

students to experience college life and to become acquainted with the university. To ensure that the experience is positive for admitted students, two aspects of the program require special attention. First, there must be excellent communication between, as well as within, all campus offices involved in the program. Miscommunication can result in disorganization that could have a negative impact on the participants.

Second, the campus leaders and hosts who facilitate the program must be positive, enthusiastic, and comfortable interacting with new people. These leaders have the largest amount of interaction with the admitted students, and therefore strongly impact their views of the university. With communication and strong leadership, the "Student for a Day" program can be an excellent addition to any college or university's admitted student programs.

BOOK REVIEW

Daniel P. Nadler, *Associate Editor*

Empty Nest...Full Heart: The Journey From Home to College

By Andrea Van Steenhouse, Ph.D.

Denver, CO: *Simpler Life Press*, 1998, 183 pages

Reviewed by

Brenda L. McKenzie

The field of literature targeted at parents and families of incoming students is growing. One recent addition to this market is *Empty Nest...Full Heart: The Journey from Home to College* by Andrea Van Steenhouse, Ph.D. The author presents information on the experiences of students and parents from the beginning of the senior year in high school into the first year in college.

The introduction to the book expresses this experience as a rite of passage. The author highlights how all the moments of child rearing are leading to this point – "to produce loving, competent, responsible adults" (p.5). This time and these experiences are portrayed as a journey – which is certainly something to which parents can relate.

Section 1 – "That Incomparable Senior Year" – traces the emotions and activities of the senior year. Van Steenhouse provides a very comprehensive overview of how seniors behave and the joys and frustrations of their parents during this time. She acknowledges that different students will have different experiences. All parents, however, will have to face the sense of power seniors develop as an extension of the freedom and privilege provided them. Van Steenhouse accurately discusses that both parties will experience mixed emotions and that letting go is a gradual process. However, she portrays seniors as power-hungry beings who completely dismiss any structure in their lives. While some of this is definitely true, she allows for no middle ground where many students land. One key point that is made repeatedly is the need for parents to listen carefully. During the senior year, listening can be overlooked due to the limited time available to spend with the student.

Selecting a college is a major stage in the development of a senior's decision-making skills. Ambivalence is most likely to become an issue at home around this topic. Van Steenhouse presents a fairly accurate picture of the pains of the college selection process. She also addresses the industry of college consultants. The use of consultants as she describes it, however, does not take into account traditional aspects of a selection process such as "fit." Stress is a regular part of this decision making process, along with hope and expectancy.

Brenda L. McKenzie is Director of Orientation and a doctoral student at Kent State University.
Bmckenzi@kent.edu

Her advice to parents on how to cope with this time is very appropriate. She illustrates the secrecy students exhibit as part of the selection process and how children will hate being asked questions. She provides three key pieces of advice to parents:

- To see each stage as a natural process in letting go;
- To set parameters about the students' responsibility in selecting a college; and
- To not project their own needs onto their children.

This first section, which encompasses nearly a third of the book, would be most helpful if read before the senior year.

Section II – “When the Pie was Opened the Bird Began to Sing” – outlines the summer before the freshman year. It highlights how students try to pack more activity into a short time and that they need to be with friends or alone rather than with families. Denial increases as the impending reality of leaving closes in. Students avoid questions and make parents the problem. One of the best suggestions Van Steenhouse makes is for parents to use statements rather than questions when talking with their children about college. She also stresses flexibility in terms of being available to spend time with their children when they ask. Working during this final summer is portrayed as an intrusion into their freedom. Again, the author stresses the importance of communication. It is important to note that most mail from the college will be ignored with the exception of the all important roommate assignment.

Van Steenhouse spends an entire chapter discussing orientation and preparations for departure. Good examples are provided which illustrate what parents can gain from attending orientation. She suggests avoiding the need to get things organized, and she provides a list of helpful things to pack. The author uses only one paragraph in the entire book to address how commuters do not have the same issues. She does not, however, illustrate what those differences are and how to address them.

The author provides many examples of areas where children and parents will argue during this time. She tends to focus a lot on the negative and little on the positive. It is certainly important to make parents aware of the challenges facing them. But at the same time, more examples of good experiences should be provided so parents do not get the impression that all is bad. Many of the stories she shares provide personal illustration of the points made, but offer little in the way of solutions.

Section III – “This is the Way We Wash Our Clothes” – addresses the transition to college. This is the “symbolic closure of the preparation period and the start of a different life for all” (p. 111). Parents will question what they might have done or said to better prepare their children. It is an emotional time for all, but it is important for parents to remember they are the adults and they need to be supportive rather than emotional. Students are experiencing many conflicting emotions, even if they do not admit it and they need their parents to be strong.

