Changes in Clark-Trow Subcultures from 1976 to 2006: Implications for Addressing Undergraduates' Leisure Interests

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Unrest in the early 1970s stimulated a need to understand undergraduates' motivations. The Clark-Trow Typology (Clark & Trow, 1966) examined student behavior (i.e., academic, collegiate, vocational, and non-conformist) according to identification with the institution and involvement with ideas. The Student Interest Survey included questions based on the Typology, and was administered at five-year intervals beginning in 1976 to undergraduates at a research extensive institution. Results suggested statistically significant shifts in subcultures. For example, the percentage of students in the academic subculture declined from 37% in 1976 to 18% in 1996, whereas the collegiate subculture increased from 17% in 1976 to 34% in 1996. Differences in leisure interests within subcultures are discussed, along with implications for addressing undergraduates' leisure interests.

The 1960s were an extraordinary decade in higher education in the United States. Brubacher and Rudy (1997) viewed the student revolution of the 1960s as "the most portentous upheaval in the history of American student life" (p. 349). Astin (1998) noted that the late 1960s through the early 1970s was a period during which rapid and widespread changes occurred in the perspectives and expectations of entering college students. The study of college students became popular as social scientists attempted to understand the changing perspectives of college students, and by the end of the 1960s, Feldman and Newcomb (1969) published the first systematic summary of how college affects students.

One of the major treatises regarding student cultures to be published during this period was Newcomb and Wilson's (1966) *College Peer Groups*, in which Clark and Trow (1966) described four subcultures (i.e., academic, collegiate,

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nonconformist, and vocational) as a vehicle for understanding student behavior. In spite of Clark and Trow's (1966) advice that the subcultures not be used to categorize students, Warren (1968) concluded that "...the need for conceptual schemes to describe students is apparently great enough for the Clark-Trow subcultures to have been used for that purpose in spite of their deficiencies" (p. 214). The two core dimensions of the Clark-Trow Typology (Newcomb & Wilson, 1996, p. 25) are the extent to which a student identifies with the institution and the extent to which a student is involved with ideas. The four subcultures are defined based on the intersection of the two dimensions: (a) Academic subculture defined as much involvement with ideas and much identification with the institution; (b) Collegiate subculture defined as much identification with the institution and little involvement with ideas; (c) Vocational subculture defined as little identification with the institution and little involvement with ideas and little identification with the institution.

According to Wilder, McKeegan, and Midkiff (2000): "Clark and Trow can be credited with conceptualizing distinct student types, stimulating a searching for underlying student dimensions, and launching a major body of research in student characteristics and student development" (p. 527). The initial studies of the Clark-Trow Typology were conducted over a relatively brief span of years from 1968 to 1981. Several were reliability and validity studies (e.g., Kees, 1971; Kees, 1974; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977; Warren, 1968) that affirmed the Clark-Trow model.

In the late 1990s, research on the Clark and Trow subcultures and other student typologies reemerged in a series of studies (Wilder, Midkiff, Dunkerly, & Skelton, 1996; Wilder, McKeegan, Midkiff, Skelton, & Dunkerly, 1977; Wilder, McKeegan, & Midkiff, 2000). Kuh, Hu, and Vesper (2000) provided new understandings of the relevance of the set of subcultures and the usefulness of typologies more generally, and commented about the Clark and Trow typology as follows: "Its lasting popularity is due to its parsimony and heuristic applications" (p. 230). Only Kees (1974), however, examined how the relative percentages of students in the four types had changed over time, and found that the percentages of students in the academic and collegiate subcultures remained virtually unchanged between 1966 and 1971. No studies have included longitudinal data on how relative percentages in each subculture have changed in the last three decades.

Studying students' leisure interests is one arena in which the two core dimensions of the Clark-Trow Typology (i.e., identification with the institution and involvement with ideas) might be explicated further. Leisure may be defined as an "attitude or state of mind in which the individual subjectively believes that he or she is pursuing an activity for personal idiosyncratic reasons rather than as a result of external coercion" (Tinsley & Tinsley, 1982, p. 105).

