life through their first term, if not their first year. The

handbooks introduced the college's administrators and sometimes faculty; described clubs and athletics; shared yells, songs, and traditions; and highlighted activities and services of the YMCA. Indeed, by the mid-1890s, the upperclassmen who compiled the handbooks began to share their own hard-earned college survival wisdom. These handbooks, and especially their advice for freshmen, helped to fill the vacuum when faculty members' attention diverted to scholarship and before student affairs became an established division on campus.

To what degree first-year students read and understand any materials provided to them either before stepping foot onto campus or in the first days of their matriculation is debatable. Yet, during this period of anticipatory socialization, they, like any other group of initiates, try to imagine themselves as accepted members within the new group by forming expectations and processing information about their role (Feldman, 1976; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). Thus, they tend to be hungry for information on how to act appropriately within the new setting.

The Y men responded to this need for socialization through the "primitive art" of student handbooks and offering freshman advice, which preceded the learned student development theories by psychologists and student affairs personnel by half a decade. To put into context our analysis of YMCA handbooks and the advice to freshmen that they contained, we first provide an overview of the development of theories about students.

Origins and Utility of Student Theory Development

Although current scholarship on student affairs is theoretically anchored by a range of psychosocial, cognitive-structural, typological, and person-environmental theories (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998), college student development theories sprouted from psychoanalytic roots, albeit tentatively, between the two World Wars. Simultaneously, disparate collegiate student personnel workers, as they were called then, struggled to professionalize. Unfortunately, by mid-century the theoretical and practical worlds emerged as distinct enterprises devoid of the benefits that each could have offered the other.

The role of deans of women rose to prominence toward the end of the 19th century, initially to serve the pragmatic end of supervising women students' lives. By the turn of the century, deans of women created both regional and national associations, and through their

coordinated efforts, successfully influenced collegiate policy to meet the social, academic, and physical needs of women students (Bashaw, 1999; Nidifer, 2000).

Dean of men positions gradually appeared on campuses from about 1900. Given the male-oriented nature of campuses, these professionals, who projected an avuncular mien, felt no compulsion to conduct research or change policy. Even by the late 1920s, the men's deanship was neither prevalent across institutions nor well defined at those that employed them (Klein, 1930; Schwartz, 1997, 2002). Although local coordination among various student services improved, not until 1937 did the Committee on Problems and Plans in Education of the American Council on Education (ACE) create a professional identity with the publication of the *Student Personnel Point of View* (Saddlemire & Rentz, 1986). Following the acceptance of this report, ACE established a committee on student personnel work that further unified these disparate offices, promoting a professional self-awareness (Zook, 1937).

In the first 30 years of the 20th century, nationwide college enrollments jumped from almost 2% to 7% of American 18- to 24-year-olds (Snyder, 1993). The sheer number of bodies crowding campuses pressed for more effective campus administration but also begged for statistical methods in educational research—"the development of norms whereby the individual student may be more certainly measured" (Robertson, 1928, p. 3). Prior to this advancement in research, studies about students primarily described student life and institutional practices (see Sheldon, 1901; Snow, 1907). It soon became apparent that scientific methods developed to discern acceptable candidates for enrollment and placement might also be used to understand and address student adjustment issues as well (Arlitt & Hall, 1923; Caldwell, 1919; Mann, 1924) .

As early as 1894, psychologist J. McKeen Cattell used college students to explore psychological testing, suggesting that research on students might be conducted in the future to enable students to correct their "defects" and develop their aptitudes (Cattell & Farrand, 1896, p. 647). This conceptual focus on student deficiencies reflected the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis and psychological theories regarding the development of youth. The prevailing theory held that personality development was completed by the traditional college age, and therefore misbehavior or emotional turmoil was the product of personal maladjustment. Nearly sixty years later, Dugald S. Arbuckle (1953) echoed this persistent psychoanalytic assumption, referring to

a struggling student as a "disturbed individual" (p. 8). Thus, through the first half of the 20th century, two largely independent though increasingly conjoined concerns developed: an emerging profession of coordinated student services and budding psychological and sociological theories of student development.

At mid-century, a post-war enrollment spike again pushed administrators and social scientists to refine services and theoretical constructs to react to the specific press of student needs. However, the responses did not occur at the same rate. For the first time, psychologists began to reconceptualize cognitive and psychosocial development to include the traditional college years. Including persons aged from their late teens and early twenties as part of the conceptualization of human developmental processes expanded the repertoire of potential investigative perspectives, specifically including social context. Robert Winthrop White (1952) asserted that his "three [case study] subjects would have been strangely misinterpreted if we had failed to consider the shaping influences of the culture, social class, group experiences, and occupational and other roles" (p. 328). After including such factors as drive, the learning process, temperament, abilities, parental influence, and personal struggle to master anxiety, White warned, "One can take a narrower view only at the risk of talking plain nonsense about human nature" (p. 328).

Despite the extension of psychological interest to the college-aged individual, the student personnel movement did not adopt theory at the rate it was being developed. As a result, the nascent profession was charged with unwillingness and unpreparedness to respond adequately to student needs. Brooklyn College Dean of Students Herbert Stroup (1957) decried the student personnel movement's lack of progress. He believed that the field relied too heavily on the theories and concepts of Sigmund Freud and Carl Rogers, as well as its own 20-year-old philosophical statement, at the expense of developing a distinctive developmental perspective.

