

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM SAMPLE QUESTIONS
MASTERS in STUDENT PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION
Saint Louis University

Masters Comp Questions – Fall 2016

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to one (1) of the following questions using what you learned in your Master's program, providing support and examples. Type your answer in **14 pt. Arial, double-spaced**. *Number your responses using the question numbers below (i.e., Question 1, Question 2).* You have 3 hours to answer your question. Before submitting your response, please review it for organization, grammar, and spelling.

Question 1

You are **Coordinator of Student Activities in the Office of Student Life** at a private, religiously based research university located in a major mid-western city. Your supervisor, the Director of the Office of Student Life, has asked you to develop a series of programs (workshops/events/sessions) for students on the topic of Title IX as it relates to sexual harassment/assault.

Please prepare a plan of the series focusing on this topic to present to your Director. In developing your plan make sure to address the following key points:

- The current literature on the students in higher education for whom the series is being developed;
- Legal and ethical considerations since the series is originating from the Office of Student Life;
- The variety of developmental issues and identity development needs of the students benefitting from the series;
- The pertinent intervention theory and technique that best describes the implementation of a series focused on Title IX.
- Key campus organizations or administrators to assist in the development of the series, or present on a variety of topics associated with Title IX and sexual harassment/assault;
- Diversity and Inclusion in higher education, particularly students with disabilities, students from other countries and how your series will comply with universal instructional design standards.
- Description of two sessions with a line item expense report to present to your supervisor.

Question 2

You are an on-campus **Apartment Complex Director** at a private, sectarian, research university located in the urban area of a major mid-western city. There was a recent incident involving the university's Department of Public Safety that has students emotionally upset. An African-American student with a psychiatric disability, living in the on-campus apartment complex you direct, within the past week had a psychotic episode. The student was uncharacteristically

belligerent and uncooperative with two members of the Department of Public Safety, called to assist the staff mental health counselor on call, who reportedly subdued the student with force in order for the student to be transported to the hospital. Members of the campus community have voiced their concern over the use of “undue force” by these two officers. One of the Resident Assistants assigned to your apartment complex came to you with knowledge that the residents are organizing a protest, and will be demanding the resignation of the officers involved along with the Director of Public Safety.

What is your response to the Resident Assistant and the student protestors? Please develop a response and your rationale for the response addressing the following information:

- Current literature on students in higher education, particularly millennial students;
- Legal and ethical considerations for the individuals involved and the institution as a whole;
- Developmental issues and identity development needs of the residence hall student population;
- Available campus resources for both students and rationale for possible referrals attentive to campus policies and protocols;
- Acknowledgement of the intervention theory and technique utilized when formulating a response to the students involved;
- Disability related considerations and ally development.

Masters Comp Questions – Summer 2016

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to one (1) of the following questions using what you learned in your Master’s program, providing support and examples. Type your answer in **14 pt. Arial, double-spaced**. *Number your responses using the question numbers below (i.e., Question 1, Question 2).* You have 3 hours to answer your question. Before submitting your response, please review it for organization, grammar, and spelling.

Question 1

You are **Coordinator of First-Year Programs in the Cross Cultural Center** at a private, sectarian research university located in the urban area of a major Midwestern city. You have been asked by the Director of the Cross Cultural Center, your supervisor, to develop a series of programs (workshops/events/sessions) for first-year students. The focus of the series is **student engagement**, and it should be appropriate for all students including traditional, nontraditional, and international students.

Please prepare a plan of the series focusing on student engagement to present to your Director. **In developing your plan make sure to address the following key points:**

- The current literature on the students in higher education for whom the series is being developed;
- Legal and ethical considerations since the series is originating from the Cross Cultural Center;
- The variety of developmental issues and identity development needs of the students benefitting from the series;

- The pertinent intervention theory and technique that best describes the implementation of a series focused on student engagement;
- Key campus organizations or administrators to assist in the development of the series, or present on a variety of topics;
- Diversity and Inclusion in higher education, particularly students with disabilities and their accommodations, ally development, and how your series will comply with universal instructional design standards.

Question 2

You are a **Residence Hall Director** at a private, sectarian, research university located in the urban area of a major Midwestern city. Ella and Marie, first-year students, have been assigned as roommates in your hall. During the first week, Ella, a student from rural Arkansas, approaches you and notifies you she wants to be assigned to a new roommate or to a single room (her preference) because her roommate, Maria (a student from Philadelphia, PA), "is deaf and cannot understand a word I say!" Although Maria uses American Sign Language, Ella neither knows nor cares to learn ASL ("It's a strange, weird language," according to Ella). Ella believes Maria is holding her back from meeting people and she does not want to be her caretaker. She also admits she is embarrassed by the way Maria sounds when she tries to speak. "Given the price of this university," says Ella, "I do not see why I should be stuck with Maria for a roommate."

What is your response to Ella? Please develop **a response and your rationale for the response addressing the following information:**

- Current literature on students in higher education, particularly millennial students;
- Legal and ethical considerations for the individuals involved and the institution as a whole;
- Developmental issues and identity development needs of both students;
- Available campus resources for both students and rationale for possible referrals attentive to campus policies and protocols;
- Acknowledgement of the intervention theory and technique utilized when formulating a response to the students involved;
- Disability related considerations and ally development.

