

Student Leadership Development: The SPU Ministries Model

Leadership Models

Student leadership and advising roles at SPU differ among organizations (ASSP government, clubs, the John Perkins Center and University Ministries and Center for Worship). ASSP's *Student Organization Resource Manual* (2004) outlines the role of Club Advisors, indicating that advisor/advisee responsibilities should be discussed at the outset of the relationship and that these relationships should approximate the needs, goals and contributions of advisor and advisee (37-38). In practice, club advising tends to be hands-off, with student leaders taking primary responsibility for program activities, planning and implementation while advisors sign off on plans and lend an occasional suggestion. The University of Arizona "Clubs and Organizations" webpage describes the role of an advisor in terms similar to the SPU model; advisors are primarily responsible for overseeing clubs' adherence to safety issues and school policy and are not expected to be deeply involved in the direct operations of the organization.

The student leadership model presented in this document differs from the above-described programs in that it focuses on students' development as leaders, providing avenues for student contribution toward larger programmatic goals and allowing students the chance to grow in leadership and knowledge in a supported environment. Rather than tasking students with the year-to-year success or failure of program and vision, this model allows students and staff to work collaboratively toward ongoing successes, building on strengths and working toward clearly-defined shared goals.

Promoting Collaboration and Reconciliation

Program advisors/mentors and student leaders must work collaboratively toward a shared vision in order for programs to achieve their greatest potential. Utilizing themes from the work of Dr. John Perkins, mentors must build connections with student leaders, investing time and personal energy in relationships, building credibility that leads to leadership in areas of program philosophy, best-practice models and long-range planning. Strong connections in which mentor and student leader are relational equals are key to collaborative work and shared vision.

A Developmental Process

Leadership builds on a developmental model. Beginning with the assets and needs of the individual student leader, mentors help students develop in the following four areas:

- Competence
 - Ministry-specific knowledge, program best-practices, sustainability and long-term vision
- Character
 - Group motivation and direction, interaction with other leaders, supporting student development
- Conviction
 - Holistic, Christ-centered approach to leadership, cultural and ministry issues
- Calling
 - Response to God through service, vocational decisions, life direction.

Program advisors shepherd, provide resources for and encourage student leaders in these areas. Because this role is relational and hands-on and encompasses more of life than only the task at hand, the term "mentor" is preferred over "advisor" or "coach."

Student leaders' area of responsibility will be shaped by their strengths and provide opportunities for growth. Therefore, each student leader's role and responsibilities will be unique and developed collaboratively by the student/mentor pair.

Mentor/Student Leader Roles

Because program mentors represent Seattle Pacific in areas of administrative goals, student safety and program outcomes, some non-negotiable elements create boundaries for program participants and student leaders. Non-negotiable boundary areas may include:

- Ministry focus and desired outcomes
- Best-practice models of engagement
- Sustainability and stewardship of resources
- Consideration of safety for participants and impact on involved parties

Because these areas may not be open for change by incumbent student leaders, mentors and student leaders should clearly identify these areas and others that invite student leaders' input. Carucci (2006) encourages administrators to clearly identify non-negotiable areas and spaces for participant input in order to avoid misunderstandings and frustration (86-87).

Mentors take responsibility in times of transition and provide parameters for scheduling and planning of events that will impact the rest of campus. Because student leadership begins in Spring Quarter but takes real effect in Fall, mentors may take responsibility for master calendar scheduling of important events that require advance planning. Such information management alleviates stress on the part of others affected by programs, paves the way for student leadership success, and provides year-to-year continuity for program partnerships and objectives.

Student leaders are key in connecting programs to constituent groups. As valued partners in the implementation of program vision, student leaders generate innovative methods of sharing program vision and opportunities with the Seattle Pacific community. In collaboration with program mentors, student leaders assess the effectiveness of existing programs, prompt discussion of new endeavors and help refine programs to improve outcomes.

The format and content of leadership development must be agreed up by mentor and student leader early in the relationship. Stanley and Clinton (1992) identify eight types of mentoring relationships (see Page 3); depending on mentor/students' goals, needs and abilities the mentoring relationship may be structured to reflect one or more of these models.

Intentional work is needed to drive leadership development deeper into the fabric of student leadership on campus; currently intentional leadership development occurs between staff mentors and top-level student leaders but has not been carried to other levels of student involvement (core team leaders, volunteers, etc.). Mentors and student leaders collaboratively develop methods to train and encourage constituent groups, utilizing the methods and objectives described above.

Resources

Associated Students of Seattle Pacific (2004). *Seattle Pacific University student organization resource manual*.

Carucci, R. (2006). *Leadership divided: What emerging leaders need and what you might be missing*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Stanley, P.D., & Clinton, J.R. (1992). *Connecting: The mentoring relationships you need to succeed in life*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

Perkins, J. (1993). *Beyond charity: The call to Christian community development*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

University of Arizona. *Clubs and organizations*. Reviewed 15 June, 2007.
<http://www.union.arizona.edu/csil/clubs/advisors/roles.php>

Stanley & Clinton Mentor Role Description

Major Thrusts of Mentoring Types (pg. 42)

Intensive

1. Discippler Enablement in basics of following Christ.
2. Spiritual Guide Accountability, direction and insight for questions, commitments, and decisions affecting spirituality and maturity.
3. Coach Motivation, skills and application needed to meet a task or challenge.

Occasional

4. Counselor Timely advice and correct perspectives on viewing self, others, circumstances and ministry.
5. Teacher Knowledge and understanding of a particular subject.
6. Sponsor Career guidance and protection as leader moves within an organization.

Passive

7. Contemporary Model A living, personal model for life, ministry or profession who is not only an example but also inspires emulation.
8. Historical Model A past life that teaches dynamic principles and values for life, ministry and/or profession.

Characteristics of Successful Mentors: (pg. 38)

- Ability to readily see potential in a person.
- Tolerance with mistakes, brashness, abrasiveness, and the like in order to see that potential develop.
- Flexibility in responding to people and circumstances.
- Patience, knowing that time and experience are needed for development.
- Perspective, having vision and ability to see down the road and suggest the next steps that a mentoree needs.
- Gifts and abilities that build up and encourage others.

Ways Mentors Help Mentorees: (pg. 39-40)

1. Mentors give to mentorees:
 - Timely advice
 - Letters, articles, books or other literary information that offers perspective
 - Finances
 - Freedom to emerge as a leader even beyond the level of the mentor.
2. Mentors risk their own reputation in order to sponsor a mentoree.
3. Mentors model various aspects of leadership functions so as to challenge mentorees to move toward them.
4. Mentors direct mentorees to needed resources that will further develop them.
5. Mentors co-minister with mentorees in order to increase their confidence, status and credibility.

Source: Stanley, P.D., & Clinton, J.R. (1992). *Connecting: The mentoring relationships you need to succeed in life*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.