> To an impressive extent, the task of theory is answered quickly by many student personnel workers with the phrase "the student personnel point of view." This rejoinder means that the field is not seriously in need of theoretical advancement because its theoretical needs have been met with a philosophy or a point of view…if it is a philosophy or theory of student personnel work, it is decidedly vapid and sentimental rather than precisely theoretical in its intention and analysis. (p. 321)

Acknowledging the need for disciplinary theory, Stroup, a sociologist by training, criticized the fundamental lack of clarity in student personnel theory-making. As the helping services coalesced into the student affairs profession, Stroup charged that the *SPPOV*'s (Saddlemire & Rentz, 1986) concept of the "student as a whole" masked the nuances of the college experience. The emerging profession required a new set of lenses through which to understand the situation of collegiate youth. Concurrent with emerging views of college student development, psychologists realized that situating problematic college student behavior as individual pathology yielded an incomplete explanation. Wedge and Davie (1958), in *The Psychosocial Position of College Men*, noted:

> Only recently has dynamic psychological theory begun to offer an adequate conceptual framework in terms of which the changes taking place in the college years can be studied, that is, ego-psychological theory. This theory makes it possible to study the processes of reorganization of the personality in terms of current experience in college, this reorganization being, perhaps, a distinctive characteristic of the college years. (p. 2)

By the early 1960s, the emerging profession of student affairs began to seek more insightful developmental concepts. Concurrently, psychologists and sociologists began redefining their developmental models and research techniques to express more accurately the unique individual changes associated with matriculation. In 1962, Sanford made the first of many enduring contributions to this dawning era of student development theory and laid the groundwork for a generation of theorists applying psychosocial concepts to the college student experience.

Situating Sanford

Sanford applied psychosocial theory to college students with the desire to improve, and not merely to describe, the development of young adults in higher education. Focusing on the influences that shape student development, Sanford (1962) generated strategies to encourage educators—at first, faculty—to mold campus environments to achieve educational and developmental aims. His dual concern for the individual and the environment placed him in close company with the budding student affairs profession.

Sanford's theorizing arose from the conjunction of his social environment and professional interests. A Harvard-trained psychologist,

Sanford's early work focused on the interaction between social systems and personality. In the 1950s and 1960s, Sanford extended his theory to student development and the collegiate environment. Recognizing the broad applicability of psychosocial concepts and the dearth of existing research, Sanford (1962) collaborated on an ambitious project to assess the whole of higher education as field of study. Student unrest in this era, typified by Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, where Sanford was teaching at the time, highlighted the need for an intensive reevaluation of the conceptualization of young people in higher education. In 1967, Sanford published a critique of the academy in *Where Colleges Fail: A Study of the Student as Person*.

Based on this work and other projects, Sanford solidified his understanding of the confluence of psychological, social, and environmental influences and their impact on the development of the college student by the late 1960s. In *Where Colleges Fail*, Sanford (1967) articulated his perspective on student development theory:

> If the development of the individual as a whole is the primary aim, then colleges should organize all their resources in efforts to achieve it. Such planning of a total educational environment must be guided by a theory of personality – a theory in the terms of which it is possible to state specific goals for the individual, describe the interrelations of his various psychological processes, and understand the ways in which he changes under the impact of environmental influences. (p. xv)

Three elements—personality theory, interactive psychological processes, and environmental impact—comprise the roots of Sanford's theoretical tree, which we explore here in some detail and then compare to the YMCA handbooks' freshman advice sections. Since our focus is on freshman advice, we limit the discussion to those parts of Sanford's theories that are relevant to this demographic. Although similar to peers both within and outside college, Sanford (1962) asserted that "the college freshman is in a distinctive 'stage of development' and actions to promote further development must be based in large part upon an understanding of this stage" (p. 254). In our estimation, the Y men intuitively and collectively understood many of the dynamics of this distinctive stage well before Sanford was even born.

In the following analysis, we explore five of Sanford's developmental concepts that parallel the Y students' intuitions. The first, personality development, forms the core of Sanford's theory

(aggregated from his works on the subject) and is supported by the other four concepts of peers, parents, and faculty; environment; self-concept; and persons in transition.

Personality Development

Citing Freud and Erikson, Sanford (1962) believed that personality consisted of three systems: one of primitive impulses and feelings; another of inhibiting and punishing forces adopted from the social environment (known as the primitive conscience); and a third that controls, adapts, and integrates as reality requires (known as the ego). At the risk of oversimplification, personality results from the interaction, struggle, and alliances among these three systems.

Developmentally, among the features of mature interaction are the *differentiation* and *integration* of the ego. In other words, as coping and identity mechanisms become more numerous and interconnected, individuals find a greater range of options for handling themselves in new and varied situations without significantly threatening their "essential identity." Impulses, too, become increasingly varied as they find new modes for expression. Conscience, broadened and refined and, directed by the individual's "best thought and judgment," becomes increasingly sensitive to a variety of moral situations and responses (Sanford, 1962, p. 257). Generally, the personality becomes increasingly balanced, nimble, and open to new experiences.

According to Sanford (1962), *readiness* is a prerequisite for development. As the term implies, certain states or conditions must be built up in a person in order for one to be in a position to develop in response to stimuli. Readiness is a necessary, though not sufficient, cause for development. *Stimuli* are internal or external events or changes that upset the existing equilibrium and require new coping strategies to adapt. Although some events, such as the transition to college, often provide automatic crisis, Sanford was also interested in ways that the academic environment could be designed to instigate stresses to encourage new growth.

If stimuli were to occur when readiness is not present, the individual may become overwhelmed and revert to previously established defense stratagems in order to protect the ego. Moreover, if readiness exists and stimuli do not, stagnation occurs, stalling development. Collegiate personnel wishing to encourage growth, therefore, should partner with the individual in a tenuous dance: challenging students who are in a state of readiness by agitating their personalities with new

and unsettling experiences to promote new adaptation techniques, but also supporting them by establishing readiness through networks, affiliations, and modes of reassurance.

