

Spring 1999

## Focus- Spring 1999

Newsletter Staff

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## Student Affairs/ Public Affairs

A Northeastern Illinois  
University Publication

Spring '99

# Student Affairs/Public Affairs: Expanded Mission

By

**Melvin C. Terrell,**  
Vice President for Student  
Affairs/Public Affairs  
and Professor of  
Counselor Education

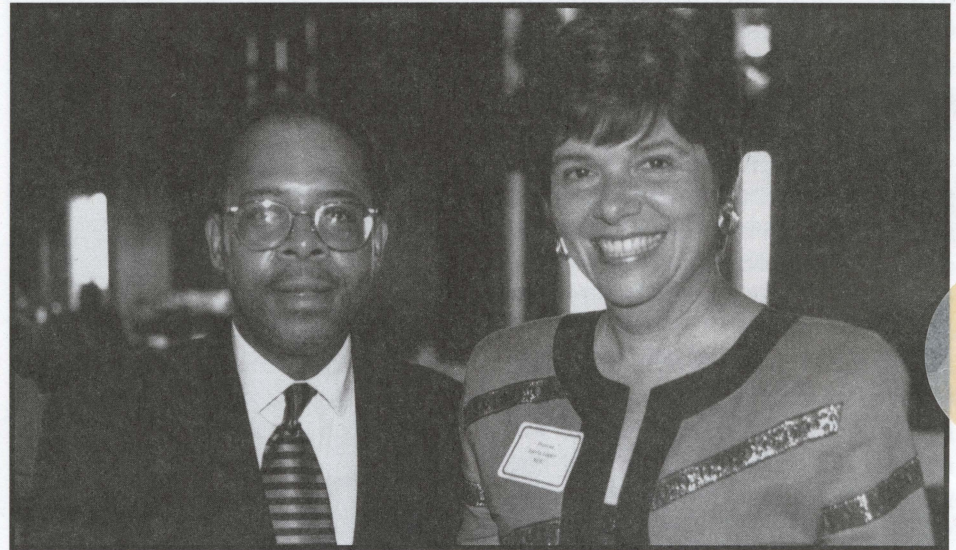
Student-Centered University:

*"The student is to be the primary beneficiary of all decisions made by the university."*

Several dramatic and profound changes in the Office of Student Affairs during this past academic year has positively impacted the quality and quantity of critical services to students and the greater campus community. Among these changes has been an orderly transition from Athletics and the incorporation of University Relations, Community Affairs and Publications, Public Safety, and University Events, into the new Student Affairs/Public Affairs Office.

Strengthening our collaboration with academic affairs, streamlining our decision-making processes and emphasizing student support programs were the basic objectives of these structural changes. In authorizing this expanded student affairs/public affairs mission, President Steinberg challenged us to build a campus ecology in which "student-centeredness" is the preeminent factor in our decision-making processes. In this context, five approaches that indicate student-centeredness are as follows:

1. *looking at the university from the standpoint of the student experience*



*Melvin C. Terrell, Vice President for Student Affairs/Public Affairs, and Estela López, Provost  
(Story on page 2.)*

2. *acknowledging the importance of the out-of-the-classroom as well as classroom learning*
3. *examining our attitudes toward students who are experiencing difficulty*
4. *evaluating our approaches to delivery of services*
5. *supporting in every way each student's goal toward successful matriculation*

These approaches refer to the kind of environment in which learning takes place, the quality of that learning experience, the quality of the services, and how we react to students. Student-centeredness also presupposes the importance of personal growth of our students and the value of the out-of-the-classroom learning

component as a complement to the academic mission. Of necessity, student affairs/public affairs staff, who frequently interact with students, should view their role as mentor, teacher, advisor, and counselor. In this way, we provide students with some basic tools in which to cope with the campus environment and with the rigors of academic inquiry.

Fostering a campus community conducive to excellence and the pursuit of academic achievement requires our working in close partnership with faculty and academic affairs. The 1998 Joint Taskforce on Student Learning concluded that by our working collaboratively, we "deepen student learning," that "we have a responsibility to model for students how to work together on behalf of our shared mission and to learn from each other."



# Student Affairs/Public Affairs and Academic Affairs - Fall Meetings

by Susan Namest,  
Director, University Relations

Senior staff members of the newly expanded Office of Student Affairs/Public Affairs (SA/PA) met together for their first retreat on October 27, 1998. The group gathered to focus on the topic "Humanizing the Process: How to Make Northeastern a More Student Centered University." SA/PA Vice President, Melvin C. Terrell, opened the half-day retreat with an address on the meaning of the student-centered university and the role of the Office of Student Affairs/Public Affairs as a significant provider of services to students, and an integral part of the academic mission of the university.