Masters Comp Questions – Spring 2016

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to one (1) of the following questions using what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, student development, student demographics, campus environment, law, ethics, intervention, and inclusion. Provide support and examples. Type your answer in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. *Number your responses using the question numbers below (i.e., Question 1, Question 2)*. You have 3 hours to answer your question. Before submitting your response, please review it for organization, grammar, and spelling.

Question 1

In light of the many recent campus shootings across the country, the Dean of Students (your supervisor) has asked you to form a Behavior Response Team (BRT). As the Director for

Student Involvement, you will head this committee. The purpose of the committee will be to provide campus outreach to promote referrals from members of the campus community regarding concerning, inappropriate, or out-of-character behavior of students and form action plans when necessary in an effort to both support the individual student/s and prevent the large-scale acts of violence becoming more and more prevalent in the higher education environment today. The group will meet approximately twice a month. Please respond to the following using the knowledge gained from your Master's in Student Personnel Administration program:

- 1) Describe the ideal campus climate and structure when it comes to supporting the BRT. What types of communication strategies and campus alerts would be in place? What is the ideal campus scenario needed in order to be proactive and avoid a dangerous situation on your campus?
- 2) Please name 6 other campus stakeholders (faculty/staff roles) who you will invite to be a member of the BRT. Please describe, in detail, the title, function, and main responsibilities of each person's day-to-day role on campus. Then, provide a detailed description of why it makes sense to have this person represented on the BRT.
- 3) Please provide the 3 Student Development Theories that will guide your work as a Team. Give an overview of each theory, including stages/phases, and provide a rationale of why this theory provides support for the new BRT.
- 4) A key aspect of this BRT will be involving the faculty, which can sometimes be a challenge. Provide at least three (3) ideas you will bring to the BRT to help generate faculty participation in this initiative. These ideas may include programs sponsored by the BRT to raise awareness.
- 5) The Dean of Students (your supervisor) is aware you will need a budget, but does not know how much to allocate. Provide a detailed annual budget to support the BRT.
- 6) Assessment will be an important measure of the impact the BRT is having on campus. Identify at least three (3) measurable outcomes for the success of the BRT and related assessment methodology you will employ.
- 7) Many legal and ethical issues exist when dealing with student behavior and the privacy of this type of information. Discuss at least two (2) main legal and ethical issues the BRT will encounter and provide a brief solution/plan to address each issue.

Question 2

Incidents of academic dishonesty through the use of social media and the internet have prompted the Dean of Students (your supervisor) to ask you to form an Academic Integrity through Social Media Task Force (AISMTF). As the Director for Student Conduct, you will head this committee. The purpose of the committee will be to gather information from members of the campus community regarding the use of social media and the internet in acts of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, an issue that is becoming more and more prevalent in the higher education environment today. The group will meet approximately twice a month. Please respond to the following using the knowledge gained from your Master's in Student Personnel Administration program: **(question continued on next page...)**

- 1) Describe the ideal campus climate and structure when it comes to supporting the AISMTF. What types of communication strategies and campus alerts would be in place? What is the ideal campus scenario needed in order to be proactive and avoid academic dishonesty on your campus?
- 2) Please name 6 other campus stakeholders (faculty/staff roles) who you will invite to be a member of the AISMTF. Please describe, in detail, the title, function, and main responsibilities of each person's day-to-day role on campus. Then, provide a detailed description of why it makes sense to have this person represented on the AISMTF.
- 3) Please provide the 3 Student Development Theories that will guide your work as a Task Force. Give an overview of each theory, including stages/phases, and provide a rationale of why this theory provides support for the new AISMTF.
- 4) A key aspect of this AISMTF will be involving the faculty, which can sometimes be a challenge. Provide at least three (3) ideas you will bring to the AISMTF to help generate faculty participation in this initiative. These ideas may include programs sponsored by the AISMTF to raise awareness
- 5) The Dean of Students (your supervisor) is aware you will need a budget, but does not know how much to allocate. Provide a detailed annual budget to support the AISMTF.
- 6) Assessment will be an important measure of the impact the AISMTF is having on campus. Identify at least three (3) measurable outcomes for the success of the AISMTF and related assessment methodology you will employ.
- 7) Many legal and ethical issues exist when dealing with student behavior and the privacy of this type of information. Discuss at least two (2) main legal and ethical issues the AISMTF will encounter and provide a brief solution/plan to address each issue.

Masters Comp Questions – Fall 2015

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to one (1) of the following questions using what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, student development, student demographics, campus environment, law, ethics, intervention, and inclusion. Provide support and examples. Type your answer in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. *Number your responses using the question numbers below (i.e., Question 1, Question 2).* You have 3 hours to answer your question. Before submitting your response, please review it for organization, grammar, and spelling.

Question 1

Emphasis on the development of multicultural competence for college students engaged in a global society has never been more pressing and relevant in higher education. In the aftermath of on-campus bias-related incidents, you have been called to leadership to construct a co-curricular educational approach to promote diversity and inclusion. Please develop an action plan for this co-curricular approach applying what you learned about current college students, legal and ethical issues, intervention skills, disability, and inclusion of marginalized populations. In your plan, identify and describe at least two student development theories that will most directly guide the framework of your curriculum and how the theories will support and intersect with the educational goals of a diversity and inclusion co-curriculum. Please provide support from the literature for your answers.

