
Light, Richard J. (2001). *Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds*. Harvard University Press. 256 pp., \$24.95. ISBN 0-674-00478-7.

Richard Light's book is energizing for academic advisors who care about their students. Having spent 10 years conducting and overseeing interviews with 1,600 Harvard seniors, Light shares the students' views on undergraduate education and their suggestions for improvement. "This is not just a Harvard story," (p. 11) Light assures the reader, adding that "most [of these ideas] generalize quite well" (p. 12). Many who advise at institutions different from Harvard will read this work with a healthy skepticism, but ignoring its suggestions is to shortchange students.

Students confirm that events occurring outside the **classroom—cocurricular** activities, club membership, and informal discussions with students, faculty, and staff—are memorable, defining, and sometimes life changing. Students are also concerned about the quality of in-class instruction. Highly structured assignments and timely feedback from faculty are highly prized, as are courses requiring lots of writing. Collaborative assignments with study groups were especially favored by students; yet, as Light reminds us, "90 percent of [faculty] discussion focuses on what material and ideas to cover in class" (p. 51). Clearly, Light challenges faculty to rethink and refine pedagogy.

How else do students make the most of college? They cultivate a relationship with a faculty or advising mentor who makes them "think about the relationship of their **academic** work to their personal lives" (p. 88). Embracing diversity is a benefit of, and not a deterrent to, learning. Managing one's time effectively and engaging in a **cocurricular** activity or an internship complements the classroom. Light's students speak in reflective, if-only-I-had-known tones.

Although the book lets students speak, notably absent **are** voices **concerned** about needing to work and pay for education, handling the stresses as first-generation students, and coping with learning disabilities. Light's Harvard students "talk about language courses with special enthusiasm" (p. 11), while some students **from** less-selective schools view language and math as barriers containing pointless information they will never use. Where are the voices of nontraditional students who dominate the halls of higher education? **They** bring a refreshing maturity but are guided by a pragmatic philosophy that affords little room for knowledge for its own sake.

Educators need an eye-opening volume to remind them that many college students are not 18–22 years old with 1450 SATs and no dependents. But we must also look to Light for a blueprint of how all students can—with the right **choices**—make the most of college.

Christopher W. Gregory
Assistant **Dean**, Undergraduate Education
Framingham (MA) State College

Beckham, Joseph. (1996). *Meeting Legal Challenges*. Technomic Publishing. 193 pp., \$35.00. ISBN 1-56676-407-6.

Beckman wrote *Meeting Legal Challenges* to educate elementary and high school officials about the law as it relates to education, rights, and **privileges** of students, teachers, and administrators. However, many of the legal issues that face elementary and high school administrators, such as ethics, discrimination, and due process, also **pertain** to college administrators and especially to academic advisors.

Advisors and higher education administrators should be aware of what **Beckham** terms "educational malpractice" **where** a student feels that his or her educational institution has failed to meet its "duty to educate" (p. 173). **Beckham** also discusses due process and delves into the two types, substantive and procedural, that are the rights of students and teachers under the Fourteenth Amendment (p. 49). In addition, he goes into great detail about who is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the reasonable accommodations allowed under this law (p. 129). He covers cases in the areas aforementioned as well as steps teachers and the administrators can take to prevent violation of the rights of their students.

This is a well-written book that is very easy to read and goes into just the right amount of detail about legal matters in education. Several chapters of the book, particularly Educationally Sound Due Process, Prohibited Discrimination, and Reasonable Prudence and Risk Management, would be good references for advisors. However, these same issues **are** also covered in two chapters, entitled Ethical Considerations and Obligations and Legal Issues in Academic Advising, in Virginia N. Gordon and Wesley R. Habley's (2000) book *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook*. Gordon and Habley (2000) address these issues and others as they relate specifically to higher education, and I believe their book may be a better resource for academic advisors than is *Meeting Legal Challenges*.

Reference

Gordon, V. N., & Habley, W. R. (2000). *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (pp. 44-69). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Christie A. Cruise
Academic Advisor, College of Liberal Arts and
Sciences
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Ehrlich's book could be **helpful** to academic advisors in two ways. First, it could be used to explain the reasons behind the curriculum and certain requirements. Many students do not understand why they must take certain courses that seem to have no direct bearing on their chosen major or career path. I doubt many students realize that the required western civilization course is supposed to foster **adherence** to civic duty (chapter 5). Second, academic advisors can use it to encourage students to participate in volunteer activities, community service, and service learning courses. These activities encourage students to think beyond themselves and their own needs. While service learning is a good means of acquiring education, chapter 19 points out that more must be done to heighten civic responsibility in college students and in institutions of higher education.