Following Dr. Terrell's remarks, Alyce Claerbaut, acting assistant to Vice President Terrell, described the format for the morning's activities. The retreat planning committee had devised a proactive meeting in which discussion and reflection would lead to practical outcomes. This was not

to be a sit-back-and-listen retreat, but a morning for all of us to "own solutions" to problems we uncovered in our discussions.

The staff was grouped into two teams, each team taking a distinct approach to creating the student-centered university. One team addressed the issue of "Student as Customer," while the other explored the matter of "A Community of Learners." After the two teams completed their discovery of the definitions of their respective top-

***The "customer" team arrived at a statement that says, in part, that to effectively serve the student/customer, staff must be "knowledgeable, skillful in communication, courteous, respectful, and able to respond in a timely manner to student/customer inquiries."***

ics, and discussed the development of statements describing the implications for Northeastern Illinois, the participants joined together as one group to share insights.

The "customer" team talked about the service and attitude implications of approaching our students as customers. The "community" team spoke of the variety of communities that constitute our student population. The "customer" team arrived at a statement that says, in part, that to effectively serve the student/customer, staff must be "knowledgeable, skillful in communication, courteous, respectful, and able to respond in a timely manner to student/customer inquiries." The "community" team

stated, in part, that "We are justifiably proud of our diversity of student and staff populations but we see that we need to do a better job of facilitating intergroup communication."

After a general presentation and full-group discussion, the staff returned to their teams to brainstorm practical solutions to the problems and concerns that emerged from the earlier sessions. Among the many constructive solutions that emerged were: setting up customer-service training/support for university telephone operators; establishing a shuttle service between campus sites and the CTA elevated train station; instituting consistent evening and weekend hours for offices that provide direct service to students; coordinating class schedules between all campus sites; improving signage throughout the interior and exterior of campus buildings; and identifying and upgrading places where students congregate.

As the retreat concluded, the staff committed themselves to specific actions that would help create and enhance a student-centered university at Northeastern Illinois. Even during a sumptuous lunch that followed, the discussion never strayed far from the morning's theme.

*The discussion continues...*

The focus and the success of the October retreat was to be echoed on November 12 at the first joint meeting of senior staff from the offices of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs/Public Affairs. Provost Estela López opened the half-day meeting with a presentation on the meaning of dialogue and team learning. Referring to the Greek etymology of the word dialogue, "through the word," Dr. López encouraged the participants to develop their thinking as a group,

*continued on page 5...*





# The CAS Standards and Guidelines

By Walt Sommers,  
Director, Student Activities

A group comprised of faculty, administrators, and a student met throughout the fall semester to conduct an institutional self-study of the Freshman Orientation Program using the CAS Standards and Guidelines. The coordinator of the Freshman Orientation Program, Barbara Bales, served as the resource person and consultant to the committee. The committee reviewed 11 areas of the CAS Self-Assessment Guide and found that the Freshman Orientation Program was in most significant respects either in compliance or functioning adequately within the framework of the standards.

The Freshman Orientation Program is the third department/program of Student Affairs/Public Affairs to have been through the CAS Standards and Guidelines assessment process in the last two years. Previously, the Student Activities Office and the Judicial Affairs program each conducted an institutional self-study. Each department/program was found to be substantially in compliance with the CAS Standards and Guidelines although there were areas found not in compliance with the majority of the CAS assessment criteria and standards. In each case where there was non-compliance with the CAS assessment, criteria and standards follow-up action plans were developed to move the department/program toward compliance.

