[Paul Begley was the keynote speaker at the 2001 annual conference held in Ottawa October 11–14. His remarks are presented below.]

Academic Advising and Living the Examined Life: Making the Case for a Values Perspective

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Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." However, if the unexamined life is not worth living, then the unexamined value is not worth holding. To make this argument, perspectives and some tools are offered that may help advisors become better at their jobs. In addition, the suggestions might make all educators into better persons, and of particular interest, demonstrate practical contributions advisors can make to shape a better world.

In October 2001, we attended a conference held in Charlottesville, Virginia. In her keynote presentation, Colleen Larson of the New York University commented on the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. She observed that everybody in New York wanted to be a fireman or rescue worker. This observation was not hard to understand. People were still stunned by the events. People naturally wanted to respond by taking action. They wanted to make specific concrete contributions. Many people wanted to give blood. Acts of giving were evident all over North America. This giving was a practical and almost metaphysical response to the tragic events. Everyone wants to react against the uncertainty, fight back against the evil acts, and deny the very scary implications what these events convey about human nature. Humans seemed suddenly to realize that the potential for evil among themselves has not changed in thousands of years, and everyone wanted to balance that capacity for evil with equivalent acts of greatness.

Clearly, not everyone could be a rescue worker at the World Trade Center, but we believe that educators have a critical role to play in the aftermath of these horrific events. The rescue workers and members of security agencies, government agencies, the military, and the airlines all have specific and direct actions in which they can engage. Unfortunately, some of those actions, especially those within the airline industry, are akin to shutting the barn door after the horse has escaped. But at least these folks get to take action. Educators naturally feel a little envious and frustrated with their more passive roles; at least they do until they think about it and realize that they too have a role to play.

A day or two after the terrorist attacks, New York governor George Pataki expressed the need to get at the roots of the terrorist problem as well as respond to immediate needs. Educators are ideally placed to attack the roots of the problem and are not limited to reacting, patching, and rescuing. They have a more long-term and proactive role to play in reshaping life after 9-11. In fact, educators are ideally situated to contribute toward the elimination of the hate and despair that make such evil acts possible. Governor Pataki gave an example of one area in which educators can make a difference. He said that all citizens need to move away from narrow, ethnocentric thinking. Concepts such as globalization need to be extended beyond North American notions of profits and economics. Globalization can also mean that a commitment to worldwide standards of health and education is a responsibility for all nations.

Many advisors probably watched the special episode of "West Wing" that aired a few weeks following the September 11 attacks. We felt the producers of that episode on terrorism and the actors performing as White House staff clearly identified the essence of the problem faced in society. They clarified the importance of maintaining and promoting a plurality of ideas. Plurality is distinctive of democratic societies and is the antithesis to many of the evils in the world: cults, fascism, demagogues, and terrorism. The promotion of plurality, diversity, and tolerance connects very clearly to our objective in this paper as we make a case for adopting a values perspective on academic advising.

We believe that a values perspective can contribute to advisors' work in three particular ways:

1. the development of advisor *sophistication* (that is, an extension of existing skills),
2. the development of advisor *sensitivity* to the value orientations of self and others,
3. and the *synergy* that results when sophistication and sensitivity are consciously cultivated.

Through these values, we advocate the promotion of life-long learning and life-long reflective practice as a habit of mind for advisors, for people who work with advisors, and for advisees.

Where Do Values Fit Into Life and Work?

Societies have become more pluralistic and the demands and needs of communities are more diversified and insistent. This is certainly the case in urban areas of North America since the 1960s. All people are experiencing the impact in their home and work lives. As a consequence of this pluralism and related demands, the nature of administration and academic advising has been altered dramatically. One obvious outcome is the observed increase in value conflicts. Always present to some extent, if only as a result of the generation gap between adult faculty and youthful students, value conflicts are now a defining characteristic of most administrative roles. In recent years the work of educational leaders has become much less predictable, less structured, and more laden with conflict. School administrators increasingly encounter value-conflict situations in which consensus cannot be achieved. This situation renders obsolete the traditional, rational notions of problem solving. Now, because no possible solution will satisfy everyone involved, administrators often must be satisfied with merely responding to a situation.