Peers, Parents, and Faculty

Peers, parents, and faculty play a vital role in the development of freshmen by providing psychological support and models of maturity. Although the main crisis of adolescence is over, the controlling mechanisms "developed for the purpose of inhibiting impulses are still unseasoned and uncertain; they are likely to operate in a rigid manner, to be overdone, as if the danger of their giving way altogether were still very real" (Sanford, 1964, p. 86). In psychosocial terms, this unseasoned state results in a preponderance of energy engaged in controlling impulses. Peers and faculty can either alleviate or exacerbate this reactive state due to the tendency of the individual to want to fit in and emulate those they respect.

Peers fill the most volatile role of the three groups. Organized peer groups may institutionalize and reinforce authoritarian tendencies, which may then discourage free thinking, broad association, and activities outside that group's norms. Sanford (1967) argued that this sort of conformity inhibits personality development. On the other hand, students entering with strong authoritarian tendencies who are unable to identify a suitable peer group are likely to find the situation intolerable and disengage academically and socially.

According to Sanford (1962), a defining feature of this age is a rootless value set, adopted from their parents and not personally owned (see also Perry, 1970). This proxy collection of values is successful so long as apposite support continues.

> The freshman's natural reaction is to seek other external supports for the values with which he arrived, or else to adopt different values that have powerful support in his new environment. This is a major basis for the freshman's susceptibility to influence by the student culture of the college. The dominant social group is an excellent substitute for an earlier moral authority. (p. 263)

The logical difficulty of this stage is that although *parents* provide an important source of support, ultimately, the student must reject their inherited parental values system to establish personally held values of significance, even at the risk of losing all moorings. Sanford cautioned

that friends or family local to the college may serve as a reminder of family expectations. "Such circumstances may not only 'cushion the shock' of leaving home; they may actually bar the student…from ever having the experience of standing in principled opposition to his parents" Sanford, 1962, p. 267). Sanford offers a rather low opinion of the participation of parents in the life of a college student, viewing them chiefly as a detriment to independence and development.

Sanford placed a premium on the participation of *faculty* in the student development process, both through relationships with students, and the design of curriculum. Desired growth can occur indirectly through the humanizing values of the liberal arts and directly by faculty providing opportunities for the student to try on the new roles of an adult and a scholar. However, Sanford identifies sources of influence that may interfere with faculty efforts to spur development. The positive impact of faculty relationships may be mitigated by peers who encourage negative stereotypes of professors. Succumbing to this influence, freshmen may keep faculty at a distance, perpetuating juvenile resistance to authority figures. Faculty members must "stir them up, and produce situations that will expose the inappropriateness of old ways of reacting by revealing the differences between real adults and the stereotypes of adults that characterize the peer-oriented students" (Sanford, 1962, p. 276).

Self-Concept

During this formative stage the developing personality is most susceptible to influence and most in need of reassurance. Authoritarian personality tendencies are closely related to self-esteem instabilities, as the student often lacks reliable internal metrics of ability and success. According to Sanford (1962), the dearth of internal ballast results in a dramatic vacillation between overestimation and underestimation, causing the student to "stick to patterns of behavior that have been rewarded in the past and to display such confidence as he can muster" (p. 263). Self-concept develops as the student receives clear feedback and positive results from new situations, both social and academic.

Environment

Although Sanford was concerned primarily with the mobilization of the academic setting to promote ego development, he also acknowledged the growth spurred on by the non-academic environment as well. College, and especially a residential college, is a perfect place for students to try on new social and academic roles previously not experienced or even

contemplated, while deciding on a pathway for the future. Engaging in this new and challenging environment is the first step of constructing an ego capable of managing future larger challenges.

Persons in Transition

Sanford (1962) observed that young people need to be taught that their status as a "person in transition" is normal and healthy.

> The student needs to be able to think of himself as someone who will change – while participating fully in whatever it is that changes him; he needs to feel that it is all right (*sic)* for him to be uncertain about his future self and his future roles, as long as he is engaged in activities that are calculated to bring out his potential. (p. 281)

Sanford (1964) railed against what he saw as the "strong trend in American culture" to blur the developmental lines and permit young people to act as miniature adults (p. 89). Further, he argued that young people must be allowed to change, be taught that they are changing, and yet, be informed that this process has an end point and is not an end in itself. The result of this orientation to development would be greater openness to new experiences since the student understands and accepts that their developmental destination has not been reached.

In summary, Sanford transposed existing psychosocial concepts from adolescent development theories, applying them to college freshmen to describe the contextual factors that promote and inhibit the development of ego and personality. However, long before Sanford devised his theories, knowledge about freshmen adjustment issues had been accumulating year after year by YMCA handbook editors and committees. In fact, the Y men had been publishing advice to freshmen some 40 years before a young Richmond College legacy named Nevitt Sanford headed off to school, likely receiving a YMCA *Spider* handbook the previous summer (Canon, 1988; Goleman, 1995). The analysis that follows demonstrates that the insights and perceptions accrued during five decades of YMCA handbooks predated and paralleled Sanford's formal student development theory. Our methods for the analysis of the handbooks are discussed in the appendix.

