

AMOSSHE

CONNECT

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Editorial

'Kentish Fire,' noun, 'prolonged volley of applause,' says my dictionary. On behalf of all CONNECT readers, may we say it to Rupert Bristow who has lived in Kent for many years and now also works there as Director of Education in the Anglican Diocese of Canterbury. When still Dean of Student Services at South Bank University, Rupert shared with me the idea – and it was *his* idea – of an occasional journal for those with an interest in the general field of services for students in higher education. With encouragement, including some funding if needed, from our respective Vice-Chancellors and with offers of articles from prospective contributors, the idea took shape. By the time the first issue was ready the CONNECT project had formed a link with AMOSSHE, our association. This link continues today.

The publication of the present issue of CONNECT marks a fitting time to wish Rupert this kind of 'Kentish fire' for his leading part in launching CONNECT.

Applause and thanks, too, to our contributors to this issue – and to the other members of the editorial team, Jenny Greenard, Chris Thornton and Sheilagh Gunston.

Corrections and Apologies

Production problems with the last issue of CONNECT (Issue 2) prompt sincere apologies to Keith Cooper of Oxford Brookes and Iain MacArthur of the University of East London for mistakes including the mis-attribution of Keith Cooper's review of *Realizing the Educational Potential of Residential Halls*. A corrected version is printed with this issue.

Alison Barty, whose article *International Student Induction: Separation versus Integration* appeared in Issue 2 is Counsellor with Special Responsibilities for International Students at South Bank University. Her article was based on a presentation for a Conference on Student Induction organised by Facilitated Learning in July 1995. Issue 2 should have included these details.

Apologies, too, for the lateness in the appearance of this Autumn 1996 Issue.

John Rolfe
Head of Student Services
University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Chair CONNECT Editorial Group

Survey to Evaluate Formal and Informal Communication Strategies in Raising Awareness of Support Services Among the Student Population

Sally Aldridge, Director of Welfare Services, Staffordshire University

Ann O'Sullivan, Research Assistant, Staffordshire University

This paper forms the first part of a report on the levels of awareness and usage of student support services in Staffordshire University. The data was obtained by a survey carried out in October and November 1994. This report focuses on the levels of awareness among the student population, and on the most effective methods of raising awareness of support services.

Staffordshire University is a British "new university". The "new universities" were previously called Polytechnics and were originally established to provide vocational higher education such as engineering, business studies and computing science. This binary divide between the Universities and the Polytechnics was removed by the government in 1992. The University has 11000 full time students studying on two sites, Stoke and Stafford, which are 18 miles apart. The schools of Business, Design, Humanities, Law, Sciences and Social Sciences are based at Stoke and Business, Computing, Engineering and Health at Stafford. Two thirds of the student population is based at Stoke, and one third at Stafford. The student gender balance is 58% male to 42% female, and the Stafford population is predominantly male. At 44% the percentage of students entering at age 18 or 19, that is directly from school or college, is slightly higher than the national average.

The student support services in British Universities vary greatly both in terms of the range of services available and the organisational structure. New Universities

tend towards centralised student support services, old Universities tend towards stand alone specialist units. At Staffordshire in 1994, the support services were partly centralised partly stand alone – that is the Chaplaincy, childcare, counselling, health and support for disabled students were centralised under the name of Welfare Services, the careers and accommodation services were separate and the Union of Students offered financial and legal advice and advocacy.

Purpose of the survey

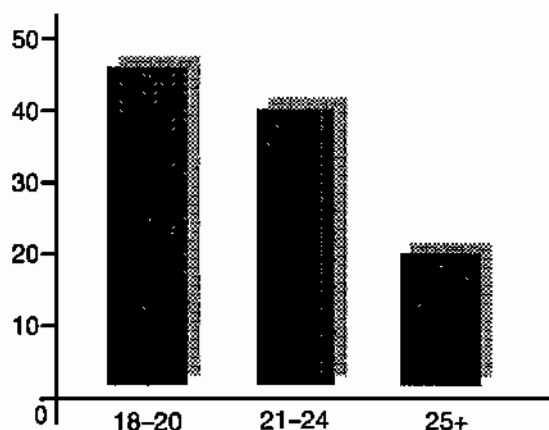
In 1994, Welfare Services, the centralised student support services at Staffordshire University, wished to evaluate the effectiveness of its advertising methods in general, and to explore if certain forms of advertising were more effective with particular groups of students. It also wished to survey the usage of the services and explore any links between awareness, usage and specific student groups. Centralised student support services in any institution face the problem of conveying information about their existence to students in ways which are user friendly and positive. The information needs to be accessible and acceptable to students. It also needs to be available to students at the right time, that is when they need to know it.