Value dilemmas manifest in a range of different ways. Some occur within the mind of the individual; for example, the relatively nonnegotiable personal core values related to integrity, honesty, and justice might compete with each other, or more likely, they may conflict with professional, organizational, or social expectations. Of course, value conflicts also may reflect the outcomes of interactions among two or more people. They may also be outcomes of an incongruence among several value arenas relevant to administration; that is, they are conflicts occurring among the domains of personal values, professional values, or organizational values. More than ever before, administrators in 2001 recognize that values have an impact on schools, chiefly by influencing the screening of information or definition of alternatives. Values blind or illuminate the facts and circumstances of lives.

We adopted the definition of values put forth by Parsons and Shils (1962, p. 395): "Values are a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action." Next, we explored the term as it relates to psychology, speech, and actions. Conceptualizing values in this manner allows one to highlight the function of values in making choices. In administration, the making of choices is usually termed "decision making," "problem solving," or "dilemma solving"; these activities are familiar to most administrators. So, values are essentially a conception of the desirable with motivating force. However, further explication is required.

Within the administrative context of advising, one finds it possible, or even necessary, to distinguish the values manifested by individuals from the more collective social values of a group, profession, society, or organization. There is an interactive relationship between the formation of personal values and social values. Values appear to be derived from both within the individual's psychology as well as from the individual's interaction with collective groups, organizations, and societies. For this reason, a balanced appreciation of the relationships among personal, professional, organizational, and social values must be established. The bulk of the literature on leadership and management has not been helpful in this regard because it reflects a predominantly organizational perspective, to the extent that individual and professional values are often ignored and assumed to be the same as or fully subordinated to an organizational imperative. The current interest of many educators in organizational learning stands as a shining example of this pathology. In the literature on this subject, the importance of the individual to the leadership process is usually acknowledged solely on the first page and henceforth lost to an unremitting collective perspective.

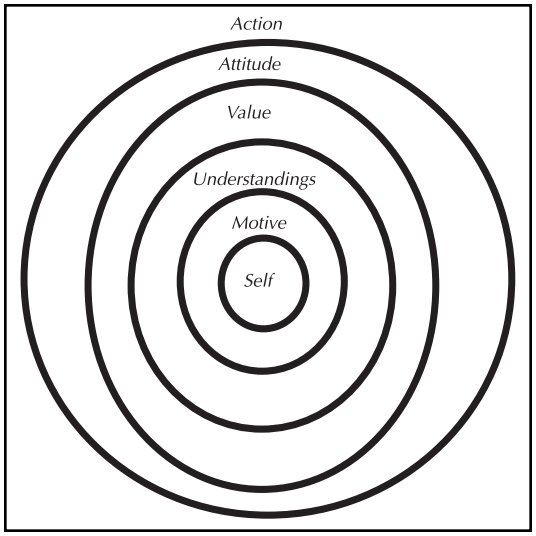
During a time of heightened social awareness and environmental activism, one can easily see why a profit-oriented corporate sector might not be allowed to dominate or remain unaccountable to the broader interests of community and society. The same can be said of educational organizations. Sophisticated administrators are wise to consciously distinguish among the arenas of personal, professional, organizational, and social values of their environments.

A Syntax of Values Terminology

To conceptually situate values within the broader context of one person's being, basic questions should be asked: Where do values fit as a component of human nature? What are their relationships to the other dimensions of an individual's or a group's identity? What are the relationships of actions, speech, and attitudes to values? What are the relationships of values to psychological motivations? One of the simplest ways to illustrate the

relationships among these identity components is through the use of an onion analogy that illustrates a syntax of values terminology. Figure 1 is an adaptation of a graphic found in several of Hodgkinson's books (1991). When considering the figure, the reader should note that one person is portrayed in the analogy; the figure does not represent a group, organization, or collective social context.

Figure 1 Values syntax



The outermost ring represents the observable actions and speech of the individual. Through the behaviors of another, an observer makes empirical attributions about the value orientations of the observed person. Observed actions and speech are also the sources of data used to generate research findings. Because no other data are empirically discernable, most people intuitively rely on the clues provided by the actions and attitudes to make predictive insights into others' values. In general, this is a sound strategy, but its reliability in day-to-day life is as limited as when it is applied in a research context. As political leaders, principals, professors, parents, and students regularly demonstrate through their speech and actions, the observable actions they manifest may or may not be accurate indicators of each person's underlying values; individuals may articulate or posture values that are quite different than those to which they are committed. This discrepancy between action and values implies the significant limitations associated with the reliability and validity of conventional research as a source of information. It also provides a cautionary note to educators as they interpret day-to-day events.