"In Case You Get Canned": Y Students vs. Savvy Psychologists[2]

Clearly, the men of the campus YMCAs were not engaged in formal theory-making when they created, borrowed, and elaborated on the advice published in their handbooks for new students. The Y men only tried to prepare new students for the unknown at college and introduce them to the student norms and campus culture. Indeed, they claimed for themselves that "It is to the men of the entering class in particular that we desire to give a few words of friendly advice, which may save them from embarrassing situations in the days that are to follow" (*Handbook of the New Hampshire College Students*; Wiggins, 1920, p. 22). The authors of Penn State's YMCA campus bulletin warned freshmen (in an admonition co-opted by their brothers at the University of Kentucky):

> In case you should get "canned" at the close of the first semester, don't tell the folks at home that if someone had given you some quiet tips on how to get along, when you came here, it might have gone differently with you. That is what this book is for – and here are the facts. Look 'em over. (*The Student Handbook of Pennsylvania State University*; Durbin, 1925, p. 18)

The advice offered in the mid-1890s was not as sophisticated as it had become by the 1930s. In what appears to be the first recognition by the campus Y men of the impact of peer relations on student development, the Students' Christian Association at Northwestern University observed in 1883 that "No other relations we sustain will be so potent in moulding [sic] our character as those of our class-mates and college companions" (p. 3).

By the early 1890s, several institutions' handbooks sported *Pointers* or *Useful Hints for New Students* that began primarily as logistical information: "You may be wiser if you read a copy of the College rules. Get one from the President" (*Students' Hand Book of the University of Wooster*; Crothers, 1893, p.6). Gradually the handbooks incorporated suggestions about actions that might positively or negatively impact a student's career in college and his development as a person. As the Y men revised handbook content from basic matriculation information to guidelines for cultural adaptation in the early years of the new century, many handbooks listed Freshman Rules that enumerated the types of clothing forbidden to first-years as well as areas of the campus that were

[2] Plummer, L. N. (Ed.). (1927). *University of Kentucky Student Handbook.* Lexington: Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A, p. 9.

off-limits to them. By the second decade, freshman advice represented entirely behavioral suggestions, cautions, and admonitions.

Embedded in the now campy and simplistic suggestions of the Y handbooks is a home-grown wisdom written to help guide new students through the same complicated maturation process Sanford sought to explain through psychoanalytic theory. In our content analysis of the advice, nine categories emerged, which we then condensed into five, reflecting a parallel and implicit awareness of Sanford's developmental concepts in action:

1. Establishing and projecting a balanced self-concept
2. Understanding and managing the counterpoints of freedom and responsibility
3. Maintaining preexisting support and shedding past inconsequential identities
4. Investing broadly in affiliations concurrent with emerging self-concept
5. Seeking constructive and avoiding destructive relations with faculty and peers

Ego Development and Support: Establishing and Projecting a Balanced Self-Concept

This first category, *ego development and support*, is assembled from two sub-categories. The first, *developing reputation and standing as a new student*, focuses on external elements of social and academic recognition, while the second, *developing a balanced self-concept*, is concerned with establishing a healthy internal self-perception.

The YMCA students penned advice columns at least in part to spare upperclassmen from predictably annoying freshman behavior. To this end, advice aimed at discouraging freshman arrogance is pointed:

> The man with the "swelled head" is very unpopular among College students. (*Student's Hand-Book of Washington and Jefferson College*; College Y.M.C.A., 1901, p. 5)

> Don't begin immediately upon your arrival to suggest changes in the faculty or the curriculum. (*The Handbook for Hillsdale College*; Shupp, 1910, p. 43)

> Do not be a "butinsky." Be respectful of upperclassmen. Know your place and keep it. (*The Michigan Hand-Book*; Slavens, 1916, p. 62)

Writers of the freshman advice columns understood the strong desire of incoming students to gain a good reputation, although the newcomers lacked the personal and environmental awareness to assess how that might be accomplished. Frequently, Y men used the term "world-beater" to describe those who might arrive with grand, though misdirected, ambitions:

> Don't try to show the world that you are a world-beater during the first few weeks. As a rule the big men in Freshman days are not the leaders in his Senior year. (*The State College of Washington Students Handbook*; Peck, 1929, p. 10)

> If you are a world-beater, don't tell about it. (*The Dartmouth Handbook*; Snow, 1925, p. 20)

> Don't try to show the university that you are a world-beater within the first few weeks of your college career. If you are, the fact will become known without assistance on your part. (*University of Kentucky Student Handbook*; Plummer, 1927, p. 14)

Sanford echoed the spirit of these sentiments when he noted that freshmen are not sure of their abilities, and as a result, swing between over- and under-estimation. The handbook writers sought to assuage this reactionary tendency in freshmen and reassure them of their place.

The need for honest feedback, according to Sanford, makes grades and the sober assessment of developing abilities vital to the developing sense of self. Freshmen seeking positive appraisal in the classroom are frequently tempted to draw attention to themselves using a variety of tactics the advice column writers considered to be juvenile and unacceptable.

> In justice to yourself, your classmates, and your professors do honest work, "Ponies" and "set-ups" are a vain thing for safety. (*Student's Hand-Book of the College of Washington and Jefferson*; College Y.M.C.A., 1901, p. 5)

> Don't try to tell it all in the classroom. Leave a little for the others.… Don't ask professors questions of which you already know the answers, "just to show that you are interested." They've seen suckers before you came. (*The Dickinson Hand Book*; Vanneman, 1909, p. 28)

> Be patient about displaying your knowledge in the classroom. An opportunity will be afforded you when called upon. (*Student's Handbook of Roanoke College*; Lauck, 1917, p. 21)

In the process of discouraging self-aggrandizing behavior, Y columnists directed freshmen to stake their reputations on what they do, not on what they have done or say they can do.