This book is geared to a much wider audience than academic advisors and is probably **better** suited for high-level administrators and faculty members. Authors of the various chapters point to the need to reconceptualize, redefine, and rethink the roles that faculty and administrators play in institutions of higher education **as well as** the roles institutions of higher education play in society. **Astin** (chapter 6) indicates that institutions need to educate the public to view higher education differently. Ehrlich points out in his introduction that higher education teaches a process and not an outcome or product, as is prevalently thought in American society today.

Ehrlich calls for action. Not only do institutions need to teach civic responsibility, they need to be actively engaged in civic responsibility. This book contains practical suggestions for making universities more civically oriented. The author calls for making connections, specifically between universities, schools, and communities. He also suggests different ways to impart civic responsibility, such **as** collaborating and embracing multiculturalism. To be civically responsible, one must be open and respectful of cultural differences.

While I thought the book was somewhat long, it was a good read, and I can see how faculty members, staff, and administrators could use it to benefit their institutions, their student bodies, and their surrounding communities.

Erin E. Davis
Academic Advisor, University College
Indiana **University-Purdue University**,
Indianapolis

Gibbs, George. (2000). *Campus Daze: Easing the Transition from High School to College*. Octameron Associates. 64 pp., \$6.00. ISBN 1-57509-062-7.

The highs and lows of a **freshman's** experience of going to college are nicely packaged in this slim volume. The prospective, traditional-aged student will discover that feeling **nervous**, excited, confused, and apprehensive, **regardless** of one's background, are normal responses **to** the **transition** experience. Facts, tips, anecdotes, and case **studies** cover a range of issues that all freshmen face during that crucial first year of college. A short section addresses the parents of these **freshmen**, with sound advice on being a good listener and not **getting** too involved in the crises that **may** arise.

In a lighthearted manner, the **author** tells **freshmen** that homesickness is normal, that one of **the** most difficult **tasks** of college is managing time, and that college provides an opportunity to grow and learn. Tips are provided on how **to** **succeed** academically. Adjusting to one's **roommate**, deciding whether to get a job and how **to** handle money, and evaluating one's personal **values** are discussed. The factors needed for success in college are clearly defined. Reflections on the freshman year by older students provide some interesting insights.

This book **may** be useful to **those** involved in **orientation** programs for new students or teachers of orientation classes. All advisors **need** to remember how it feels to face a new **environment**. My son, a high school junior, read this book in two days and felt more excited about the **prospect** of going to **college** than he had before reading it.

Written for a **limited** audience of **18-year-old** students with two parents, it does not **try** to address the diverse population **at** a typical campus today, such as **adult students** or those at risk for attrition. Readers looking for in-depth topics need to look elsewhere. However, it provides easy reading for prospective and brand-new freshmen as well as their **parents**. Tidbits of wisdom are inserted here **and** there that may reach a young person better than a parent's **attempt** to advise.

Mary Haynes
Allied Health Advising
University of South Alabama, Mobile

Guernsey, Lisa. (2000). *College.Edu: On-line Resources For The Cyber-Savvy Student*. Octameron Associates. 143 pp., \$9.00. ISBN 1-57509-061-9.

Searching on-line can be overwhelming with the **myriad** of sites one encounters. *College.Edu* is a clear and concise text that simplifies the on-line search by providing a brief analysis describing the usefulness of each of the on-line resources it lists. However, the title of book is somewhat misleading; a better title would be *CollegeSearch.Edu: On-line Resources for the College Bound Individual* as the book is geared to those who are searching for and applying to colleges or universities.

The reader need not be cyber-savvy because the author thoughtfully begins by providing basic **information**, such as how to get connected to the Internet. The appendix entitled **FAQs** for Internet Newbies demystifies terminology such as HTML, URL, browsers, and hypertext (p. 105). Therefore, *College.Edu* is useful for high school students, their parents, and adults who are considering acquiring a postsecondary degree as well as high school guidance counselors and college or university admissions and financial aid counselors.

College.Edu is organized methodically, beginning with the college search via search engines, large on-line databases, and regional Web sites. The author recommends various methods of obtaining information about colleges and universities, such as Web sites with college **rankings**, local and college newspapers, and college or university Web sites. Chapters list a variety of Web sites that take students through SAT or ACT preparation, the application process (including essay writing) to postsecondary institutions, the often frustrating search for financial assistance, and college life.

Although the author refers to a few sites for **African** Americans and Native Americans, the text could be more inclusive of minority students. For example, in the chapters Searching On-line Databases and Beyond Uncle **Sam**, the author could have provided sites for **Hispanic/Latino**, **Asian/Pacific** American, **Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender**, and **Disabled** students (pp. 16–25, 79–90). In addition, first-generation college students might find helpful a list of civic or cultural organizations as well as information about colleges and universities that provide mentoring to college **students**.

