

A STUDENT PERSONNEL PROGRAM FOR THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

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A Thesis  
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the Faculty of the Department of Psychology  
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in Partial Fulfillment  
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Master of Arts

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by  
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I N T R O D U C T I O N

## CHAPTER I

### THE CONCEPT OF STUDENT PERSONNEL WORK AND PLAN OF THE THESIS

Personnel work is concerned with the psychological welfare of the individual. It is a branch of applied psychology, and, like other applied sciences, uses the principles of several related sciences. It is founded on psychological principles, but must take into account also the effects of economic, political, and social forces upon the satisfaction of individual needs and upon the shaping of those needs.

The philosophy underlying student personnel work is fundamentally that which underlies all personnel work, with specific orientation to the conditions and needs of students. Its basic concept is of the individual as a total personality, and embodies respect for his intrinsic worth as an individual. An acceptance of this view of the student contains within it the implicit acceptance, as well, of certain heretofore unrecognized obligations to the student. It implies, above all, recognition of the fact that students have problems, and that these problems, whether personal, social, or educational, have a direct bearing on academic achievement. If a college or university is to attain its educational goal, which may be described broadly as the educating of young people to become mature men and women,

capable of an intelligent understanding of themselves and of society, it must give attention to the present and future needs of these young people.

This philosophy recognizes the fact that student problems are not as simple and easily solvable as is generally assumed, but that they are to a large extent inter-related, and spring from many sources. Not only must students cope with the normal problems of late adolescence and early adulthood, but they must do this in a totally new situation, which expects from them a degree of independence and responsibility for which their experience has only partially prepared them. They must make the adjustment from the relatively restricted social and intellectual environment of home and school to the broader community of the university, and are caught between the desire to act independently and an acute awareness of their inadequacy. At the same time, they are faced with the fact that opportunities for young people in the occupational fields are decreasing, which makes the problem of vocational choice an extremely troublesome one. The transition from high school to university presents many difficulties in itself--the necessity of fitting into a broader social group, of learning to work independently, and of adjusting to whole new areas of knowledge and of ideas.

In short, the philosophy upon which student personnel work is based, maintains that an institution which undertakes the intellectual training of young people must, for the effective furtherance of its educational aims, and in justice to its students, also undertake responsibility for educating its students toward self-understanding, desirable social relationships and skills, mental and physical health, intelligent course selection and vocational choice, and the development of sound character. These are personnel, as distinguished from academic, functions, and yet the distinction is an arbitrary one. The ideal situation would involve a close integration of the two, a single program which would satisfy the needs of the total personality, functioning to increase individual security and independence by aiding in the achievement of maturity.

It is the aim of this thesis to present a plan for a student personnel program which would satisfy the requirements of the University of Manitoba. The method of approach has been to divide the thesis into two Parts. Part I (Chapters II--IV) presents a review of what is being done in the field of student personnel work in Canada and the United States, with a detailed study of the student personnel program at the University of Minnesota. This particular program was chosen because it was felt to embody much of the advanced thinking and practice in the field in

both countries. Part II (Chapters V--VII) deals specifically with the University of Manitoba, Chapter V presenting the results of a check list distributed to First- and Fourth-Year students for the purpose of ascertaining their expectations from University and the problems which they have experienced; Chapter VI outlining a program which might be considered to be adequate to the need on this campus; and Chapter VII suggesting the manner in which such a program might be implemented to provide both immediate and long range satisfaction, taking into account both student needs and the practical considerations of cost, space, and staff.

PART I

A SURVEY OF STUDENT PERSONNEL WORK IN CANADA AND  
THE UNITED STATES

## CHAPTER II

### STUDENT PERSONNEL WORK IN CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES

#### A General

Student personnel work, particularly in the area of counseling, is still in a very rudimentary stage of development in Canadian universities. This fact is pointed up in the results of a recent survey conducted by Professor W. H. D. Vernon for the Canadian Psychological Association.<sup>1</sup> Because of their direct bearing on the subject of this thesis, these results are being presented here, with Professor Vernon's permission.

It will be necessary, however, for the sake of clarity, to describe first the method used in the survey, and to comment on its reliability. Information concerning the student personnel programs in all non-Catholic<sup>2</sup> Canadian universities, sixteen in number,<sup>3</sup> was obtained by means of a

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1 Report of the Standing Committee on the Counseling of University Students, Chairman, W. H. D. Vernon, presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association, Montreal, May, 1949.

2 Because of some divergence in organization and practice between Catholic and Protestant universities, a separate study of Catholic universities was undertaken by Professor Maurice Chagnon, to be reported on separately.