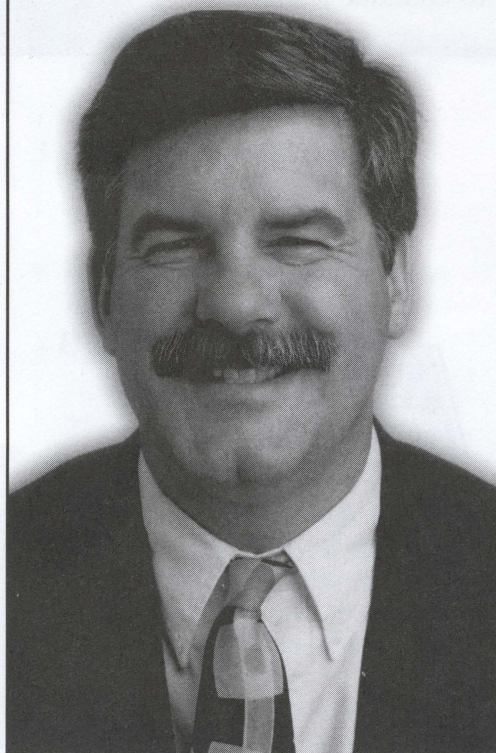
What is CAS, what are the standards and guidelines, and why does it matter to Northeastern Illinois University? The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) was established nearly two decades ago to develop and promulgate standards of professional

practice to guide practitioners and their institutions, especially in their work with college students.

Some fundamental principles of the CAS Mission follow:

- to establish, adopt, and disseminate unified and timely professional standards for student services, student development programs, academic support services, and related higher education programs and services,
- to promote the assessment and improvement of higher education services and programs through self-study, evaluation, and the use of CAS standards,
- to advance the use and importance of standards among professional practitioners and educators in higher education.

The CAS Standards and Guidelines were established for institutions in 23 functional areas of student support



services programs to use for program development, program self-study, and staff development purposes. It matters to Northeastern Illinois University because when an institution of higher education provides its students with programs and services that meet or exceed the CAS criteria, the institution can be considered to have implemented an environment conducive to the education and personal development of its students, both individually and collectively. In addition, it matters to the office of the departments of the Office of Student Affairs/Public Affairs because CAS standards are useful as an advocacy tool to help broaden institutional leaders' understanding of the necessity for comprehensive programming in student services, student development programs, academic support services, and related higher education programs and services.

The Office Student Affairs/Public Affairs is committed to continually improving its services to students through using the CAS Standards and Guidelines for conducting comprehensive program reviews. As stated in the mission of the Office of Student Affairs/Public Affairs, our goals are:

- to continually improve the quality of services provided to our students advocate for student needs,
- to facilitate the intellectual, physical, ethical, and social development of students, and
- to help students make successful transitions to, through, and beyond the university environment.

The CAS Standards and Guidelines is an important and practical tool to use to accomplish these vital tasks.



# Counseling Office Expands Training Programs

By John Hoeppel,  
Director, Counseling Office

The Counseling Office has been expanding its use of interns and practicum students over the past several years and is planning more for the future. Who are interns and what do they do? Students in doctoral and masters degree programs in fields like psychology or counseling routinely complete their professional training by working in clinical settings under the supervision of practicing psychologists and counselors. In Northeastern's Counseling Office, they provide individual, couple, and group counseling to members of the university community. Their services are closely supervised and monitored to ensure that our clients receive the best possible care. In this way, interns complete their professional education while the university benefits by the addition of their services to students and staff. Students completing doctoral degrees in psychology complete at least two 700 hour practicum experiences learning assessment and psychotherapy skills before serving a year-long 2,000 hour internship placement. Students in masters degree programs in counseling finish their training by completing a 700 hour part-time placement.

The contributions of interns have been a vital part of our counseling efforts. Although the Counseling Office has trained part-time masters level practicum students for years, our participation in doctoral internship training did not begin until August of 1994, when two full-time interns joined our staff. Since 1994, we have recruited two doctoral interns each year from Chicago-area professional psychology programs, along with masters-level students in

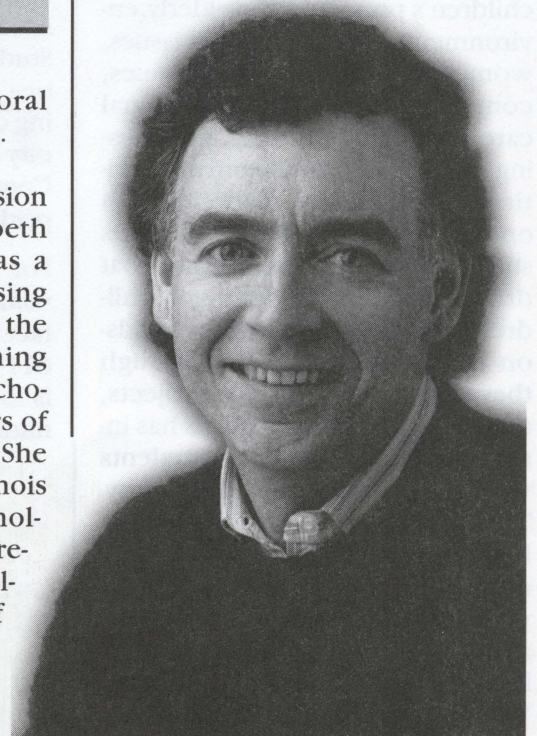
counseling from local counselor education programs, including Northeastern's own. Our current interns are Chris Migalski and Virginia Quiñonez, both completing doctoral training from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology, with Marcy Hochberg, completing her master's internship from Northeastern's own Counselor Education program. Dr. Mei Chen, on the faculty in the Counselor Education Department, is also providing counseling services part-