The second layer of the onion figure represents attitudes. Attitudes can be thought of as the thin membrane between values and the observable actions or speech of an individual. It is the permeable boundary of personality that acts as the interface between the psychological and the physical world. Attitudes can be formally defined as the predisposition to act specifically as a result of values or value systems acquired previously and elsewhere.

Consider how the values acquired in one personal or social context can have a general influence on the relatively specific attitudes (and actions) of the same individual or collective group operating in another context. For example, a school principal might discover that his or her attitudes toward children in the school change when he or she becomes a parent. Similarly, a person's values as an instructor and college administrator might spill over into the other social roles she or he carries out: army reserve officer, scout or guide leader, municipal politician, and so forth. The strength of this extended influence can be residual, significant, or it can intrude to such an extent that it overrides or neutralizes the influence of a second value or value system. Moreover, attitudes may be reflected in body language: posture, gait, or unconscious muscular tensions. These physical forms of communication are outward and visible signs of inward and mostly invisible inclinations.

The third onion-figure layer represents a domain or conceptual placeholder for the actual values held or manifested by an individual. For example, an individual might value chocolate over Australian red wines, a chat at the pub over reading, working independently over working with others, a monarchial system of government over a republican system. In the case of an educator, the individual might value phonics over the whole language approach, relatively controlled approaches to delegating authority over more laissez-faire styles of distributed leadership, computer mediated instruction over workbook exercises, or may prefer a student-centered as opposed to a teacher-centered curriculum. In fact, with a modest amount of cooperation from an individual, one can relatively easily catalogue that person's values. However, identifying these values is one thing; knowing why they are held is quite another.

Any specific value can be held in response to one or more in a range of potential motivations. For example, a person could subscribe to honesty to avoid the sanctions for dishonesty. In an alternative situation, she or he may manifest honesty because it is part of a shared professional or community orientation, because the consequences of widespread dis-

honesty is social chaos, because it is the right thing to do, or any combination of these basic levels of motivation. Furthermore, understanding the motivations of others becomes much more complicated when individuals deliberately or unwittingly manifest one value while being committed to another value.

To know the actual level of another's commitment, one must look two layers deeper into the value onion to find the motivations for manifesting a particular value. For example, the level of commitment to decisions by administrators that are tacitly justified on consequential (e.g., commitment to those that produce the highest enrollments) or consensual (e.g., commitment to university policy and traditions) grounds could just as easily be based on self-interest or personal preference. For example, the administrator may be saying to him or herself about a particular decision: "If I work this right, I'll get merit pay and a promotion." These commitments are also occasionally grounded in a transrational motivational base of will or in response to transcendental values of faith or duty. The innermost layers of the onion figure provide the key to understanding the nature and influence of values on life in general and administration in particular.

Between the values layer and motivational base layer of the figure is a separate layer labeled "available knowledge" or "understandings." The kinds of knowledge referenced at this level are acquired through life experiences, training, and reflection. The understandings provide the linkage between the basic motivational bases of the fifth layer and the specific values adopted and manifested by the individual. As a result of experience, training, and reflection, an individual responds to basic motivations by adopting particular value positions that will support the fulfillment of that basic motivation in a specific way. The value will be operationalized through actions or speech selected by the individual to achieve the valued objective. Of course, people vary in terms of the skills and sophistication they can bring to bear on achieving their objectives, and these factors depend on the quality of the knowledge at their disposal. This is generally applicable to all aspects of human enterprise, and an infinite number of examples can be offered. However, for the moment, consider how a skillful college or university administrator, consensually motivated as a professional to achieve a complex set of organizational objectives, might employ a carefully orchestrated strategic plan to achieve those educational objectives. In contrast, a less-experienced administrator, with the same consensual motivation, but responding based on different knowledge (or the absence thereof), might decide a memo is all that is required to achieve the same objective.

The motivational base layer of Figure 1 provides the key to understanding the nature and function of values. This is the motivating force dimension behind the adoption of a particular value which, as demonstrated through the layers of the figure, shapes attitudes and (potentially) subsequent actions. For the purposes of this article, four basic motivational bases are identified: personal preference or self-interest, an inclination toward consensus, an inclination toward or concern for consequences, and an inclination to respond to ethics or principles. See Table 1. These four motivational bases are rel-

Table 1 Four motivational bases for decision making

1. Consequences Based
Administrator is focused on desirable outcomes.
Decisions can be rationally justified with phrases such as: "The Internet is good for research" and "Standardized testing has proven results."