Question 2

Select a student affairs functional area within a university and create a student retention plan for that functional unit. Applying what you learned in the required courses in your Master's program regarding law, ethics, student demographics, student development theory, student personnel administration, disability, and intervention skills, develop a detailed plan for your unit to retain students. The plan should include a description of the make-up of the unit, goals and action steps, rationale for the action step, and support from the literature.

No Masters Comps were taken Spring or Summer 2015**Masters Comp Questions – Summer 2014**

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to one (1) of the following questions using what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, student development, student demographics, campus environment, law, ethics, intervention, and inclusion. Provide support and examples. Type your answer in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. *Number your responses using the question numbers below (i.e., Question 1, Question 2).* You have 3 hours to answer your question. Before submitting your response, please review it for organization, grammar, and spelling.

Question 1

Following a decade of military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, many student veterans are beginning to enroll in college. At your institution, a medium sized public university where you serve as the Dean of Students, you are beginning to see increasing numbers of these students. They are generally a little older than the rest of the student body and they frequently are enrolled only part-time. Several faculty members have approached you about these students, some of whom (the students) are clearly exhibiting some emotional and psychological difficulties as they readjust to civilian life. The faculty tell you these students are not equipped to cope with such issues and insist that you do something.

Drawing upon your knowledge of student development theory and today's millennial college student, including legal and ethical issues, disability issues, student personnel administration, and intervention skills, create a thoughtful plan to address this situation. Consider the stakeholders you may have to involve, and how you will ensure the success of your plan. What obstacles might you confront? How will you overcome them? Be sure to support your answer with the literature from your Master's program.

Question 2

You are a Dean of Students at a large, private institution in the Midwest. The students who are admitted to your university are part of the millennial generation and have had their time filled with classes, athletic practice and events, music rehearsals and performance, tutoring, clubs, and service projects. They have filled every moment of the day with activities, which their parents have coordinated. They arrive on your campus and some seem suddenly adrift, unable to cope with scheduling their own time. Their face-to-face social skills are not particularly well developed and some seem self-absorbed and reluctant to get involved in campus life.

Using what you have learned in your Master's program about today's millennial students (including the other topics you learned), develop three initiatives to engage your students and to help them begin to assume ownership of their time and to connect to the campus. Consider the students' strengths as well, parlaying them into a successful college experience. Be sure to support your answer with the literature from your Master's program.

Masters Comp Questions – Spring 2014

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to one (1) of the following questions using what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, student development, student demographics, campus environment, law, ethics, intervention, and inclusion. Provide support and examples. Type your answer in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. *Number your responses using the question numbers below (i.e., Question 1, Question 2).* You have 3 hours to answer your question. Before submitting your response, please review it for organization, grammar, and spelling.

Question 1

Select one of the following college student populations: A) students with disabilities; B) students from China; C) first-generation students from rural America. What key elements should the Vice President for Student Affairs know about the students in your selected student population who are attending his/her University? Please explain the elements and provide examples of each. Remember to provide support from the literature.

- a. Demographics and educational environment
- b. Student development and identity development theory
- c. In-class and out-of-class teaching and learning
- d. Intervention and mediation
- e. Legal and ethical issues
- f. Access to education including cost, indebtedness, physical access, programs, and services

Question 2

Type of institution and institutional environment impact the learning environment (both in-class and out-of-class) of college students, administrators, faculty, and staff. Based on what you have learned and experienced in your Master's program, describe an ideal higher education environment for non-traditional students who are single parents over 30 years of age. Address the following areas in your response, and be sure to support your response with literature from your Master's program.

- a. Type of institution selected and elements of the selected institution's environment (i.e., What does the institution look like? How is it designed and organized? What is its culture and climate?)
- b. Student development theories that apply to this population
- c. Programs and services offered in the ideal environment
- d. Budget and assessment issues to consider in the ideal environment

- e. Intervention skills necessary for communication with students in this population
- f. Legal and ethical issues applied to this environment

Masters Comp Questions – Fall 2013

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

Question 1

You are a dean of students at a comprehensive regional university in the Midwest. This year, a number of students from the Middle East have enrolled. These students, who are Muslim, are experiencing some challenges adjusting to life at an American university, and domestic students have not been open to accepting these students. You have noticed that the students tend to keep to themselves and do not seem to mix with the American students. Drawing upon what you have learned about campus environments that foster educational success, what strategies would you employ to enhance the transition for these students?

Question 2

In her book, *Where You Work Matters*, Joan B. Hirt asserts that there is a “need to explore whether graduate programs are preparing future student affairs professionals to succeed in different types of environments” (2011, p. 9). Her study highlights issues of professional socialization, exploring daily routines, colleagues, values of the environment, and rewards. Contrast the challenges and rewards that student affairs professionals might experience at two types of institutions (e.g., liberal arts, research, community colleges, etc.).

Masters Comp Questions – Summer 2013

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

Question 1

You are invited back to your alma mater to deliver the 2013 Commencement Speech. Please write your Commencement speech addressing the hot topics facing college students today. Use what you have learned in your six core courses in the Master’s program (Student Development Theory, The Student in Higher Education, Student Personnel Administration, Legal & Ethical Issues, Disability in Higher Education & Society, and Intervention Skills for Student Personnel Administrators) to address your topics and to support your response. Provide vivid, applicable examples and support from the literature.