This section describes many of the challenges that are a part of the freshman year – roommates, adjusting to different habits, where to study, laundry, food, and health. While these issues are common experiences for freshmen, there are no specifics

in terms of advice for parents on how to help their students work through these problems. And, again, the unique needs of commuters are not addressed. This section is written more for the student as the primary audience.

Homesickness, relationships and money are all briefly mentioned. The author provides many good personal stories and examples of what to expect with little in the way of suggestions, practical advice or guidance. The one exception is the over-emphasis on phone calls and e-mails. This suggestion is made continually almost to the point of implying that there no other ways to communicate or to help with homesickness. Van Steenhouse does, however, suggest family visits to campus, especially for family days or little sibling weekends.

One key chapter in this section addresses the need for students to study and to learn how to manage their time. It also addresses some of the sensitive topics freshmen may face such as assaults, alcohol, cheating, credit cards, and sexually transmitted diseases. While these are very critical issues, again, they are quickly glossed over and little in terms of how parents can help is provided.

Section IV – “Empty Nest...Full Heart” – summarizes the final issues with which parents may have to deal. The author acknowledges the overwhelming emotions of dropping a child off, letting go, and trying to help the student negotiate his or her own way. The point is made that parents will be striving to learn their place in this new relationship. That means trying to stay connected while giving up control. Van Steenhouse again addresses how parents' expectations can color their view, revisiting an issue raised several times in the book.

In this section, the author briefly mentions that video games play a large role in college life. What she does not address, however, is the increasing amount of time students are spending on e-mail and surfing the web. No concrete advice is given on how to help a student find a balance.

One of the best chapters in this section addresses what will happen when the student comes home for Thanksgiving and beyond. Van Steenhouse accurately describes how the student will have changed and how he/she will want to spend time with friends rather than family. She also correctly points out that the student will have changed every time they come home; they are becoming more of who they are going to be.

The author does a good job of addressing the feelings parents may experience. In one brief section, she also addresses how siblings may flounder with these changes. The key message that ends the book is that parents and children are in transition and starting a new life. The hope is that although parents experience an empty nest, their hearts will be full.

Each section concludes with a series of home remedies. Some of the more pertinent examples include:

- make time to spend together;
- don't wait for the right time to talk about it;
- keep the routine;
- get e-mail and learn how to use it;
- send gossipy letters about hometown happenings and care packages; and

- continue traditions with siblings still at home.

Every home remedy list concludes with, "say 'I love you' often." This is a key point that is often overlooked in the flurry of activity and emotion.

Parents who read this book will feel that their emotions have merit. Van Steenhouse does a good job of providing relevant insight and personal stories from other parents. This lets parents know they are not alone in what they are experiencing with their child and the emotions they are feeling. It can go a long way toward calming the reader. Since almost half of the book addresses the senior year and that following summer, it should be read early.

Professionals who read the book may be frustrated by the lack of advice on how parents can assist their students in working through this transition. It also lacks specific advice to parents on addressing their own transition. It does, however, provide many good examples of what freshmen may experience. In addition, the home remedies offer practical suggestions to parents. This is certainly a book orientation professionals could recommend to parents.

INFORMATION

Guidelines for Manuscript Authors

The Journal of College Orientation and Transition focuses on the trends, practices, research, and development of programs, policies, and activities related to the matriculation, orientation, transition, and retention of college students. Also encouraged are literature reviews, "how-to" articles, innovative initiatives, successful practices, and new ideas.

Publication Schedule

Spring and fall editions.

Circulation

Approximately 1,500.

Style Guide

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fourth Edition.

Recommended Length

Should not exceed 3,000 words (approximately 12 pages of double-spaced, type-written copy with one-inch margins and including abstract, tables and figures, and references).

"Campus Notes" Submission

Manuscripts briefs on campus programs, "how-to" articles, successful innovations, and pragmatic issues relevant to the orientation and transition of students are encouraged. They should not exceed 1,000 words and should be submitted directly to the "Campus Notes" Associate Editor.

Book Reviews

Book reviews of current appropriate professional publications are encouraged. Submissions should not exceed 1,500 words and should be submitted directly to the "Book Reviews" Associate Editor.

Perspectives

Points-of-view and reflections written in editorial or speech writing style.

Abstract

Include an abstract on a separate page following the title page (except for "Campus Notes" and "Perspectives" manuscripts). The abstract should be 50 words or less.

Accepted Manuscripts

Once the manuscript has been accepted for publication, a revised copy should be submitted on a 3 1/2 " disk (Macintosh™ preferred; MS-DOS acceptable) with word processing software specified.