Henderson (1996) concluded that explorations of leisure activities present an opportunity to better understand the perspectives of diverse segments of the college student population. Since the construction and expansion of recreation sports facilities, unions and other facilities have increased dramatically in the last decade on college and university campuses, information on the changing leisure activities of college students enables sound facilities planning to accommodate the distinct leisure activities of the four subcultures. The predominant literature in the field of leisure studies has not focused specific attention to the leisure interests of college students, while the predominant emphasis in studies of the outside-of-class activities of undergraduates has focused on co-curricular activities. One leisure activity, reading for pleasure, has decreased, perhaps as a function of the technological orientation of today's generation of college students (Jeffries & Atkin, 1996).

As colleges and universities broaden the range of opportunities available to enrolled students, it is important to recognize that "the student body" is not a homogeneous group of students all of whom have the same commitment to the institution and to the world of ideas. In fact, as various authors (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Lowery, 2001) hypothesize the existence of a single type of college student today, the Millennial student, institutions may be less inclined to think about the distinct differences in subcultures within the undergraduate population at a given institution. As institutions consider how to provide supportive services and leisure activities for an increasingly diverse population in terms of age, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation, research based on typological frameworks can clarify the distinct lifestyles of subgroups of students. Dilley (2005), for example, proposed a typology of non-heterosexual male collegiate identities as a framework for understanding the subcultures of six types of non-heterosexual males. Knowing how to best serve students on campus requires a comprehensive understanding of how they spend their time when they are not attending class, studying, or working.

The purposes of this study were: (a) to determine if the relative percentages of students identified with each of the four subcultures originally identified by Clark and Trow; (1996) have changed during the past 30 years; (b) to determine differences among the four subcultures in selected student characteristics (e.g., gender and year-in-school); and (c) to identify the distinguishing patterns of leisure activities of the four subcultures.

Method

Institutional Context

The institution is a public, research extensive, land-grant institution located in a Midwestern metropolitan area. The institution has become more residential, more selective in its undergraduate admissions, and more diverse in its undergraduate population since the mid-1970s. Whereas there were 4,235 oncampus housing spaces in 1976, there are 6,293 in 2006. During the same time period, the percentage of women undergraduates increased from 45% to 53 %, and the percentage of students of color increased from 8% in 1986 to 17% in 2006.

Sample Selection

The Student Interest Survey (SIS), described below, was mailed by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs to the home addresses of 600 randomly selected and currently enrolled undergraduates, except for 2006 when the process was changed to a web-based survey and the request to respond was sent to 950 undergraduates. The study was repeated every five-years beginning in 1976. The response rates ranged from a high of 91% in 1986 to a low of 67% with the last print survey in 2001 and a 35% response rate in 2006 using the web-based instrument. A follow-up procedure used in the first six administrations was to call non-respondents. The lower response rates for more recent years are consistent with the greater difficulty in achieving high response rates noted by others who administer surveys in the higher education context (Porter, 2004). The lowest response rate in 2006 is likely due, in part, to the increasing use of web-based surveys at the study institution.

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 contains the demographic characteristics of respondents for each of the years. Chi-square analyses were performed to determine if characteristics of respondents varied across time. Results indicated significant differences for each of the variables: gender (Chi-square = 74.30, p < .001); year-in-school (Chi-square =177.83, p < .001); race/ethnicity (Chi-square =166.33, p < .001); and distance of residence from campus (Chi-square=263.48, p < .001). Differences in characteristics of respondents across the seven administrations are generally parallel to the changing demographic characteristics of the undergraduate population since 1976, such as the increasing enrollment of women and students of color.

Table 1

Descriptive Characteristics of Respondents, Percentages by Year

Year	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
N	534	483	503	434	375	334	332
Gender							
Male	52.1	56.8	52.4	48.3	49.3	48.2	35.8
Female	47.9	43.2	47.6	51.7	50.7	51.8	64.2
Year in School							
Freshman	18.7	19.0	16.3	13.6	21.3	19.5	21.7
Sophomore	31.5	26.1	17.5	15.9	16.5	21.0	23.2
Junior	21.0	26.5	24.5	23.0	22.7	25.1	22.9
Senior	28.8	28.4	41.7	47.5	39.5	34.4	32.2
Race							
Black		1.5	1.5	1.4	3.9	3.7	3.8
American Indian		0.0	.2	.9	2.2	1.2	1.6
Asian American		1.7	3.9	5.3	7.2	5.5	7.6
Chicano/Latino		0.4	.8	.9	1.7	2.2	1.6
White		93.3	92.1	87.1	80.4	82.5	85.4