3 The universities included are: Acadia, Dalhousie, Mt. Allison, New Brunswick, Bishops, Sir George Williams, McGill, Carleton, Queens, Toronto, Western Ontario, McMaster, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

questionnaire, which was sent to key persons believed to be in sufficiently close contact with the personnel program of each university to be able to report on it. An attempt was made, by means of specific and open-end questions, to solicit as comprehensive a body of data as possible. According to the report, however, the latter questions were not too well answered, so that no clear picture could be gained of the particular organization of student personnel services within each university. Nor were the specific questions of such a nature as to elicit information regarding organization. They were designed to cover such things as; 1) the amount of counseling being done, 2) by whom it was being done (e.g. administrators, faculty, professional counselors), 3) its nature (whether educational, vocational, clinical), 4) its organizational basis (whether casual, or part of an organized program), 5) the services offered to students (e.g. freshman selection, orientation, and guidance; counseling, health, housing, employment, financial aid, coordination of extracurricular activities), 6) the provision made for referrals, and 7) the provision made for a system of cumulative records. In spite of this lack of information concerning the administrative structure of particular personnel programs, the data from the questionnaire does give a general view of the situation with respect to student personnel work being carried out in Canadian universities, and it is summarized as follows:

1. Counseling. A large part of the questionnaire was devoted to questions concerning counseling. This is the most important single aspect of student personnel work, cutting across all other phases and basic to them. Of the sixteen universities reporting:

- i All make provision for veterans' counseling.
- ii Ten claim to have an organized counseling program, at least 3 of which include in their scope non-veteran students.
- iii None report the use of full-time professional counselors.
- iv In 14 of the 16, administrative officers (Deans and Registrars) do not only academic, but personal and financial counseling as well. In only 4 instances are these officers reported to have professional training in non-academic counseling.
- v Twelve report faculty counseling in non-academic matters, done, in most cases, on a casual basis. In 3 of these cases, faculty doing non-academic counseling have had professional training.
- vi The psychology department carries on informal counseling of departmental and other students in 14 universities. In 11, some member of the psychology department takes an active or advisory part in the counseling agency, and in 9, the department plays an informal part in university counseling.
- vii Six indicate that the department of education plays some part, usually casual, in the counseling program. In 3 universities, one member of this department acts in an advisory capacity to the counseling agency. Two departments have a regular counseling service for their own students.
- viii All but 2 report that counseling is offered to students on a voluntary basis. In these 2, it is compulsory for some.

2. Services. The questionnaire listed ten services, any or all of which might be included in a student personnel program. These are listed below, with the number of universities making some provision for each given in brackets following.

|      |   |      |
|------|---|------|
| i    | Freshman selection on the basis of psychological tests, interviews, and academic records. | ( 4) |
| ii   | Freshman counseling and guidance  | ( 9) |
| iii  | Freshman orientation program  | (10) |
| iv   | Diagnosis and counseling of students -  |      |
|      | Clinical  | ( 9) |
|      | Educational   | (10) |
|      | Vocational  | ( 9) |
| v    | Remedial assistance in -  |      |
|      | Reading   | ( 9) |
|      | Speech  | ( 4) |
|      | English   | ( 1) |
| vi   | Student health service -  |      |
|      | general physical  | (13) |
|      | psychiatric   | ( 6) |
| vii  | Coordination of extracurricular activities  | ( 6) |
| viii | Housing program for students  | (13) |
| ix   | Financial aids (loans, bursaries, scholarships)   | (14) |
| x    | Employment service  | (14) |

Counting the subdivisions, these services may be said to number sixteen. One university offers 2 of these 16 services, two offer 12, and the other thirteen fall in between, the median number of services offered being 8.5. Eleven of these were reported as being offered by the University of Manitoba. In this connection, it must be noted

that, while "some provision" can be reported for a large number of services, this gives no indication of their adequacy.

3. Referrals. Most universities reporting have arrangements for referrals in matters of illness, finances, and employment.

4. Records. Of the sixteen universities, eight report that some provision is made for a system of cumulative personnel records.

Information from that part of the questionnaire dealing with the situation in particular universities, while incomplete, does indicate clearly, according to the report, that the smaller and younger institutions have given more thought to, and are better organized to carry out, a counseling program, and that in almost every instance students are appreciative of the services which they do receive and are anxious for these to be extended.

Summary. This survey seems to point up the general lack of a clearcut understanding of the value of, and the need for, positive, well-organized, and carefully administered student personnel programs in Canadian universities. There are some indications of progress, but these, in the light of available psychological knowledge and techniques, are not impressive.

