

they suggest, it is necessary that a poor decision be made because of public opinion, well established policy, or other factor specific only to the situation in question. For these types of poor decision, Levy and Kozoll provide sound rationale which justifies the making of a poor decision almost making it a good one. This is a valuable thing for new student affairs personnel to learn. All problems are not simple; all solutions are not ideal.

Student services personnel often deal in a realm fraught with emotion. Students appear with severe financial difficulty; academic insufficiencies; social fiascos. It is difficult not to ignore the rules and rush to the aid of the student in order to alleviate his/her pain. The situation is not much different in situations where the student services professional deals with personnel problems in the office. These, too, have an emotional component. A student services employee serious about putting fairness over compassion and who reads this book with a view to making better decisions will find a template which encourages professionalism in all matters, the weighing of potential long-term consequences of any decision, why too much haste can be dangerous, when and when not to use the past as a guide, the merits of conflict, and how to remain true to oneself when making decisions which touch on personal standards of ethics and professional conduct (p. 140).

A Guide to Decision Making in Student Affairs is a comprehensive and well organized learning tool for either established or would-be student affairs personnel. The language is succinct and lacks any hint of patronization as the lessons are systematically put forth. In closing, I found Levy and Kozoll's book to be clear, concise, well-informed and well-written with a view to the necessary human side of student affairs.



Diana G. Oblinger & Sean C. Rush (Eds). (1997). *The Future Compatible Campus: Planning, Designing, and Implementing Information Technology in the Academy*. Jaffrey, NH: Anker Publishing Company, Inc. Pp. 304. Price: \$34.95 US (hardcover).

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For colleges and universities, this book could be characterized as an appropriate response to the wish expressed by Robert Burns in lines written

more than two hundred years ago: paraphrased in modern English, the poet observed that if only 'some power could give us the gift to see ourselves as others see us, it would from many a blunder and foolish notion free us' (Oxford, 1992, p. 163). The consulting organization of IBM provides the gift in the current context, and the seers are nineteen systems analysts, project planners, information officers and implementation experts. Together they have shared their experience with two senior IBM Global Education Industry managers to produce a timely perspective on the technological challenges presently facing higher education.

As might be expected from people paid to generate such solutions, the transformative power of information technology serves as the unifying theme of their writing. The contributors also believe that without information technology compatible strategies, many of our campuses face a problematic, even doubtful, future. To be accepted, unchallenged, this conclusion would require their evidence — increasing competition, rising consumer consciousness, internationalization, inefficiency of operational processes, limited flexibility, declining public investment, constantly rising expenditures and substantial increases in tuition, among others — to appear less like a generic shopping list inviting consultant intervention. Nor should the array of suggested remedies resemble such a similarly self-interested package of all the currently fashionable management bandwagons, ranging from benchmarking to total quality management, continuous quality improvement to process re-engineering, customer satisfaction focus campaigns and measurement systems. These negative first impressions of superficial justification and jargon are compounded by the inadequacy of initial examples, which provide only hypothetical applications to teaching, and passing mention of the curriculum, student learning and the use of faculty time, before turning to such operational elements of the campus environment as purchase orders and registration procedures.

Understandably, in any collection of articles the significance and contribution of constituent components can be uneven. Opening chapters in *The Future Compatible Campus* devoted to general strategies for investing in, planning and implementing information technology appear more conducive to presenting management theory than to providing specific cases of success. This does not, however, preclude a practical perspective nor worthwhile, context sensitive advice. Proposed network investment, for example, recognizes added value, but also added cost.

High enrollment problem areas, in programs open to a leadership role in attacking unresolved curriculum issues, are recommended as targets to capitalize on new information technology infrastructure and computer networks. Identifying leadership, funding, communications and expectation management as critical factors, successful implementation is also attributed to synchronization of planning with institutional purpose. In such a framework, each element of the information technology implementation plan must be aligned to support a particular institutional intent, reflecting a mission statement and goals. Further discussing the importance of consensus building, executive support, project management skills, and the utility of external facilitators, a planning template is suggested as a model to develop a business case.