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Table 1 (continued)

Distance Campus						
On campus	17.5	16.5	19.7	22.5	26.5	28.0
Less than one mile	13.3	17.7	17.2	19.3	18.7	16.6
1-3 miles	15.8	15.1	16.9	11.8	6.0	15.4
4-10 miles	28.9	27.2	26.2	20.4	17.8	17.5
Greater than 10 miles	24.5	23.5	20.0	17.8	21.1	22.6

Instrument

The SIS, developed by research staff in student affairs, institutional research, and academic affairs at the study institution, was designed to track changes in the relative percentages in each of the subcultures identified by Clark and Trow (1966), to provide information useful in the planning of student leisure activities, and to determine students' opinions about timely student life topics (e.g., a proposed remodeling of the student union on campus). The total numbers of items on the SIS varied as a function of the numbers of items pertaining to specific time-bound situations on campus. A total of 53 core items from the SIS were included in the present analysis due to their salience in characterizing activities and leisure interests of the four student subcultures.

Respondents were asked to indicate which one of four statements most accurately described their perspective on their college experience. (a) Academic Subculture: "Although I may ultimately be concerned about a career, currently I am interested in enriching myself through education focusing on the world of knowledge and ideas;" (b) Collegiate Subculture: "Although my academic work and progress are important, I believe an equally significant part of the college experience exists outside the classroom. Participation in campus life and activities is important to me;" (c) Vocational Subculture: "Of greatest importance to me is getting a degree in my chosen field. Consequently, other intellectual and social activities are necessarily of secondary importance to me;" and (d) Non-Conformist Subculture: "Although I find the University environment stimulating, I feel alienated from the institution and its formal programs and activities. Currently, I am interested in pursuing the meaning and purpose of life through involvement and self-exploration outside the University."

Analysis

A chi-square analysis was performed to determine if there was a difference in undergraduates' self-identified membership with one of the four subcultures over the seven administrations of the SIS during the aforementioned years.

Given the much lower response rate for the 2006 web-base survey and the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the decision was made to exclude the 2006 respondents from the analyses related to the second and third purposes of this research study (i.e., differences in the student characteristics among types and differences among types in leisure activities). Responses to additional questions concerning overall satisfaction with the undergraduate experience, perceptions about the importance of community on campus demographic characteristics, and evaluations of campus experiences were used to identify differences among subcultures. For these analyses, statistics appropriate to the item type were used (i.e., one-way analysis of variance (e.g., for differences among subcultures in an overall satisfaction rating) and the chisquare statistic (e.g., for gender).

A second set of analyses focused on the identification of leisure activities within subcultures. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences among the students within the four subcultures in their participation in each of the leisure activities. Post-hoc statistical comparisons of each subculture with the other three subcultures combined were conducted to construct a profile of the leisure activities that distinguished among the four subcultures.

Results

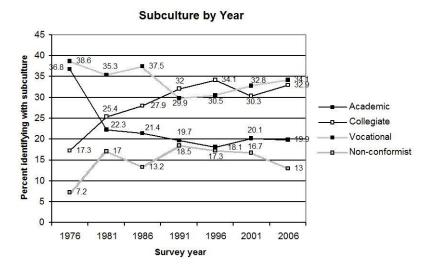
The first section describes changes over time in subcultures and the associated characteristics of students in each subculture. The second section discusses variations in leisure activities across subcultures.

Changes over Time in Subcultures

Figure 1 portrays the statistically significant change in subculture identification over the past 30 years (Chi-square = 119.45, df= 18, p <.001). The percentage of undergraduates who identified with the academic subculture declined significantly between 1976 and 1981, from 37% to 22%, but has remained relatively stable since then. During the period from 1976 to 1996, the percentage of students identifying with the collegiate subculture almost doubled, from 17% to 34%, respectively. In the most recent administration in 2006, 33% identified with the collegiate subculture and 34 % identified with the vocational subculture. The percentage identified with the non-conformist subculture ranged from a low of 7% in 1976 to a high of 18.5% in 1991.

Figure 1

Percentages of Students in Academic, Collegiate, Vocational and Non-conformist Subcultures, by Year



Characteristics of the academic subculture.