Question 2

Study abroad opportunities (both short-term and long-term) are becoming more popular for today’s college students. Develop a proposal for a study abroad experience for the Master’s in Student Personnel Administration program. Include the purpose, rationale, content (where it will occur), learning outcomes, and assessment plan. In the your rationale, use what you have learned in your six core courses in the Master’s program (Student Development Theory, The Student in Higher Education, Student Personnel Administration, Legal & Ethical Issues, Disability

in Higher Education & Society, and Intervention Skills for Student Personnel Administrators) to support your proposal. Provide vivid, applicable examples and support from the literature.

Masters Comp Questions – Spring 2013

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

Question 1

In *Educating by Design*, Strange and Banning (2001) purport that “perceptual models of the environment recognize that a consensus of individuals who perceive and characterize their environment constitutes a measure of environmental press or climate which then exert a directional influence on behavior” (p. 85). “Close correspondence between individual need and environmental press is presumed to be growth producing” (p. 87). Thus, a campus culture is formed. Based on your knowledge of college environment factors (scholarship, awareness, community, etc.) and college characteristic factors (aspiration level, intellectual climate, group lift, etc.), how might a college environment or college characteristics of a particular institution encourage individual growth and development of its students? Apply what you learned throughout your Master’s program to support your response

Question 2

By studying differing values, Coomes and DeBard (2004) contend, “This comparison can depict some of the flash points of potential conflict...give some indication as to how these conflicts can be reconciled...” (p. 39). Since there are four generations currently in the higher education setting, it is important for higher education professionals to note their varying values and to respect those differences. What are some of the differing values between the Silent generation, Boomer generation, Generation X, and Millennials and how do these differing values affect the development of students? What are some ways that generations can resolve differing values? Apply what you learned throughout your Master’s program to support your response.

Masters Comp Questions – Fall 2012

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

Question 1

You are the Director of a Student Affairs functional area in a midsized private university. Briefly describe the functional area including mission, goals, size of staff, and titles of staff members. Using professional competencies as those supported by ACPA and NASPA, identify three professional competencies for your entry-level staff members and indicate how you expect them to achieve these competencies and how you will evaluate their performance. Be sure to use what you learned throughout your Master’s program to support your response.

Question 2

Social media is prevalent on college campuses. A recent study at the University of New Hampshire, for example, found that 96% of their students used Facebook. Identify three (3) types of social media used by college students and discuss how this usage affects (positively and/or negatively) the work of the student affairs professional and the programs/services offered to

college students. Be sure to use what you learned throughout your Master's program to support your response.

Masters Comp Questions – Summer 2012

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

Question 1

"The number of Chinese undergraduates on U.S. campuses has risen rapidly in recent years—increasing 43 percent in the past year alone – prompting many college administrators to ask how they can better position their institutions in the China market." (*Inside Higher Education*, May 31, 2012). According to a survey conducted by Zinch, factors influencing Chinese students' college choices include availability of their desired major followed by safety, philosophical approach to education (alternatives to the professor-centric, lecture-based style), cost, and rankings.

Given the influx of this population and based on the information provided above and your knowledge of college students,

- 1) compare and contrast the concerns and expectations of Chinese students with those of domestic students;
- 2) discuss the role of the student personnel administrator in addressing the needs of these students on their campuses; and
- 3) provide recommendations as to how Saint Louis University can better position itself in the China market.

In your responses, use what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, the history of student affairs, college environments, college student traits and demographics, disability and diversity issues, intervention skills and student development theory. Include specific examples and provide support from the literature.

Question 2

According to *Today's Campus* (June 1, 2012), "MIT and Harvard recently announced a new partnership to offer free online courses through edX. Princeton, Stanford, Penn and Michigan are making similar plans through Coursera. Changes in the world of online learning occur on a daily basis. Where is it all headed?"

Given the rapid changes in technology and the move to digital education,

- 1) discuss the positive and negative roles technology plays in college students' lives;
- 2) address the role of student affairs professionals in online learning;
- 3) describe how student affairs can function and how learning "outside the classroom" can take place in an online learning environment; and
- 4) provide recommendations as to how Saint Louis University can promote to online learners the programs, services, and experiences facilitated by the Division of Student Development, ensuring those students they will reap the same or similar benefits as their on-campus counterparts.

In your responses, use what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, the history of student affairs, college environments, college student traits and

demographics, disability and diversity issues, intervention skills and student development theory. Include specific examples and provide support from the literature.

Masters Comp Questions – Spring 2012

*Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.*

Question 1

Issues or concerns facing college students today include access to higher education (e.g., cost, opportunity to attend, etc.); persistence to graduation; student inclusion; safety on campus; and integrity of students, faculty, staff and administrators. Discuss three (3) of these five (5) issues and address how they affect the work of student personnel administrators. Describe how student personnel administrators can assist, mentor, and/or advocate for students as they experience these issues/concerns. Using what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, the history of student affairs, college environments, college students, disability and diversity issues, intervention skills and student development theory, respond to these questions. Include specific examples and provide support from the literature.