The examples in the text which most concretely illustrate the enabling potential of direct access to integrated information systems, independent of time and place, are those with a student focus. The realization of greater effectiveness, efficiency and cost savings is confirmed in an excellent account of how new technology was combined with a reorganization of student services into cross-functional teams to simplify and integrate the previously separate operations of recruitment, admissions, student advising, and financial support. Another chapter describes the innovation of student mobile computing, where every student acquires a laptop computer, demonstrating how universal access changes not only the technical infrastructure, but also what is taught and how, modifying student and faculty behaviour in the process. Citing such advantages as better communication between students and with professors, connectivity to remote information sources, universal computer literacy and equity of technological access, promotion of student-centred and discovery learning, and enhanced relevance, assessments by institutions that have adopted the approach also confirm higher enrollment, improved retention of students, and overwhelming acceptance as recorded in positive responses on student and faculty surveys. Recommendations regarding implementation, infrastructure, project management and funding are continued in a further chapter documenting the case of the Wake Forest University universal mobile computing initiative. Although the presentation of the Wake Forest plan by its prime advocate is interesting, the project has received considerable publicity elsewhere (cf. Young, 1997). This also applies to what is offered in a chapter on the digital library, which is surpassed by almost any issue of *College & Research Libraries* (e.g., Heckart, 1998).

The chapters on collaborative learning, instructional technology, and the faculty perspective are significantly better. Although hardware, communications and software requirements receive some mention, the major focus is on ways to promote collaborative learning using information technology in association with classroom teaching, through completely asynchronous course delivery, or in conjunction with video distance education. Recognizing that the promised revolution in teaching and learning has been slow to meet expectations, discussion employs diffusion theory to explain the significant delay that has occurred between the availability of instructional technology developments and any meaningful impact. To encourage widespread adoption, it is argued that functioning, quality-focused, discipline-based examples of success are essential. These must incorporate the persuasive power of clear added value, addressing real educational problems, involving a significant number of students. Appropriate infrastructure support, including technical personnel and equipment, is critical in this regard.

The book devotes three chapters specifically to the presentation of relevant physical requirements, including network infrastructure, client/server technology and classroom design. Advocating upward scalability to accommodate growth and future technologies, the authors also stress the importance of a formal technology development plan to be revised annually, but to remain under continuous review. Although rather general in nature, given a context of constant change, design considerations for both network and classroom configurations favour practical decisions based on clear definitions of purpose that transcend simplistic equipment specifications. The best coverage of potential pitfalls occurs in the presentation of client/server technology. Based on a model applied in five universities, the technology is seen as a catalyst to facilitate change in a distributed environment. The potential for successful implementation is interpreted as a relationship between technical complexity and organizational preparedness to assume the project.

The Future Compatible Campus concludes with an essay on project management and a formal commentary on performance measures. To some extent, the information presented recapitulates more distinctly many of the management and measurement recommendations mentioned in earlier chapters. Nevertheless, an appreciation of the complexity of change in the college and university environment and a preference for a balanced holistic approach are clearly communicated through further examples, related best practices and the advantages of benchmarking.

In summary, notwithstanding a rather hesitant beginning, *The Future Compatible Campus* deserves to be near at hand to any generalist implicated in the implementation of innovative information technology. Perhaps not so much to be read from cover to cover as to serve as a convenient reference and overview of relevant issues, the well-structured organization of the book, its clear chapter summaries and an index facilitate consultation as required. Although somewhat repetitive, given the number of contributing advisors, the direction and encouragement provided should indeed permit us to avoid a few 'blunders and foolish notions' if we choose to be guided. Those who ignore such counsel, however, are not likely to find their mistakes published as examples elsewhere any more than any are in this book. The opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others is reserved by consultants for paying clients, and a characteristic limitation of the literature of technological innovation is that it rarely takes the time to reflect on failure.

References

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Recension de *L'université au féminin*, sous la direction d'Anne Holden Ronning et de Mary-Louise Kearny. (1997). Traduit de l'anglais par Irène Michine. Paris, UNESCO. Pp. 336. Price: FF150.

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L'université au féminin est un ouvrage collectif qui réunit des contributions de quinze auteures d'autant de pays différents, précédées d'un avant-propos que signe Attiya Inayatullah, alors présidente en titre du Conseil de direction de l'UNESCO.

Le premier chapitre s'intitule «Pour une nouvelle société» (pp. 9-50), un titre ambitieux. Cette contribution fait office d'introduction. Elle est