> Don't spend all your energy in trying to show people that you are made of "superior mud." If you do, you will not have enough strength left to balance yourself on your own self erected pinnacle. (*Students' Handbook of West Virginia Wesleyan College*; Moon, 1908, p. 8)

> If you would be popular, don't try to be. Let your efforts and not your words show that you have ideals. (*The Student's Hand Book*; Christian Associations of Olivet College, 1915, p. 25)

Finally, the handbook writers balanced their stern and critical assessment of freshman inclinations toward inappropriate self-promotion with encouragement that their current station, no matter how lowly, bore no shame. The writers counseled incoming students to recognize that they inhabited a temporary position in the pantheon of the academy, and they should make the best of it. This guidance represents a step toward Sanford's advice that students should be encouraged to think of themselves as moving through an acceptable stage of maturation and transition.

Although the substance of remarks may vary, both the YMCA writers and Sanford recognized that for freshmen to claim maturation or perceive themselves as something they have yet to become may be damaging. In response, Y men cautioned patience.

> It's like the whooping cough or measles. They are no disgrace – neither is it a disgrace to be a freshman. (*University of Kentucky Student Handbook*; Plummer, 1927, p. 13)

> You are a freshman. Be proud of it. Although your hardships are many, others have faced them before you. Susquehanna is proud of what it has to offer you. Will you allow Susquehanna to be proud of you? (*The Students' Handbook of Susquehanna University*; Cozak, 1930, p. 28).

The second sub-category, *developing a balanced self-concept*, also relates closely to Sanford's bid for patience with the developmental process. Distinguishing internal self-perception from external

attempts to gain notoriety is important in part because Sanford makes a clear separation between the internal struggle for self-definition and external attempts to buttress an emerging personality by mimicking the behavior of peers and adults. Our content analysis of the advice columns also demonstrates a demarcation of content between warnings against public displays for recognition and imbalanced self-perceptions, either low or high. Again, these upperclassmen likely were attempting to preempt behavior they considered unbecoming of their social and academic inferiors. However, the advice they penned is filled with encouragement as well as criticism of those not inclined to take up their assigned place in the hierarchy.

> Do not decide that Newberry would close if you should leave. This is the sixtieth year without you. (*Students' Handbook of Newberry College*; Bodie, Haigler, Bodie, & Counts, 1916, p. 12)

> Don't be self-conscious. Your face may not be the answer to a maiden's prayer but that doesn't matter. (*University of Kentucky Student Handbook*; Plummer, 1927, p. 11)

> A fair minded student body will value you for what you are; and an oblivious body will ignore you for what you only think you are, or what you have been or have done. (*The "V" Book of Vanderbilt University*; Crockett, 1928, p. 6)

Understanding and Managing the Counterpoints of Freedom and Responsibility

The challenge and support didactic that Sanford constructed provides a ready framework for understanding the advance warning of the hazards and rewards of an unregulated college schedule. Students develop when stress is great enough to challenge prior modes of adaptation, but not so great as to induce defensive reactions (Sanford, 1967). The YMCA writers attempted to alert incoming students to the tremendous adjustment and balance necessary to navigate college life successfully, encouraging them to make the most of this opportunity for growth. Even for those students whose parents may have attended college, the sea change between the highly structured routine extending from morning watch to evening vespers they would have experienced to the relatively unsupervised smorgasbord of activities current students now faced meant freshmen had to navigate myriad choices with minimal preparation.

Advice in this category was intended to encourage the pursuit of a college experience free from excesses, and to illustrate the degree of personal responsibility required.

> It will not pay you to go out every night of the week; it will pay you to take a night off a week. (*Hand-Book of Useful Information for Students New and Old from the University of Nebraska*; Christian Associations, 1896, p. 22)

> Formerly, you were told when to get up in the morning, and when to go to bed at night. Here, nobody cares when you get up. Nobody cares when or whether you go to bed. If you wish to put all four in the trough, and ruin your digestion, it is your food and your digestion. Go as far as you like. (*The Student Handbook of Pennsylvania State University*; Durbin, 1925, p. 20)

> Don't think that profanity, cigarettes, drinking "booze" and wearing loud socks make you a true college man. (*Students' Handbook of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute*; Young, 1926, p. 15)

The writers of the YMCA naturally desired to support the continued spiritual growth and to help freshmen avoid moral turpitude. By contrast, Sanford expressed concern that peer groups may simply perpetuate values that have not been adequately challenged. Further, he believed that the liberalizing influence of the college setting provides first-hand exposure to respected figures engaged in behavior or holding beliefs that the freshmen previously would have found unacceptable. In the process of questioning and justifying what he or she experiences, the individual creates new adaptive techniques that replace older inadequate methods. Sanford (1962) noted that one of the virtues of collegiate life is that "it provides an environment in which he may experiment with new forms of expression without the consequences of his mistakes being too serious" (p. 273). From the tone of the advice columns, freshmen clearly had sufficient opportunity to run amok despite the influence of the YMCA.

Pre-Existing Support and Identity: Impact of Pre-College Background

The *pre-existing support and identity* category contains two subgroups: *the positive and negative impact of pre-existing relationships with parents and peers*, and the *abandonment of pre-college identity*

as prerequisite to the development of new modes of adaptation. As we have discussed, Sanford emphasized the important phase of personality development marked by the entrance into college. However, matriculation also marks a change in the status of support mechanisms as well. Relationships, accomplishments, and other existing sources of support enter a tenuous phase, serving to bolster confidence and insulate the student from growth-inducing crises. Unlike many closely shepherded students today, freshmen attending college between 1883 and 1930 included many first generation students, arriving unaccompanied, often with only posted mail as a means of communication with home. In this relative isolation, freshmen experienced a greater need to bolster self-confidence, and, in response, may have relied more heavily on stories and artifacts representing past glory, much to the chagrin of the upperclassmen.