Question 2

You are the Dean of Students at a 4-year religiously affiliated college located in the southern United States. You have a "dry" campus and enroll 1,200 students. In your role as Dean, you oversee all student affairs functional areas including Housing, Dining Services, Career Services, Student Conduct, Multicultural Services, Disability Services, Student Activities, Greek Life, Campus Ministries, Student Center, and Student Recreation. At the beginning of his senior year, J, President of Student Government and captain of the tennis team, tells you in confidence that he is aware of several issues occurring on campus including a sexual relationship between a hall director and a first-year resident, alcohol consumed by students after games in the Rec Center, and hazing of two students who have been tested HIV positive. How will you respond to J? What action will you take? Whom, if anyone, will you tell? What steps will you take to resolve these issues? Given what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, functional areas, college environments, college demographics, student identities, disability and diversity issues, intervention skills and student development theory, develop a response. Please be specific and provide support from the literature.

Masters Comp Questions – Fall 2011

*Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.*

Question 1

Identify three (3) major issues or concerns that are facing college students today. Describe how we as student personnel administrators can assist, mentor, and/or advocate for students as they experience these issues/concerns. Using what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, the history of student affairs, college environments, college students, disability and diversity issues, intervention skills and student development theory, respond to these questions. Include specific examples and provide support from the literature.

Question 2

You are the Assistant Dean of Students at a public 4-year institution with enrollment of 24,000 students. Ella, a first-year student, confides in you that she is concerned about her self-image and making new friends, which in turn, is affecting her ability to focus on her coursework. She reveals to you that she experiences bouts of depression, is questioning her sexual orientation, and feels she has “lost her religion” (she was raised Catholic). It is the fourth week of the semester and she wants to leave college; however, she feels she has no place to go. She asks for your assistance. How will you respond to Ella? Given what you learned in your Master’s program regarding student personnel administration, functional areas, college environments, college demographics, student identities, disability and diversity issues, intervention skills and student development theory, develop a response. Please be specific and provide support from the literature.

Masters Comp Questions – Summer 2011

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

Question 1

You have been hired to develop a new Social Justice program and center within the Student Development Division of a small Midwestern private research university. Based on what you have learned about student personnel administration (including the current college student population, student development theory, the college environment, inclusion, ethics, Universal Design, interpersonal communication, budgeting, program development and assessment), develop a proposal for the new Social Justice program. In your proposal, be sure to include the purpose, the rationale (with support from the literature), the plan itself, a proposed budget, and an assessment plan.

Question 2

You are the program chair for the annual convention of a state student personnel administration association. The convention chair has asked you to submit a list of relevant topics for the 3-day convention. Given what you learned in your Master’s program about the field of student affairs and issues affecting college students and college administration today, design a 3-day program around the “hot topics” for student personnel administrators. Provide a rationale for your program topics with specific examples and support from the literature.

Masters Comp Questions – Spring 2011

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

Question 1

In 1979, Boland said this about the student affairs profession: “We have cultivated an expertise that was not requested, is not sought out, and for which there is little recognition or demand. Many entry-level and (many) seasoned professionals know little of student development theory and practice and, in fact, do not really need such expertise to meet the role expectations of their supervisors or, in too many instances, their institutions.” (Boland, 1979, NASPA Journal).

Is Boland's statement accurate today? Do student affairs practices rarely connect to student development theories? Using what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, the history of student affairs, college environments, college students, disability and diversity issues, and student development theory, respond to these questions. Include specific examples and provide support from the literature.

Question 2

An historical event is about to occur. Between March 15- April 15, 2011, each member of ACPA and NASPA will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed consolidation of these two associations into a new comprehensive international student affairs association that combines the strengths and resources of both associations. In an open letter, the current ACPA and NASPA presidents expressed the commitment to open and transparent communication during the study of the consolidation process by the Consolidation Steering Team (CST) and the ACPA and NASPA Boards of Directors, and members of both associations have had opportunities to be involved throughout the process.

Given what you learned in your Master's program about these associations and the field of student affairs (e.g., student personnel administration; new, mid-level, senior student affairs professionals; student personnel graduate programs, the history of student affairs, college environments, college students, identity issues, legal and ethical issues, student development theory, etc.), discuss the pros and cons of this consolidation. In your current role, do you support the consolidation of ACPA and NASPA? Explain your response, include examples, and provide support from the literature.

Masters Comp Questions – Fall 2010

*Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in 14 pt Arial, double-spaced. You have 3 hours to answer your question.*

Question 1

“Why would an academic choose to work at a historically black college or university when he or she might gain higher status and more money at a more prestigious, better endowed, predominantly white institution? Are there values and goals that trump status and money?” These questions were posed to four academics professionals (as reported in the September 19, 2020 Chronicle of Higher Education). Using what you learned in your Master's program regarding types of colleges, student personnel administration, today's students, today's campus, legal and ethical issues, and student development theory, how would you respond to these questions as a student affairs professional? Provide support for your answer.

Question 2

The admissions race to increase enrollment and push for diversity could lead to problems once students arrive on campus. What issues might arise? How can institutions, particularly student affairs professionals, handle these issues, or, better yet, prevent them from ever occurring? Using what you learned in your Master's program regarding student personnel administration, characteristics and demographics of today's college students, the campus environment, legal and ethical issues, intervention skills and student development theory, discuss your plan for

addressing marginalization and other issues affecting underrepresented groups on college campuses. Provide support for your answer.