Results indicated that students identifying with the academic subculture are more likely to be women, have graduated from a high school close to the study institution, ride a bus to get to campus, and live more than a mile from campus. Age is one difference between academics and non-conformists (both of which have much involvement with ideas): 42% of the academics are under 21, while 30% of the non-conformists are under 21. Of the students identifying with the academic subculture, 27% work more than 20 hours per week, while 40% of the non-conformists work more than 20 hours per week. By way of contrast, 39% of students in the vocational subculture work more than 40 hours per week.

While the importance of personally experiencing a sense of community at the institution is equally important to both the academic and non-conformist subcultures, 40% of the academics actually experience a feeling of community to at least some extent compared to only 14% of the non-conformists. Non-conformists appear to have the same need to connect to the university community, but perhaps are unable to find those activities that engage them in campus life.

Collegiate subculture.

Results indicated that students identifying with the collegiate subculture see extracurricular involvement as an important part of their college experience. Students identifying with the collegiate subculture are somewhat more likely to be men, underclass students, live in residence halls and fraternity and sorority houses, and have graduated from high schools more distant from the institution. They tend to work less than students identifying with other subcultures and tend to have more disposable income for leisure pursuits. A sense of community is much more important to them, and they experience a feeling of community to a much greater extent than other students do.

The results of a one-way analysis of variance indicated statistically significant differences among subcultures in overall satisfaction with their college experience (F (3, 1,101) = 27.85, p < .001). On a six-point satisfaction scale from 1=Very dissatisfied to 6= Very satisfied, the mean satisfaction scores with the college experience were as follows: Collegiate (4.7); Academic (4.5); Vocational (4.3); and Non-Conformist (3.7).

Characteristics of the vocational subculture.

The highest percentage of students identifying with the vocational subculture own or rent a house or rent an apartment alone, and either drive alone or carpool to get to campus. A higher percentage of students identifying with the vocational subculture consider themselves to be commuters and nearly half travel greater than 10 miles to get to campus. Very few are members of fraternities and sororities. Students identifying with the vocational subculture are the most heavily involved in employment: 39% work 40 or more hours per week. Despite working more hours per week, they also study more hours per week than do students of any other subculture. A sense of community at the university is not particularly important to the vocational subculture.

Characteristics of the non-conformist subculture.

More non-conformists are women than men, live off campus, and hold a job. They study significantly fewer hours per week students in other subcultures. A sense of community is not important to them, and they experience a sense of community with the university least of all the subcultures. Of the four subculture types, they are also least satisfied with their university experience.

Variations in leisure activities across subcultures

By examining the leisure activities in which students participate, it is possible to discover patterns of leisure activities for students in each of the four subcultures distinguishing them from each of the other three. Figure 2 identifies the leisure activities that distinguished each subculture from the other three.

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Figure 2

Much Involvement with Ideas

Leisure Activities in which Participation was Highest and Lowest by Academic, Collegiate, Vocational, and Non-conformist Subcultures

Percents represent at least occasional participation

NON-CONFORMISTS

Do more than other subcultures

Listen to recorded music (98.1%)

Read books (92.3%)

Watch rental movies (90.0%)

Art (56.5%)

Sing (56.3%)

Crafts (45.6%)

Read literary magazines (43.3%)

Creative writing (42.6%)

Do less than other subcultures

Watch sports on TV (71.5%)

Attend University sports events (48.9%)

Little Institutional Identification

ACADEMICS

Do more than other subcultures

Read books (93.4%)

Read news magazines (82.5%)

Sing (56.4%)

Art (53.2%)

Creative writing (44.8%)

Crafts (43.7%)

Read literary magazines (41.6%)

Do less than other subcultures

Watch rental movies (81.5%)

Attend pro sports events (52.9%)

Much Institutional Identification

COLLEGIATES

VOCATIONALS

Do more than other subcultures

TV daily news/weather/sports (93.2%)

Do more than other subcultures

Listen to music on the radio (99.3%)

Listen to recorded music (99.0%)

Go to parties (95.7%)

Watch rental movies (90.9%)

Watch sports on TV (84.4%)

Attend University sports events (76.8%)

Go out to a bar/tavern (72.0%)

Go out dancing (71.9%)

Attend pro sports events (66.5%)

Do volunteer work (52.2%)

Do less than other subcultures

Art (40.4%)

Crafts (33.4%)

Do less than other subcultures

Attend musical performances (68.6%)

Go out to bar/tavern (61.3%)

Lectures/discussions (55.3%)

Go to art museums (47.4%)

Film/photography (38.4%) Art (36.7%)

Creative writing (27.5%) Acting/dance/drama (18.6%)

Little Institutional Identification

Much Institutional identification

ittle Involvement with Ideas

Leisure activities of academic subculture.

