

**Vincent A. Tinto.**

***Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition.***

**Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, 246 pp.**

In *Leaving College*, Tinto reminds us that total enrollment in higher education "is predicted to further decline to an estimated low of 10.5 million in 1995 before increasing again in the later part of that decade." (p. 2) While institutions will experience this decline differently in response to this reality, there is a growing concern on our college campuses about student retention. By challenging administrators to come to operational terms with the notion of dropout and to reframe their thinking about departure as failure, *Leaving College* helps administrators to think pragmatically about retention. Tinto suggests that not all departures can be prevented and that students who do drop out are not deviants. He encourages institutions to view retention as secondary to a concern for the intellectual and social growth of students. This kind of thinking may be difficult for institutions faced with declining enrollments, but it is important thinking for long-term efforts.

Of particular interest to college administrators is Tinto's chapter on strategies institutions can use to confront student departure. According to Tinto, institutions must first clarify mission and goal statements, as these are the primary tools to be used in directing an institution's retention efforts. Institutions must also recognize that not all students can be retained and use institutional goals to focus retention efforts for identified groups of students. In essence, Tinto reinforces the notion that colleges and universities can't be all things to all people, and that administrators must focus their efforts on those students whom the institution wants and has the capacity to retain. It is for these

students that colleges and universities should develop strategies to increase institutional commitment. The strategies he discusses relate to effectively integrating students into the college environment.

*Leaving College* provides university administrators with a scholarly grounding in the literature of student departure, presents Tinto's own theory of individual departure from higher education institutions, and engages us in a solid discussion of institutional strategies that promote the retention of students. *Leaving College* is a unique blend of theory and practice and, as such, is clearly an important piece of scholarship.

**Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini.**

***How College Affects Students.***

**San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991, 894 pp.**

*How College Affects Students* is an invaluable resource for college and university administrators, scholars, and researchers, and students of higher education. In this impressive work, Pascarella and Terenzini masterfully organize, review, analyze, and synthesize the major research on and about college students from the late 1960s through the 1980s. They organize their review according to four types of outcomes or ways that college may affect students (cognitive-psychological, cognitive-behavioral, affective-psychological, and affective-behavioral). These four outcomes provide the general framework for the authors, who then also use a series of basic questions to guide the reader. Each question addresses a kind of potential effect that college may have on students.

For administrators, *How College Affects Students* is a tremendous practical resource. The final two chapters provide a summary of the research findings presented in more detail in earlier chapters. The final chapter

is a practical one. In it, Pascarella and Terenzini discuss implications for policy and practice of the research they review, making notations for the reader interested in exploring ideas and action plans in further detail.

While Pascarella and Terenzini note the limitation of the present work as being focused only upon traditional four-year residential college students, this limitation pales in light of the contribution this work makes to research and practice. In terms of the former, by summarizing where we are, further research is focussed and stimulated. By reviewing implications for policy and practice, *How College Affects Students* challenges administrators to carefully and thoughtfully evaluate their own institutions from a solid research perspective—and in so doing, guides administrators toward effective decision making regarding program alternatives.

**Margaret J. Barr and Associates.**

*Student Services and the Law.*

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988,  
409 pp.

It is no surprise, as our society becomes increasingly more litigious, that colleges and universities need to be cognizant of the legal implications of their policies and practices. This is certainly true in student affairs. Indeed, as Barr in *Student Services and the Law* comments, "responsible administration requires that professionals understand the legal implications of both their actions and inactions." (p. xv) *Student Services and the Law* introduces administrators, and specifically student affairs administrators, to the basic concepts of the law governing higher education, examines areas of the law related to areas of

particular high risk to student affairs practice, and then explores the law relative to specific areas of student affairs administration.

This useful resource is divided into three sections. Part I introduces the reader to basic concepts of the law and provides the general framework from which to understand the impact of the law on college campuses. Of particular interest to student affairs administrators is the chapter that explores the applicability of the law to public and private institutions, highlighting the differences.

In Part II, Barr and associates take on critical issues facing student affairs and explore the legal liability of which administrators need to be aware. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 should hold particular interest for most student affairs administrators as these chapters deal specifically with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, student conduct and discipline, and some of the major issues facing institutions related to negligence and alcohol. Finally, Part III explores the law from specific areas of student affairs, such as residence life, admissions, counseling and health, as well as the management of student records and staff supervision.

This useful reference is a tremendous supplement to W. A. Kaplin's (1985) *The Law of Higher Education: A Comprehensive Guide to Legal Implications of Administrative Decision Making*. Together, these works provide student affairs administrators with a comprehensive understanding of the legal implications of their work.

Susan M. Roberts  
Special Assistant to the  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
University of Southern Maine  
96 Falmouth St.  
Portland, ME 04103