Masters Comp Questions – Summer 2010

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double-spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

Question 1

Nevitt Sanford is deemed as the “Father of Student Development.” Given what you have learned about Sanford’s (1967) Challenge and Support Theory and based on the information and knowledge gained from your classes in your Masters program, explain how his theory serves as the foundation for all other student development theories. How will you, as a professional in higher education, apply his theory to other student development theories when working with students? In addition, how will you apply his theory and other theories to your work in student and/or academic affairs? Please provide support from the literature throughout your response using theories, models, and statistics from your readings. Include citations in APA format.

Question 2

Recent budget constraints in the state of Illinois have created massive budget problems for the state’s public colleges and universities, particularly the University of Illinois – Champaign Urbana and Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville.

According to a December 2009 article in *Suburban Journal*, a St. Louis Metropolitan newspaper, “the issue hinges on payments the state owes local governmental units, which all heavily rely on the revenue stream to provide services and make payroll. The problem is, the state has a potential \$12 billion deficit and is \$4.3 billion behind in paying bills. The funding gap has trickled down to local operations. SIU President Glenn Poshard announced that the Illinois Comptroller’s Office has released \$15.5 million for the university system’s payroll, but there is still a \$16.5 million gap for the Jan. 1 payroll.”

Given what you have learned in your Master’s degree program, what does this mean for the faculty, staff, students, and family members of the Illinois universities and colleges that rely on public funding? Further, given what you have learned about the Millennial student, their parents, the college environment, and student learning, how does this recent salary announcement affect the following:

- a. the college environment (physical, aggregate, structural, and constructed);
- b. student learning and holistic student development;
- c. expectations of Millennial students;
- d. expectations of the parents of Millennial students; and
- e. overall morale of colleges/campuses?

Masters Comp Questions – Spring 2010

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in **14 pt Arial, double spaced**. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

1. You are asked by the Vice President of Student Development to present to the Faculty Senate an explanation of student development theory and its importance to the campus community. How will you do that? What will you include in your presentation in order to

provide an effective, well-supported, user-friendly case? When developing your response, consider what you have learned about student demographics, campus environments, legal and ethical issues, student personnel administration, college teaching, and communication in addition to student development theory. Please answer the question completely and provide support and examples throughout.

2. “The complexities of identity development in a postmodern world are not fully captured without attention to multiple and intersecting identities and the sociocultural contexts in which identities are constructed and negotiated” (Jones, 2009, *JCS*, p. 257). Multiple identity dimensions include gender, race, culture, social class, sexual orientation and disability among others. Please identify and explain at least three (3) identity theories you learned in your program. Using these theories, explain how students experience multiple identities and how these experiences affect their development. Please answer the question completely and provide support and examples throughout.

Masters Comp Questions – Fall 2009

*Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in 14 pt Arial, double-spaced. You have 3 hours to answer your question*

1. With the recent passage of the 21st Century GI Bill (also known as the post September 11 GI Bill), we expect many more veteran students on college campuses and in online classrooms in the near future. It is important for faculty and staff to be knowledgeable of the unique needs of service members and veterans entering post-secondary education, to identify common access challenges or barriers to enrollment and matriculation into college, and to develop successful campus strategies for integrating veteran students into the college community (ACPA, September, 2009).

Using what you have learned in your Masters in Student Personnel program, develop a plan for SLU’s Divisions of Student Development and Enrollment Management for facilitating veterans and service member transitions. Be sure to include a purpose, rationale, description and assessment with appropriate support from the literature.

2. “Today’s college [student affairs] professional is dealing with more issues than ever before. The landscape of student mental health issues continues to become more crowded and murkier as the issues become more complex. More students arrive on campus with mental health issues, more students exhibit anxieties, depression and self-destructive behaviors. Greater concern is being placed today on the assessment and treatment of suicidal students. All of this happens against a backdrop of heightened awareness for threat assessment, competition for resources in tough economic times and the increased burden, stress and burnout that campus professionals are feeling.” (StudentAffairs@paper-clip.com, September 25, 2009).

Using what you have learned in your Masters in Student Personnel program, respond to the statement above as it relates to Saint Louis University students. Be sure to address each issue and provide appropriate support from the literature.

Masters Comp Questions – Summer 2009

Please respond to one of the following questions. Type your answers in 14 pt Arial, double-spaced. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

1. Multiple and intersecting identities are socially constructed through relationships with others (e.g., family, friends, etc.) as well as relationships with institutions (e.g., school, work, church, etc.). A growing body of literature has addressed college students who distinguish themselves as having multiple identities related to gender, race, social class, culture, spirituality, ability and sexual orientation. Based on what you have learned about college student development, the college culture and student personnel administration, please respond to the following questions:
 - a. What is meant by “multiple identities”?
 - b. Discuss the impact of a student’s multiple identities on his/her learning and development.
 - c. Address how you, as a student personnel professional, can assist in the education and development of a college student with multiple identities?

Please include examples and provide support your responses.

2. According to ACPA – College Student Educators International, student affairs professionals are educators. Assuming this statement is true, provide reasons for its accuracy. Using what you have learned about college student development, the college culture and student personnel administration, explain how, when and why this “educating” takes place. Please include examples and provide support for your responses.