Overall, *College.Edu* is a **very practical** book that provides an extensive list of on-line resources. Please note that the version of the book that has been evaluated is 4.0, and according to the publishing company, it is updated every September.

Jennifer Garcia
Academic Advisor, College of Arts and
Humanities
University of Maryland, College Park

Kames, Frances A. and Stephens, Kristen R. (2002.) *Young Women of Achievement: A Resource for Girls in Science, Math, and Technology*. Prometheus Books. 279 pp., \$21.00. ISBN 1-57392-965-4

By far the best feature of *Young Women of Achievement* is the nearly 100 pages of **personal** stories depicting young women who are **excelling** in their respective math and science education programs. Most of the women profiled are in high school, but a few graduate and undergraduate students are included, indicating that **this** book is targeted to females in that sensitive 6th- through 8th-grade age group. Through the collection of stories, the reader learns how to become involved in various programs and what to expect from them: "Now that I have the opportunity to work with the **expensive equipment**, I know exactly why they did not let me use it at first" (p. 38).

I cannot praise this collection enough for its down-to-earth presentations detailing personal **obstacles**, **expectations**, and **achievements**. The stories are full of ideas the young reader can use to seek

out similar opportunities. However, it should be noted limited ethnic and disciplinary diversity is represented in the text.

Unfortunately the accompanying sections, those written by the authors, are not nearly as appropriate for young girls as are the stories. Phrases discussing mentors, who "should be patient, especially when working with young children" (p. 28) make the introduction read much more like a parents' resource than the "upbeat" book publicized on the back cover.

The book includes a list of quotes of the "never give up" variety from women of all ages and a journal in which readers can record **accomplishments**, identify role models, and conduct limited self-evaluation. The **timeline** of women's achievements, book list, Web sites, and contact information for selected programs could prove to be a useful reference for young girls and adults alike.

The soft cover and black-and-white printing keep costs reasonable, making this an inexpensive textbook candidate for a university-run summer program targeted to girls in the 6th through 8th grade. However, the stories are the book's greatest resource, and I believe they will start young readers "on the path toward realizing career dreams" as advertised on the back cover. For this reason, I suggest it to advisors as a parting souvenir for a summer program.

Maura Jenkins
Stanford University

Book Reviews

Schuh, John, H., Upcraft, M. Lee, and Associates. (2000). *Assessment Practice in Student Affairs: An Applications Manual*. Jossey-Bass. 510 pp., \$32.95. ISBN 0-7879-5053-X.

Why assessment in student affairs? If conducted properly, assessment is the best way to ensure commitment to high-quality student services, programs, and facilities. Assessment projects can potentially change the atmosphere of a college and therefore need to be conducted with great care and thoroughness. As Rayman (1999) stated, "We have entered an era of accountability never before experienced in higher education. If we wish to survive this era, we will need to do a better job of advocacy and we will also have to become more efficient and innovative in our use of existing resources."

Covering numerous principles, purposes, and methods of assessment, the authors stress that researchers should carefully analyze the specific needs and purposes of the study and choose the data collection method that best suits each particular study. Readers are also reminded that the more traditionally respected means of assessment (quantitative surveys) are not necessarily the best. Qualitative studies, used alone or with quantitative methods, may better serve the purposes of a study.

Accreditation seems to be moving toward quality improvement. Routine assessments showing the contributions of student affairs units to student learning and growth are essential in meeting accreditation requirements. Once data is gathered and evaluated steps should be taken to ensure the best programs, services, and facilities possible are available for student use. Many reports turn into blueprints for action and improvement.

The authors present and discuss case studies pertaining to almost all areas of student services as well as the university as a whole. In the final section of the book the authors state, "Assessment is no longer a luxury but a necessity, and getting started on the right foot is essential." They then proceed to do a fantastic job laying out a template for an overall assessment plan.

Methods of assessment are important for academic advisors because the results of assessments affect students' experiences, development, and entire college success. As personnel at The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education stated (1973, p. 18), "The hope is to design and fit environments to people so they can achieve their great-

est potential." Improving student experiences should be the top priority for all of higher education, including academic advisors.

References

Rayman, J. R. (1999). Career service imperatives for the next millennium. *Career Development Quarterly*, 48, 175-84.

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. (1973). *The ecosystem model: Designing campus environments*. Boulder, CO: Author

Jennifer Timmons

College of Business & Technology
Western Illinois University, Quad Cities