2. Consensus Based
Conformity with group norms, peer pressure, and expert opinion are important to the decision maker.
Decisions can be rationally justified through phrases such as: "ministry approved curriculum" and "the research says."

3. Preferences/Self-interest Based
Experience, memory, and comfort level are basis for decision.
Personal good is the result of decision.
No rational justification is offered: "I like teaching Phys Ed" and "Macs are better than PCs."

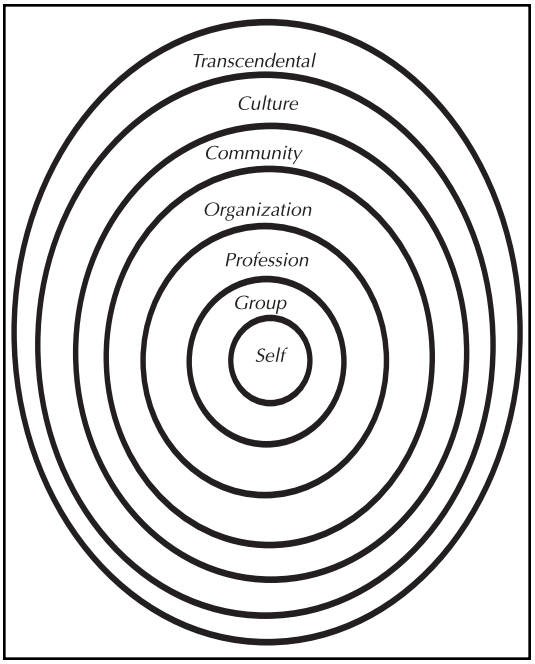
4. Ethics/Principles Based
Decisions are based on wisdom of the ages: The Golden Rule and "honesty is best policy."
Established cultural norms, such as those based on democracy, are the basis for decisions.
Entrenched societal values guide decision making; no rational justification is offered.

atively broad and arbitrary distinctions, and in any specific situation, people can simultaneously manifest a predisposition toward one or more of these motivational bases.

Research that we conducted during the spring of 2001 at the Region 5 (Great Lakes) NACADA Conference in Michigan produced findings very similar to prior research on the valuation processes of school administrators in several countries (Begley, 1999; Begley & Leonard, 1999). We found that the normative motivational bases for administrative decision making associated with academic advising are in the rational domains of consequences and consensus. Self-interest is infrequently acknowledged as a motivation, possibly because professional activity is usually publically accountable, and ethics and principles tend to be employed under special circumstances.

Motivational bases are at the core being of individuals, and values held by an individual reflect these motivational bases. Therefore, the utility of conducting research that merely describes or lists the values manifested by administrators, teachers, students, citizens, neighbors, or members of the family is limited. The description of someone's values may be interesting and relatively easy to determine, but why a person holds certain values is a more crucial question. Much of the early empirical research on values held by professionals in educational administration is descriptive and reveals little that is conventionally verifiable about motivation.

Figure 2 Arenas of administration



The innermost layer of the figure is labeled "self" and describes the essence of the individual. It includes the biological as well as the existential or transcendent self. Not a great deal is known or can be said about this inner core of the individual. Some would describe self as the soul, the force, or spark of life. It is included in the figure primarily as a conceptual placeholder for such matters.

The Arenas of Valuation: Sources of Values and Value Conflicts

Although much of the leadership literature is fundamentally organizational in context and emphasis, the full environment of administration is much more complex. Any administrator who attempts to lead and manage without reference to the broader environmental context will quickly encounter difficulty. The values of profession, organization, community, and society are not necessarily consistent or compatible with each other. Another onion figure can be used to illustrate arenas of valuation. The term "arena" highlights the multiple domains and functions of administration. Seven arenas can be identified to conceptualize the environment of administration (Figure 2). These are the interactive environments within which valuation processes, and by extension, administration occur. Important dynamics occur among these arenas.

Conceptualizing administration through multiple arenas, each with potentially competing or incompatible values, is useful for managers or leaders who wish to reflect on the appropriateness of their own actions, the actions of others, and predict social reactions to their actions. Within Figure 2, the individual is represented within the center ring as self. In a practical sense, this arena highlights the role of the individual as an entity with a potentially unique influence within a social or organizational enterprise. It also conveys the potentially intensified influence of one individual when she or he is a leader. In this arena, the power of one, the capability of one person to have enormous impact as a leader, is highlighted. In addition, when leadership responsibilities are distributed or when leadership influence is exerted by individuals without vested authority or in relatively informal ways, the potential for influence on processes, sometimes referred to as micro politics, is represented in the self arena.