The activities in which the academics participate are clearly intellectual or cultural in nature and the academics tend not to be interested in sports as spectators. Of the academics, 93% spend leisure time reading books, but only 53% of them spend leisure time attending pro sporting events.

Leisure activities of collegiate subculture.

In reviewing the activities that characterize the collegiate subculture in Figure 2, one can observe concentrations in the electronic music media, in sports and social activities, all of which are "popular culture" in nature. Of members of the collegiate subculture, 99% listen to music on the radio, but only 33% devote leisure time to crafts. Students who identify themselves as members of the collegiate subculture have lesser involvement in cultural and intellectual interests than students in the other three subcultures.

Leisure activities of vocational subculture.

Perhaps due to less time for leisure activities as a result of their employment, their academic programs and more family responsibilities, members of the vocational subculture have lower participation rates in most of the leisure activities. Of students identified with the vocational subculture, 93% devote time to daily news/weather and sports on television.

Leisure activities of non-conformist subculture.

Non-conformists have the highest participation rates in activities involving self expression, such as singing and participating in arts and crafts. For example, 98% of non-conformists devote leisure time to listening to recorded music, but are less likely to devote leisure time to all sports activities.

Discussion

Clark and Trow (1966) offered their own projections about the future of the subcultures: "...the collegiate subculture, whose panoply of big-time sports and fraternity weekends has provided the dominant image of college life since the end of the nineteenth century, is now in decline..." (p. 27). Compared to 1976 when 17% of undergraduates at the study institution claimed to identify with the collegiate subculture, 33% of undergraduates identified with the collegiate subculture in 2006. Thus, at least for the sample, this prediction has not come true. The above forecast applied to the undergraduate population in general, whereas the results of this study pertain to one particular public, research extensive university. The decrease in identification with the academic subculture is consistent with Astin's (1998) findings concerning lower academic engagement of entering college students beginning in the early 1980s. To the extent that systematic changes occurred in the undergraduate education

population at the study institution, the percentage changes may not be an accurate reflection of broader changes in the perspectives of undergraduates attending public research extensive universities.

Aside from the clear patterns of growth in the collegiate subculture from 1976 to 1981 and the decline in the academic subculture from 1976 through 1996, fluctuations in the vocational and nonconformist subcultures at the study institution perhaps reflect the ebb and flow of changes in society at large and the subsequent and parallel changes in perspectives of undergraduates. The percentage of undergraduates identifying with the non-conformist subculture was lowest in 1976, at 7.2%, consistent with Peterson's (1965) conclusion that nonconformists represented a small minority of college students. Several possible explanations for the low percentage compared to subsequent five-year assessments may be the difficulty of indefinitely sustaining antiwar sentiment, a primary thrust of non-conformists in the early 1970s, and the fact that the military draft ended in 1976.

The subculture findings reflect only snapshots of the undergraduate student population on seven distinct occasions, surveys conducted at five-year intervals. They do not measure changes among individuals over the course of their undergraduate experience. Kuh, Hu, and Vesper (2000) suggested that "a substantial fraction of students change their primary reference group during college" (p. 241). Cross-sectional comparisons are suggestive of some possible changes across the undergraduate experience. The overall percentage of students who identified with the academic subculture is 20.5% and varied less than one percent from first to fifth-year students. The percent of first-year students identifying with the collegiate subculture is 35% and there is a slow and progressive decline to 28% among fourth-year students, followed by a larger decline to 20% among fifth-year students. This trend contrasts with a significantly higher percent of fifth-year students identifying with the vocational subculture, from roughly 32% for the first four years to 38% for the fifth year. Among first-year undergraduates, only 13% identify with the nonconformist subculture but non-conformists as a percent of the student population slowly but progressively increase to 21% among fifth-year undergraduates. This pattern may reflect an increasing exposure to new and different ideas over one's undergraduate experience or the possibility that nonconformists may be more likely to persist to graduation.