The Y advice writers assisted freshmen by separating the importance of parental connections from attachment to past accomplishments. Many handbooks advised new students to write to home quickly and often to sustain the positive bond with their parents as well as to help parents understand the new situation their sons were experiencing:

> Don't get wild and waste your money. Remember there is a mother or father at home who believes in you. (*Student's Hand-Book of Roanoke College*; Lauck, 1917, p. 22)

> It is natural that your family at home should be anxious to hear from you. In your rush of events, do not forget to write to them. And when you write, remember that it is just possible that your mother is not fully conversant with the college patois. Better write to her in English until you have been home for the holidays at which time you can make her a lexicon of student slang. Tell her about your room. Draw her a map of it and place an "x" at the point reserved for study. Tell her what you had for dinner, what the prof said to you (if it was complimentary) and mention the fact that you would like to see her and put your feet under the family table for a real, honest-to-goodness meal. And what about dad? It may seem queer, but fathers like to be considered as something more than a mere bank. (*University of Kentucky Student Handbook*; Plummer, 1927, p. 12)

Although maintaining family ties was encouraged, almost ubiquitously, handbook authors decried displays by new students of secondary

school accomplishments. Students consistently were reminded that their campus reputation had to be constructed anew; former social statuses do not transfer venues.

> Don't tire everyone with a story of your "prep school" exploits or of what you can do. SHOW what you can do, NOW. (*The University of Maine Hand Book*; Whalon, 1917, p. 32)

> Put away all your prep school insignia, and remember that your prep school reputation is not going to pull you through college. (*Handbook of the New Hampshire College Students*; Wiggins, 1920, p. 22)

> Prep school reputations count very little at Washington State College, and the majority of your class are entering with as few friends as you are. (*The State College of Washington Students Handbook*; Weaver, 1927, p. 12)

> Discard all preparatory school insignia. (*The Freshman Handbook: The Official Handbook of the University of Michigan*; Howell, 1929, p. 17)

While students happily reflect on past successes and draw support from those memories, they also sense that they now stand on a bigger stage with greater expectations (Sanford, 1964). The YMCA handbook writers promoted positive transition by discouraging freshmen from relying on past identifiers and encouraging them to establish themselves anew in the collegiate environment.

Investing Broadly in Affiliations Concurrent with Emerging Self-Concept

According to Sanford (1967), differentiation of personality occurs as students engage in increasingly varied and complex situations:

> [A] student entering college has a wide array of adaptive mechanisms and ways of ordering experience—mechanisms that have served him well in the past and are serving now to maintain his stability. If he is eager for new experiences, as he often is, what he anticipates is not so much change in himself as the successful testing of powers he already has. (p. 51)

Although the student is unaware of the results of engagement, his apparent readiness to experience new stimuli leads to new growth.

Here a dynamic established in prior categories is repeated: although the handbook writers had no explicit knowledge of the psychological

constructs thought to contribute to personality development, they exhibited a keen awareness that broad student engagement is beneficial. This insight is particularly noteworthy considering they represented an organization seeking the allegiance of all young men. The emphasis on holistic development, later articulated in the 1937 *SPPOV*, is evident in the early and later YMCA advice.

> The student must remember that a one-sided development is abnormal and worthless. The body and spirit as well as the mind, need strong exercise and healthy growth. The spiritual life cannot thrive – and many instances have proven it – where the intellectual life consumes all one's energies. (*Students' Handbook of Colgate Academy*; Young Men's Christian Association, 1896, p. 9)

> Seek the good in different student activities. Do not have it forced upon you. (*Normal Hand Book of the Oshkosh Normal School*; Christian Association, 1907, p. 30)

> The man who can balance his University work and his student activities in the right proportion gets the most out of Cornell.… Too often a man has won a competition only to find that he has not attended closely enough to his studies, and so cannot take the place he has won. (*Cornell Students' Hand Book*; Micou, 1914, p. 79)

> Do not let the turmoil of the first week or two disturb your equilibrium too violently. Take a reasonable share of the social life of the State College. Play is an essential part of normal development. (*The State College of Washington Students Handbook*; Weaver, 1927, p. 13)

The advice also reflects evolving societal attitudes toward physical activity. In the first decades of the 20th century, physical education and intercollegiate sports (particularly for men, but increasingly for women) grew rapidly. Similarly, the concept of *muscular Christianity* became vogue by the 1890s and emphasized activism and rejection of a passive sedentary lifestyle (Gustav-Wrathall, 1998; Hopkins, 1951; Morse, 1913; Putney, 2001).

> The University Athletic meeting comes off about the middle of October. Intending competitors should start training as soon as possible. (*Students Hand Book of McGill University*; Young Men's Christian Association, 1891, p. 13)

> Try out for the teams. If you fail – ROOT! (*Occidental Students' Handbook*; Pellegrin, 1909, p. 8)

> If you have any ability, you are expected to try to make at least one of the college athletic or non-athletic organizations. (*Handbook of Dartmouth College*; Downey & Frame, 1909, p. 24)

> On the athletic field, in publication work, debating, music, or dramatics, you can give much good to Lafayette and in return get much out of it yourself in enjoyment, in friends and in training your mind. Keep busy and you will be happy. (*Freshmen Hand Book of Lafayette College*; Williams, 1923, p. 22)

Positive and Negative Impact of Faculty and Peer Relationships

Sanford (1962) argued that the freeing of impulse occurred primarily in two ways: through exposure to academic disciplines that challenge simplistic worldviews and through faculty modeling mature expression of ideas and emotions. Peer culture did not receive similar favorable treatment: "One of the main functions of peer culture … is to maintain the state of affairs; to avoid any real involvement with adults, such as would threaten to upset an internal organization and a view of the world which have served well enough in the past" (Sanford, 1962, p. 275). However, Sanford did acknowledge that older students play a role in modeling mature emotional behavior.