Masters Comp Questions – Spring 2009

Please respond to one of the following questions. Type your answers in 14 pt Arial, double-spaced. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

1. You are the Associate Dean of Students in a public university of 20,000 undergraduate students. You oversee the following departments (none of which are auxiliaries): Orientation Programs; Greek Life; Student Clubs & Organizations; Women’s Center; Cross Cultural Center; and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Center. Due to economic conditions, you have been asked by your supervisor, the Dean of Students, to cut 20% from your overall budget (i.e., the combined budgets of the departments listed above). Your task is to develop an action plan for this budget reduction. In the action plan, please address the following:
 - a. What steps will you take to make these cuts? Will you ask each department director to cut the same amount? If so, why? If not, why not? Provide support for your arguments.
 - b. In the rationale for your budget reduction plan, what legal and ethical issues arise and should be considered? Explain.
 - c. What campus environmental issues should be considered in your decisions and why?
 - d. What student development theories will be considered in your decisions? Be specific here. Clearly describe in detail at least 3 theories and explain how and why they are important in

- your decision making. Are specific theories applied to specific populations? If so, please explain.
- e. Include an impact statement. Who and what will be impacted by these cuts? Who and what do you believe should not be impacted? Provide support for your argument.
 - f. Include assessment strategies for measuring the impact of the budget reduction.
 - g. Be sure to answer the entire question completely and provide support for your response throughout.
2. One of the “hot” topics in higher education today is that of access to college. Provide a definition and explanation of this issue; discuss what factors are involved, and offer possible solutions to the access problem. When developing your response, consider what you have learned about student demographics, campus environments, legal and ethical issues, student personnel administration, student development theory and communication. Please answer the question completely and provide support and examples throughout.

Masters Comp Questions -- Fall 2008

Please respond to **one** of the following questions. Type your answers in 14 pt Arial, double-spaced. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

1. A new book intended for graduate students in student affairs preparation programs and for student affairs practitioners has been proposed. The title of the proposed book is *Designing Student Affairs Organizations for Sustainable Change*.

Question: How would you design a student affairs organization, i.e., division, for sustainable change?

In your answer, be sure to include the following:

- h. Your definition of “a student affairs organization”
 - i. Your definition of “sustainable change”
 - j. Components and areas you would include in the organization
 - k. The theoretical base for your decisions (i.e., theories you are using or will use to develop, maintain, and improve the organization)
 - l. The environmental components you considered
 - m. Your collaboration plan for the organization
 - n. Your assessment plan for the organization
2. There currently is a lively listserv discussion among graduate preparation program faculty about the student affairs profession. It began with the slogans for the two national conventions for spring 2009.
- Here are the slogans:
- “Nourishing Partnerships for Lifelong Learning” (with focus on issues such as balance, innovation, partnerships, and sustainability)
 - “Power to Imagine - Courage to Act”

Then the question was posed: If we in the profession of student affairs really do have the power to imagine and the courage to act, what [are] the reasons that we “talk” sustainability and

"advocate" for "green campuses" yet still hold two enormously expensive, generally redundant national conferences each year?

Question: Given the above information and based on what you have learned in your Masters program regarding student development, student affairs organizations, history of student affairs, etc., respond to the following questions. Be sure to provide support for your answers.

- a. Do student affairs professionals have the power to imagine and the courage to act? If so, what does that look like and how can it be operationalized?
- b. How can student affairs professionals nourish partnerships for lifelong learning? What does that look like and how can it be operationalized?
- c. How can student affairs professionals "walk the talk" regarding sustainability and "green" campuses? Are we being counterproductive and redundant when we hold two annual national conferences, many annual regional and state conferences, and a multitude of national, regional, and state educational programs throughout the year?

Masters Comp Questions -- Summer 2008

Please respond to one of the two questions below. Type your answers in 14 pt. Arial, double-spaced. You have 3 hours to complete this exam.

Question #1

In *Toward Acceptance* (Vernon Wall & Nancy Evans, Eds., 2000), the authors of one of chapters state the following: "When personal identity is ignored by using only the traditional theories and attempting to apply them to all cultural groups, educators are doing harm to the students with whom they work by not acknowledging or embracing their unique characteristics" (Ferguson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000, p. 290). Given what you have learned in your Masters program regarding student development theory and student personnel administration including history, law, ethics, student demographics, campus culture, etc., please respond to the above quote by addressing the following questions:

1. Why do you agree or disagree with the quote?
2. Although this quote was published in 2000, does it apply to college students in 2008? If so, why?
3. What specific theories do you believe should be applied to today's college students to address the above issue (in the quote)?

Please provide support for all of your responses.

Question #2

In Joan Hirt's (2006) book, *Where You Work Matters: Student Affairs Administration at Different Types of Institutions*, she explores the interaction between student affairs professional life and institutional type. In her research she discovered that there are distinct similarities and differences in student affairs practice between and among the following seven types of postsecondary educational institutions: 1) Liberal Arts Institutions; 2) Religiously Affiliated Institutions; 3)

Comprehensive Institutions; 4) Research Universities; 5) Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); 6) Community Colleges; and 7) Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

Although you may not have read Hirt's book, based on what you have learned in your Masters program regarding student development theory and student personnel administration including history, law, ethics, student demographics, campus culture, etc., please respond to the following questions:

1. Select 3 of the 7 institution types listed above. From the perspective of a student personnel professional, what similarities and differences do you see in Student Affairs at these 3 institutions?
2. Based on your response to #1 above, what theories, models, and concepts would you apply at these 3 institutions? Are they the same? Are they different? Please explain your answer.
3. How should success in Student Affairs be measured at these institutions? Develop an assessment plan and include a timeline.