The use of the Clark-Trow Typology to monitor student dispositions over time is instructive to those who work with students in higher education, particularly those in admissions, academic administration, student services, and campus life. Astin (1993) noted: "It is virtually impossible to carry on a meaningful conversation about American college students without invoking taxonomic language" (p. 36). As Luan (2006) noted, typological strategies are underused in the context of research on college students, in spite of the potential for such

research strategies to add new understandings about an increasingly diverse population of students served by most colleges and universities. There is a tendency to examine differences as a function of obvious individual differences variables such as gender and race/ethnicity rather than differences among student groups defined in terms of similarities within the particular subgroup of students.

One of the benefits of a college education, if one is fully immersed, is exposure to new and different ideas, which may have a profound influence on students' lives. Kuh, Hu, and Vesper's (2000) finding that 43 percent of students belong to types associated with underperformance and lack of educational purpose suggests the magnitude of today's challenges. Typologies are often criticized for their simplicity and the perhaps rigid classification of a student into one type versus another. At the same time, a typological system such as that developed based on the initial work by Clark and Trow (1966) forces institutions to think in terms of the quite different needs and expectations of subsets of the undergraduate population.

The value of this approach is illustrated by examining the extent to which the subcultures' members vary with regard to visiting bars and taverns as one form of leisure activity. The two subcultures that were most likely to engage in this leisure activity were the collegiate and vocational subcultures (72% and 61%, respectively). Both of these subcultures have low levels of identification with ideas. Although results of the most recent national survey of entering freshmen (Pryor, Hurtado, Saenz, Lindholm, Korn, & Mahoney, 2006) indicated that drinking in high school is at a record low, other studies, including one at the study institution, have indicated that binge drinking is at a record high.

Implications for Practice

Sizing up the student population in terms of students' basic motivations for attending the university and how their motivations are reflected in their activities and interests are important to examine. This will give student affairs practitioners, as well as those responsible for facilities and educational planning, a greater foundation for developing programs to address the needs of the four distinct subcultures of students. Results of this study have several notable implications for student affairs professionals who work in the diverse institutions that constitute U.S. higher education today. First, institutions that administer the CIRP American Freshman Survey might add institution-specific questions to determine relative percentages of entering students who fall into each of the four subcultures.

Second, especially institutions that have characteristics similar to the study institution, might consider using the findings on leisure activities of each subculture. They may be used as a basis for determining if institutional

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structures and facilities enable such leisure activities within the campus. Awareness of shifts in the relative percentages within each of the cultures can be used in planning services and leisure opportunities most likely to satisfy the needs of undergraduates.

Third, being aware of cross-sectional changes in subcultures and their associated leisure interests can be used to target publicity to those students most likely to participate in certain activities. This also allows for targeting specific activities which may appeal to each subculture. Fourth, use may be made of information regarding drinking behaviors within each subculture. The different levels of drinking within the subcultures suggest the value of developing alternate leisure activities for the collegiate and vocational subcultures as substitutes for drinking activities.

Fourth, the different levels of drinking of the subcultures suggest the value of developing alternate leisure activities for the collegiate and vocational subcultures as substitutes for drinking activities.

Conclusion

Although the undergraduate population today is characterized as having certain distinguishing features (e.g., the Millennial student), it is imperative that we understand that, at least within the population of undergraduates at the study institution, there continue to be quite distinct subgroups of students. In an era in which much emphasis is placed on improving the quality of services provided to the generic "student as consumer," considering the distinct student subcultures is no less important today than when Clark and Trow (1966) proposed the four subcultures over four decades ago. According to Kuh, Hu, and Vesper (2000) "policies and resources can be enacted and resources targeted in an effort to channel student behavior toward activities that will enhance their learning and personal development" (p. 242). Developing programs and services that strengthen students' identification with the institution and simultaneously engage students in conversations about ideas (i.e., the two dimensions underlying the Clark-Trow (1966) subcultures) is fundamental to the core mission of colleges and universities. Students' leisure interests provide student affairs professionals an opportunity to engage students in activities that are conducive to an interesting and satisfying undergraduate experience.

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