The second ring from the center represents the arena of groups, which are collective entities of various types. This arena acts as a placeholder for collectives such as family, peers, friends, and

acquaintances. The third ring, profession, represents a more formal arena of administration. It is closely related to the second ring, but we have given it special emphasis because of its relevance to college or university administration. The fourth ring represents the arena traditionally of most concern to academics and practitioners in educational administration: the organization. Indeed, much of the traditional literature of educational administration and most of the corporate literature are grounded within the organizational perspective. As a result of this attention, the organization arena is often attributed with too much vividness, highlighted to an unnatural or exagerrrated extent.

Looking at the outer rings in the figure, one encounters the arenas representing the greater community, society, and culture. In the 1990s, administrators learned to pay more attention than before to the community as a relevant administrative arena and source of influence on educational leadership. The increasing diversity of societies and a general trend toward globalization have similarly highlighted society and culture as relevant arenas of administrative activity.

A final seventh ring is included to accommodate notions of the transcendental: God, the Holy Spirit. Although it does not get a lot of attention in the literature of administration, the transcendental arena is of considerable importance to many people. Administrators who do not subscribe to a spiritual dimension as a relevant source of personal influence would do well to keep this arena in mind, if only because at least some individuals associated with their followership certainly do maintain a spiritual life. The spiritual dimension can be a significant influence on valuation processes for many people, and a leader who wants to understand the motivations of the followership will be sensitive to this potentially significant category of influence.

This arena onion figure (Figure 2) serves two important functions. Through it, one can suggest the various sources of values and convey how values can be derived by the individual from multiple external and internal environmental sources. Although some values potentially may be acquired through biology as well as existential processes, values are perhaps predominantly acquired from more collective sources: family, friends, peers, acquaintances, a profession, organizations and formal associations, the community, social culture, and through the transcendental. The arenas figure conveys these multiple sources of values. However, this figure also shows the sources of value conflicts. For example, although value conflicts can certainly occur within a single arena of administration, consider how the personal values of the individual might conflict with those of the community or how professional values may conflict with organizational values.

Conclusion: How to Use Arenas of Valuation to be a Better Academic Advisor

The discussion and concepts presented in this article, especially the two onion figures, are offered as tools that will contribute to the conceptualization of more authentic and effective advising practices by administrators. This is perhaps an ambitious and idealistic view of administration, but it is not a new one. The innovative dimension being proposed is the adoption and application of a values perspective to make the advising process more understandable, compelling, and achievable. In a fundamental way, this kind of authentic leadership can be achieved by living the examined life as Socrates advised. The skills of expert academic advisors extend beyond management and procedure. All educators consciously or unconsciously employ values as guides in interpreting situations and suggesting appropriate administrative action. This is the artistry of academic advising. It is a form of leadership that extends far beyond the technical processing of decisions by managers.

The first step for advisors who want to make a difference is understanding self. We suggest that advisors practice analyzing the motivational bases used in response to situations experienced at home and at work. Advisors may be surprised to discover how often personal preferences color rational professional practices or how often ethical justifications are propped up for a practice that is really based on self-interest.

In time, increased self-knowledge leads to a better understanding of others. One can practice this understanding of others by consciously trying to give reason, in terms of motivational bases, to the actions and speech of others. Is a colleague's or client's argument grounded in consensus, consequences, self-interest, or transrational values? Are the values being articulated the ones actually espoused?

Finally, to make the world a better place, all educators must work toward promoting reflective habits of mind in others. Get people to engage in reflective writing on the critical incidents of their lives. Live, demonstrate, and promote the essence of democracy and free society—a plurality of ideas—through critical reflection and democratic processes. Empower people to live examined lives. Elevate academic advising beyond management.

Seize the opportunity for leadership and even artistry. All advisors can make a difference in this world through their strategic location in the education system. All have to make a contribution. The events of recent months make that clear. Our future may depend on it.

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A former elementary school principal in Ontario (1979–86), Paul Begley's academic interests center on the ideas and issues related to administrative values and school leadership development. He maintains a particular interest in how individuals respond to, or construe, the dynamics of school leadership. Because of his extensive field development experience in Ontario, the Northwest Territories, Sweden, Hong Kong, and Australia, his work reflects a strong practitioner orientation.

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