Rather than perpetuating stereotypes of instructors, the handbook writers encouraged freshmen to engage faculty and in some cases, upperclassmen, describing them positively:

> Do not hesitate to ask for advice from a faculty member; remember that he is your friend. Friendship is not bootlicking. This is one of the chief advantages of a small college. Don't ignore it. (*The Students' Handbook of Washington and Lee*; Moore, 1924, p. 34)

> Don't be afraid to ask questions. You will find both older students and members of the faculty glad to direct you to where you wish to go on campus, and to help you in any way possible. (*University of Illinois Students' Hand Book*; Gullick & Morton, 1926, p. 7)

> At the head of this big family stands President Hetzel, a ready counselor. He invites your acquaintance. And then, just

> below him are assistants and teachers whose thoughts and principles of living you will take with you through life. Meet these men and women personally. (*Student Handbook of the Pennsylvania State College*; Mensch, 1930, p. 31)

The YMCA writers also discouraged negative peer influences and encouraged young men to meet and form positive relationships with a wide variety of persons, as well as to learn how to cope with differences in student status:

> Know people. Not just a few, but all you can, of all sorts. "The very best and most important thing in the world is folks." (*Students' Hand-Book of Penn College*; Briggs, Kenworthy, &Wildman, 1898, p. 17)

> The companionship of cultured men and women is half a liberal education. (*Students' Hand Book of Baker University*; Christian Associations, 1901, p. 16)

> In your attitude toward others, be natural and sincere. A natural reserve and deference towards upperclassmen shows an appreciation of college precedents, but cringing servility is a self-evident sham. (*Handbook of Williams College*; Coan, 1910, p. 52)

> When you enter the University you are expected to be a man competent to choose between good and bad. You can have good friends to assist you. To this end be careful in the choosing of your intimate friends. Choose the type of friends that will help you attain to the best of true manhood. (*The "M" Book of the University of Mississippi*; Miller, 1925, p. 11)

Nevertheless, the Y men were part and product of the student culture. As such, they passed norms of freshmen treatment on to the next generation.

> It is the privilege of upperclassmen to requisition freshmen for carpet beating, furniture moving, and picture hanging during the first weeks of college. It is the best plan for freshmen to accept this with as good grace as possible, recognizing it as one of the established customs. (*The Dartmouth Handbook*; Snow, 1925, p. 18)

> You will be ragged and chaffed a little and subjected to an occasional humiliation. This is part of your training. Don't

> get sore about it. Go on and take your medicine. Other people have taken theirs and are still hale and hearty. (*The Student Handbook of Pennsylvania State University*; Durbin, 1925, p. 26)

Conclusion

The Y men authored the freshman advice sections to help students make the most of their collegiate years. The simplicity of that fact veils the contemporary implications of the historical gap in services and theories that the Y men bridged prior to the scientifically-based instruments and offices of the mid-20th century. In concluding, we argue that although the YMCA handbooks with their freshman advice sections saturated higher education institutions nationwide and fed the emerging personnel services profession, the maturing student affairs profession is only now in a position to accept and appreciate the diverse components of its own origins, represented in part by the contributions of the YMCA.

From the handbooks' earliest inception, they provided logistical information, including instructions for pre-matriculation testing and advising, as well as tips on domestic issues, such as rooming houses and jobs. The freshman advice columns were one minor element in a considerable and diverse assemblage of handbook information. The handbooks themselves were one contribution in a complex program of services and activities developed and operated by the campus YMCAs through the 1930s. Furthermore, the handbooks increasingly added advice on proper freshman behaviors, permitting the neophytes to anticipate their new role as college students. And yet the impact of these small seeds of advice compounded year after year as subsequent generations received handbooks prior to entering college as freshmen. Had the institutions been providing this information to new students, the Y men undoubtedly would not have felt the need to include it.

Although we can only speculate about the identities of those individuals who received, read, and heeded the advice offered, the pervasiveness of the handbooks at U.S. colleges and universities during the first decades of the 20th century represented an influential force in the early collegiate experiences of many students. Included in this group of first-year students as well as YMCA handbook editors, officers, and members, assuredly was the rising cadre of student personnel workers in the 1920s and 1930s, the progenitors to the professionalized student affairs offices widely recognized

today. In fact, archival records demonstrate a common pattern of the transfer of responsibility when nascent student services offices gradually supplanted YMCA oversight. At several institutions, Y men were actually hired to fill the newly established university position of dean of students and other student personnel directors, linking the accumulated expertise of association members with the unseasoned structures of the emerging profession (Finnegan & Alleman, 2005).

Cumulatively then, not only did the freshman advice columns (and the men who authored them) directly contribute to this emerging student affairs field, but they possibly influenced the front line of future scholars: student development theorist William Perry entering Harvard University in 1931 would have received a handbook, as would Ohio State higher education researcher William Cowley at Dartmouth in 1920, and of course, Nevitt Sanford at Richmond College in 1925. As a result, the influence exerted by the YMCA, of which freshman advice was one small part, potentially forms the backdrop not only for pre-theoretical freshman socialization, but also the preparation of the initial generation of student affairs professionals and student development theorist who would not coalesce for some 30 years.