*The contributions of interns have been a vital part of our counseling efforts for years... since 1994, we have recruited two doctoral interns each year from Chicago-area professional psychology programs.*

time, completing post-doctoral hours necessary for licensure.

As a central part of this expansion of training efforts, Dr. Elizabeth Pullen has joined our staff as a clinical coordinator, supervising our interns, acting as liaison to the Chicago area's clinical training programs, and providing psychological counseling to members of the Northeastern community. She earned her Psy.D. from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology-Chicago. Dr. Pullen had previously worked at the Counseling Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago and completed her internship here at Northeastern.

Where does our training program go from here? The Counseling Office is currently exploring the process of seeking accreditation of its clinical training program by the American Psychological Association (APA). APA accreditation for training programs is quickly becoming an important "selling" point as we market our internship positions to prospective candidates. The accreditation process is a multi-year endeavor beginning with a self-study and culminating with a site visit. In order to meet the accreditation requirements, the Counseling Office plans on working to add a third doctoral intern, hopefully in September of 2000, along with various other program improvements.





# Student Volunteer Corps

By Santos Rivera,  
Acting Dean of Students

*"People don't care how much you know unless they know how much you care." - J. Humes*

The mission of the Student Volunteer Corps, Office of the Dean of Students, is to heighten the awareness of Northeastern Illinois University students about social issues and foster a commitment to ongoing community service and, through it, collaboratively share the responsibility for student learning and development.

Since 1991, the Student Volunteer Corps, has drawn on a strong Northeastern tradition of providing its students an ongoing opportunity to participate in on-campus and off-campus community service activities. Through an available database of more than 140 registered agencies seeking volunteers, students from every major are widely engaged in meaningful and rewarding service experiences. Student involvement in volunteer service has included working with the disabled, children's programs, the elderly, environment and conservation issues, women's programs and services, community development, animal care, mentoring, tutoring, and housing initiatives. Some volunteer activities have matched students with one-day, hands-on service projects such as "Make a Difference Day," coat drives, toy collection for needy children, food drives, and other hands-on community projects. Through these community service projects, the Student Volunteer Corps has integrated the interest of the students with the needs of the community. This connective initiative has helped address significant community and university issues. Working with such professional associations as the Metro Chicago Volunteer Coalition, Hispanics in Philanthropy, the Volunteer Network, the Points of

Light Foundation, the Association of Volunteer Administrators - Metro Chicago, United Way of Chicago, and other state and local initiatives, the Student Volunteer Corps has identified experiences for students to give time and effort to the needs of the larger society.

Displaying a commitment to the effective use of volunteers in meaningful and rewarding capacities, the Student Volunteer Corps has helped students explore new learning opportunities. The volunteer experience has engaged students in activities that have afforded them the chance to identify community needs, learn problem solving, develop leadership skills and cross-cultural communication abilities. Through practical experience, students strengthen their education and the university achieves its mission.

One of the goals of Northeastern's Student Volunteer Corps is to raise the awareness of the importance of community service by linking students to volunteer opportunities. Working with on-campus units like America Reads, Campus Ministries, Student Government, Student Activities, and an advisory board consisting of students, faculty, and community residents, the Student Volunteer Corps is committed to infusing civic pride with a new vitality.

For further information regarding volunteer opportunities, please contact Christina Prieto-Val at 773/794-6115. The Student Volunteer Corps is located in room C-315, Sachs Administration Building.

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## Student Affairs/ Public Affairs and Academic Affairs - Fall Meetings

and as a team, to produce ideas for innovative and coordinated action to create a more enhanced student/learner-centered university. Dr. Terrell added his support for a collaborative approach and stated that good practice in Student Affairs forges educational partnerships that in turn develop student-centeredness and reinforce life-long learning.