## B The Student Personnel Program at the University of British Columbia

Although the student personnel picture in general is not good in Canadian universities, there are a few institutions which have moved toward an organized program. One of these is the University of British Columbia, whose program of testing and counseling, begun in 1945 to meet the needs of veteran students, is gradually being expanded to include all students. While U. B. C. offers other services, in the areas of student health (mental and physical), student housing, and freshman orientation, these do not seem to be regarded as part of an over-all student personnel program. The term applies, rather, to the work being done in testing and counseling. Although these two related services constitute only one aspect of a well-rounded program, they have, nevertheless, formed the nuclear beginning of organized student personnel work in many colleges and universities. Since this may prove to be a logical starting point for the University of Manitoba as well, it was felt that a description of the present program at U. B. C., the result of five years' experience, might be helpful. This description<sup>4</sup> follows.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on information received in a letter from Dr. W. G. Black, Professor and Counselor, University of British Columbia, December, 1949.

1. Staff. The staff of the counseling bureau consists of three counselors and three stenographers. All counselors are part-time, one devoting one-third of his time to teaching, one giving part time to summer employment and student veteran loans, and one giving the major portion of his time to University staff employment and permanent employment service for graduating students. The stenographers are full-time employees, in charge of appointments, correspondence, and records.

2. Program. The counseling bureau offers a testing program to incoming students three times a year, once in June and twice in September. This is on a voluntary basis for students. Those taking tests return later for counseling, most of their problems centering around courses and educational and vocational objectives.

In addition to the testing and counseling of new students at the beginning of the year, these two services are available to all individual students who may seek them throughout the year. Students make appointments at the reception desk for testing, or for a half-hour counseling interview. Some of the individual testing is done by selected senior students in clinical psychology.

The bureau administers special test batteries for pre-Medical, pre-Dental, and Physical Education students. These are at present on a voluntary basis for students, but

it is expected that in future these will be made compulsory. It is also anticipated that other departments, such as Law and Commerce, will set up similar test requirements in the near future.

Responsibility for administering the Graduate Record Examination, the American Association of Medical Colleges Examination, and the Miller Analogies Test is also assumed by the counseling bureau.

Most of the counseling done is educational and vocational, but with some attention given to personal problems. An occupational library, with files on 426 occupations, is available for the use of students.

3. Records. A record is kept of every student using the counseling bureau, by means of a card index system and personal files. The records of those who have left the University are kept separately.

4. Tests. A reference file is kept of some five hundred sample tests. The basic testing program, however, includes only eleven; two tests of general intelligence, four of vocational interest, two of aptitude, and three of personality.

5. Accommodation. The counseling bureau is housed in an old Army hut, centrally located on the campus. It also has the use, five days a week, of an adjacent hut, which is used for testing.

Evaluation. No objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the counseling service has been given, but it is the feeling of the counselors that the service has been of considerable help to students, particularly in educational and vocational problems, with a fair degree of success in the area of personal problems. While this is a highly test-conscious program, a great deal of caution is exercised in the emphasis and interpretation put upon test results. Care is taken to make clear to counselees the limitations as well as the values of tests. With respect to educational and vocational counseling, the feeling is that, on the basis of information gathered from both counseling interviews and test results, it is possible to give considerable assistance to students by helping them focus their thinking on one or two favorable areas.

It is evident that this program is still in the early stages of development. It is growing rapidly, and reaching more students each year, but there is no indication that referrals are made between the counseling bureau and other departments, or of a move to integrate the counseling bureau with other personnel services on the campus. As on so many other campuses, the individual services seem to have sprung up as the need for them was felt, independent of any over-all plan.

## CHAPTER III

### CURRENT TRENDS IN STUDENT PERSONNEL WORK IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Student personnel work in the United States has taken on the proportions of a 'movement' which is sweeping into universities and colleges throughout the country. It received its impetus from the development of tests of mental measurement during World War I, and from the emphasis placed by psychologists on the importance of motivation in learning. Over the past twenty-five years its growth has been rapid, stimulated by continuous research in the field. To attempt a survey similar to that described in Chapter II seemed not only unfeasible but undesirable. Since the purpose of this thesis is to present a plan for a student personnel program at the University of Manitoba, a more useful approach to an understanding of what is being done in the United States seemed to be to review the literature for an indication of present trends, supplementing this with a detailed study of one outstanding student personnel program which was believed to embody the most advanced thinking in this field.

The present Chapter will deal with recent trends in student personnel work in the United States. Chapter IV will be devoted to a presentation of the student personnel program at present in operation at the University of Minnesota.