Consequently, the work of the YMCA students generally, and the freshman advice sections as a single, though significant, example, calls into question the prevailing account of the origins of student services and the emergence of student development theory. The Y advice was neither sanctioned by a professional organization or office, nor was it grounded in theoretical literature. Yet the YMCA advice columns reached thousands of unsteady freshmen with categories of developmental wisdom that would be theoretically formalized decades later. Reconsidering the roots of the profession and its theoretical base suggests the need for continued critical historical investigation and a greater appreciation for the diverse and unconventional sources of influence that have shaped the student affairs profession.

Despite the extensive influence of the handbooks and YMCA advice, the first decades of the 20th century were dominated by a growing commitment to scientific positivism that established a new standard of evidence based on the scientific method. Along with rising college enrollments, empiricism propelled innovations in student testing, freshman orientation, career advising, psychological counseling, and other emerging professional personnel services (Zook, 1932). Enthusiastically, personnel workers, psychologists, and deans of men and women applied the tools of science to examine, guide, and correct student disorders (Cowley, 1940).

In contrast to the data typically generated by scientific observers, the freshman advice columns were the work of native insiders who authored heartfelt guidance, no doubt from personal experience, to new students for whom the Y men displayed sympathy and solidarity. However, the perceived worth and efficacy of local knowledge were soon overshadowed by the new demands of scientific rigor and professional standards. This shift in the basis of evidence not only displaced the campus groups' methods, but it also gave rise to professional training, associations, and publications that reinforced the value of empirical study and expertise as the product of formal education. Publication of the *Journal of Higher Education* in 1930 marked the inception of a national scholarly dialogue in the emerging field and grounded in the rules of scientific discourse. Similarly, by 1938, 25 institutions ran summer training programs for higher education administrators, including student personnel workers, reflecting the increased focus on professional preparation (Palmer, 1938). Thus, by the 1940s, not only was the YMCA diminished in its campus presence, but the student-driven, experientially based socialization and cultural induction implicit in the freshman advice columns no longer fit the dominant student affairs mode of operation.

Although scientific empiricism still predominates, over the past several decades a growing number of researchers and practitioners have expanded the boundaries of evidence, recognizing the value of local insight and lived experience as legitimate sources of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As a result, the current highly professionalized field of student affairs may now begin to value the kind of insider self-reflection that the Y men demonstrated during the early decades of the 20th century. Although periodic calls for better theory to explain the development of students have been made and gradually heeded, the Y men generated insightful, actionable advice in advance of a research perspective to instantiate its worth.

The story of the YMCA men told in brief here but expanded upon elsewhere (see Finnegan & Alleman, 2005; Setran, 2007) adds breadth to the current student affairs narrative that emphasizes the rise of the deans, nascent professional associations, and professional creeds, such as the *Student Personnel Point of View* (Saddlemire & Rentz, 1986). The history of student development theory and practice is as much about the roots that took nutrients from the earth as it is about the trunk and branches themselves.

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Appendix: Methodology

The comparison of the YMCA's student advice columns and Sanford's developmental concepts arose unexpectedly as we reviewed material resources for a different research project. One of us, already familiar with Sanford's ideas, was struck by the similarity of the content and purpose of the freshman advice with the elements of Sanford's theory. From this reflexive insight we developed a systematic process for comparing and evaluating the parallel conclusions of Sanford and the Y men.

Campus YMCAs began to publish handbooks as early as 1883. To date, we have uncovered at least four campus associations that produced handbooks that year. To establish the pervasive use and substance of Freshman Advice sections in YMCA student handbooks, we created a spread sheet and performed a content analysis of 130 YMCA student handbooks from 84 different institutions published between 1883 and the 1930s. The institutions range from small liberal arts colleges to public universities with a few normal schools or teachers colleges in the later years.

Though we collected student handbooks published between 1883 and the 1970s, we only analyzed the collection through 1930 because approximately then, many institutions or their student governments began to publish handbooks, though the institutional appropriation varied greatly according to the strength and influence of each individual association. Handbooks during the late 1920s and early 1930s also began a transition of content, relying less on homegrown knowledge and student creativity, and reserving more space for formal documents and rules, such as student government charters and housing regulations.

We found various forms of freshman advice in 79 (61%) of our collected handbooks for those four decades. Prior to 1900, most of the handbooks analyzed (15 of the 23 from 20 different higher education institutions) did not provide advice to their new students. However, almost all of the handbooks contained *Freshman Rules*, which introduced new students to informal prohibitions against certain types of dress, behavior, and the use of certain campus locations often reserved for upperclassmen. In the 18 handbooks published between 1900 and 1909, 13 carried freshman advice in some type of format. During the teens, 27 of the 37 (73%) handbooks published freshman advice, while 31 of 52 (60%) handbooks during the 1920s provided advice. The advice imparted in the handbooks during the last two

decades of the analysis included standardized inventories of specific support, cautions, and admonitions. In several handbooks among the later years, we found verbatim items of guidance, demonstrating that YMCA members across several campuses shared (or borrowed) these specific insights with or from each other.

In the spreadsheet, we noted each instance of nine developmental themes within the advice columns. We then categorized the results for comparison with the major developmental themes advanced by Sanford (1964) in *The American University* and other publications, compressing the nine themes into the five parallel categories reported in this paper. The handbook quotations used as examples in this document were selected for their content and engaging style, but are decidedly representative of those found in other handbooks. Consequently, the quotations reflect the categories found in the handbooks at large, but may not fully reflect the diversity of institutions and eras in which advice columns were found.

Finally, our use of the term *freshman* rather than the inclusive and currently preferred term *first-year student* is purposeful. The student writers of the advice columns were most often males writing to other males, reflecting the emphasis of the YMCA. In addition, Sanford wrote in an era when the masculine pronoun was used generically. Our citations and quotations therefore reflect that historical reality.

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