The staff was grouped into six teams organized around university units: enrollment management, learning management (and assessment), human resources, facilities management, student services, and information technology. Each team addressed four objectives, which mirrored and built on those of the SA/PA retreat: 1) to share operational definitions of student/learner-centered; 2) to identify common goals in six specific areas to collaboratively create and support a learner-centered environment; 3) to begin to define how we can work together to accomplish these shared goals; and 4) to begin to identify how we will measure success in terms of our shared goals.

As a whole the participants agreed upon a number of points, including: the university needs to first determine who it wants to serve; student-centeredness means efficiency in providing access to the curricula and student services; the external community must be brought into the process; and, to measure success, goals and objectives must first be set and progress must be checked regularly. As the teams reported on the results of their discussions, it became clear that the October and November meetings were only the beginning of a growth process toward creating a more student-centered university.



# Judi Puschmann

A sense of humor and the desire to do the right thing describes Judi Puschmann. Judi, the office manager of Student Activities, has worked at Northeastern 18 years. She began in University Events in 1981 and then in 1982 moved to Student Activities.

Judi said "My work at Northeastern has been an opportunity for me to assist students in developing their skills in management, planning and understanding fiscal and budget processes and responsibilities."

Over the years, Judi reports that the maturity level of students has increased along with the average age of students. "As a trouble-shooter and problem-solver, I provided a liaison between student leaders and the business offices. There is a greater sense of cooperation and collaboration with today's students as opposed to the early 80's," Judi concluded.

For Judi work has always been more than a place to earn a paycheck. She has served on a variety of work related committees, councils and task forces including Civil Service Council, Employee of the Month Committee, and a few search committees.

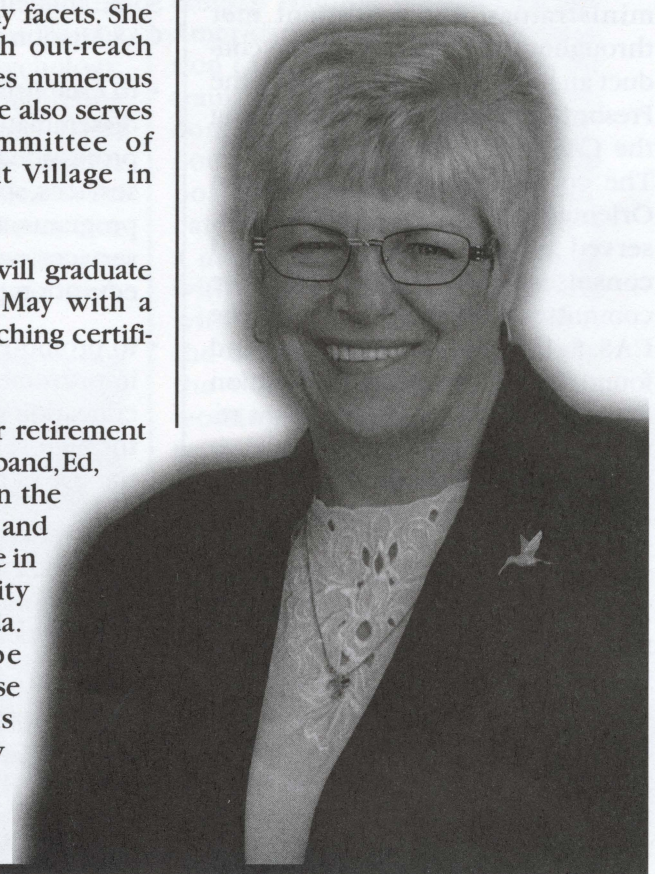
Judi was born at Swedish Covenant Hospital to Danish immigrant parents. Her family relocated to Florida when she was a young girl. After graduating high school in Florida and business college in California she returned to Chicago.

Judi is a woman of many facets. She is active in her church out-reach program which provides numerous community services. She also serves on an Outreach Committee of Friendship Retirement Village in Schaumburg.

Her daughter, Melissa, will graduate from Northeastern in May with a master's degree and teaching certificate.

Judi has announced her retirement this Fall. She and her husband, Ed, are selling their home in the O'Hare area of Chicago and are building a new home in a retirement community near Clearwater, Florida. She and Ed won't be lonely in Florida because many of their friends from Chicago are already in the area. She intends to continue her volun-

teer activities with the elderly, take up golf and really get into all those arts and crafts projects that she says she has been putting off completing. Time permitting, she also intends to pursue part time work at a local college in Tampa or Clearwater.



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