Please provide support for all of your responses.

Masters Comp Questions -- Spring 2008

Please respond to one of the following questions. Type your answers in 14 pt Arial, double-spaced. You have 3 hours to answer your question.

1. Develop your response based on the following:
 - o. Select a student affairs functional area in a postsecondary institution.
 - p. Select and describe the type of institution your functional area is in by using the Carnegie Classification. Provide general demographics including approximate enrollment and type of student population served.
 - q. Describe the functional area's purpose, functions, staffing, and intended student learning outcomes.
 - r. Describe an assessment plan for measuring the learning outcomes of your department including how the assessment plan will be implemented and how and to whom results will be disseminated.
 - s. Explain how your responses to **c** and **d** above would differ if you modified any or all of your responses to **b**.
2. According to Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004), "Some scholars believe it is appropriate use of theory that makes the difference between being a well-intentioned amateur and a professional (Strange, 1987; Strange & King, 1990). Explain what is meant by this quote. In doing so, define "professional" and provide theoretical and scholarly support and examples.

Masters Questions -- Summer 2007

Please respond to one of the two questions below. Please type your response in 14 pt Arial and double space. Thank you.

1. According to the document, Learning Reconsidered (ACPA & NASPA, 2005), student affairs and academic affairs should collaborate to provide “intentional” learning outcomes for students. Using the theories, concepts, and models you learned in your Masters courses, develop a plan for integrating this Learning Reconsidered principle (i.e., providing intentional learning outcomes) at Saint Louis University. Begin with a definition of “intentional” learning outcomes and conclude with an assessment process.
2. According to a recent national seminar entitled “Taking Disability to the Next Level,” student affairs professionals are concerned with the following: 1.) the degree to which students with disabilities take personal responsibility; and 2.) professors’ reactions to students with disabilities, particularly those students with learning and psychological disabilities. Utilizing what you know about student development theory, disability models, and teaching and learning philosophies, develop a response to the concerns of these student affairs professionals.

Masters Questions Spring 2007

Please answer one of the following two questions:

1. Abby is a second-semester senior majoring in music. During her four years at Big-Ten University, she has been a stellar student and an outstanding leader. She is a superb pianist and carries a 3.8 (out of 4.0) GPA. Abby has been a Resident Assistant in a first-year learning community, a peer tutor, an orientation leader, a student ambassador, and currently is president of the student government association. Abby will graduate in 3 months – and Abby has no idea what she will do after graduation.

This may seem surprising given her background and experience not to mention all of the contacts and references she has cultivated over the years. Many faculty, staff and administrators have offered to speak to colleagues in education and in the music business on her behalf. Abby has graciously declined their offers. Most of her friends have been accepted to graduate schools or are interviewing for jobs. Her boyfriend, Jake, is lead guitarist in a local band and she is in awe of his talent. She wishes she could be like him and be brave enough to follow her dreams.

Given the limited amount you know about Abby and given what you know about student development theory, identity development, changing student demographics, and campus culture, analyze Abby’s situation. Select four student development theories; define each including the type of theory it is (i.e., cognitive-structural, psychosocial, identity, typology) and who developed it; and describe how the theory applies to Abby and her current status. In responding, think about these questions: What could be going here? Why is Abby reacting this way? How could she have ended up in this situation? Is this a common occurrence for college seniors? Conclude your answer with recommendations for Abby and for university personnel. What could have been done, if anything, to assist Abby along the way? What could be done, if anything, at this point in time?

2. The Freshman Year Experience (FYE) program at your institution is comprised of the following offices: orientation, academic advising, career services, transition programs, and service learning (a rather unusual organizational structure, but one of which the Dean of Undergraduate Education is quite proud). The Director of FYE reports directly to the Dean of Undergraduate Education who reports directly to the Provost who reports directly to the President of the university.

The coordinator of academic advising and the coordinator of career counseling are not pleased with the current arrangement, and both have encouraged their entire staff to behave accordingly. Although service learning was just brought into FYE programs this past month, the advising and career coordinators are already talking to the new service learning coordinator, attempting to form a coalition with him. Despite the pleasant demeanor shown to the Dean of Undergraduate Education by all coordinators in the FYE program, the FYE Director is not receiving the same pleasantries. Negativity is brewing and sabotage is in the works.

You have just been promoted to Assistant Director of FYE. Your responsibilities include overseeing orientation, transition programs and service learning. Although the FYE Director oversees academic advising and career services, you are expected to work closely with these areas and oversee them in the Director's absence. As the past coordinator of orientation, you are familiar with the entire department, the ongoing issues, and the personalities involved.

Analyze the above scenario. Consider the following in your response: What is occurring? Why? How? Who are the key players? Who is responsible for the current state of affairs and for the future? What is your role in this scenario? How can change occur – and at what cost?

In addition to your analysis, provide recommendations for improvement and future success of the program. Apply what you have learned about higher education administration, student personnel, law, history, and culture to your response as appropriate. Be sure to provide support for your statements and recommendations.