The size of the survey

The total number of students who took part in the survey was 1,772, with a gender

balance of 49% male to 51% female. The gender balance of the general student population is 58% male to 42% female, so the survey sample does not match the population completely. 57% of survey students were over the age of 21 at the beginning of their degree course, this is a higher percentage than in the general student population. 45% came from the local geographical region. 3% of the survey were International students, 4% were disabled, 8% had children, and 13% were of non-white ethnic origin. Thus the population surveyed was predominantly white European, with a fairly even gender balance.

Figure 1: Age of students



METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain some measure of the student awareness and use of the support services provided in the University, a simple self completion questionnaire was designed. It was decided to survey continuing students rather than new students for several reasons. First it was considered that the Freshers Week induction programme, which took place during the time of the survey, would probably distort the results towards the talks given by support service staff, since these would have been very recent events. Second, new students would have had little time to use the support services. Third, a survey of continuing students would elicit some measure of the longer term effectiveness of the awareness raising methods used.

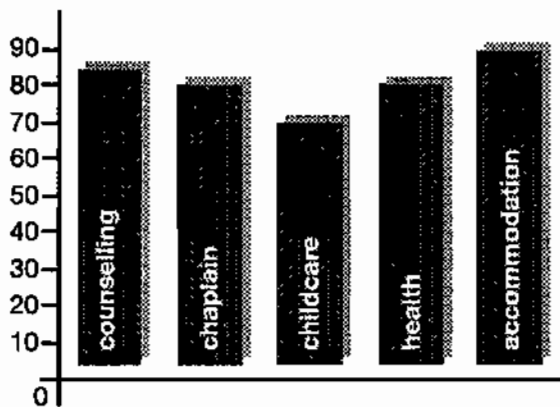
Discussion between the Housing and Community Research Unit and Welfare Services resulted in the decision to approach students during enrolment in order to ensure a high response rate among students of all the schools throughout the University. The Director of Welfare Services contacted all the School Administrators at both Stoke and Stafford. The majority of questionnaires were distributed by the Schools themselves during the enrolment period, when the questionnaires could be completed in a few minutes and left in boxes before the students left the room. The questionnaires were anonymous so this method of collection did not give rise to any breaches in confidentiality. This method was intended to cause the minimum amount of additional work for the schools staff, who then returned the completed questionnaires to Welfare Services at Stoke for processing by the Housing and Community Research Unit.

For the majority of schools this method of distribution proved to be successful and through their co-operation a good response rate was achieved. Owing to a delay in some information being sent out, staff in the School of Sciences felt that they had not received sufficient prior notice to the research and therefore could not commit time or resources during the enrolment period. The School of Computing found itself unable to distribute the questionnaires. HCRU researchers therefore distributed questionnaires to Science and Computing students during the semester for students to complete and return immediately. Where possible during the distribution of the questionnaire members of the research team or Welfare Services were available to answer any questions which students presented. The data was then entered on to SPSS from the questionnaires.

LEVELS OF AWARENESS OF THE SUPPORT SERVICES

The survey showed a general high level of awareness of all the services. The childcare was the lowest at 68% and accommodation highest at 88%.

Figure 2: Age of students



ANALYSIS OF LEVELS OF AWARENESS BY SERVICE:

Accommodation

Description of service

At the Stoke site there are six on-campus halls of residence and six off-campus halls of varying sizes. There are also 30 six bedroom houses and two off-campus blocks of flats. All other students live in privately rented accommodation, or their own houses.

Levels of awareness

The Accommodation service had the highest levels of awareness of 88% of all the services. There was little difference between genders – 87% of males compared to 90% of females. Differences by parental status were apparent, the highest awareness being 90% of those students who are single with no parental responsibilities compared to 73% of those students who had both partners and children. Difference between age groups awareness being highest in the 18-20 age category 90% compared to 80% for the 25 and overs.

The Chaplaincy

Description of service

There is a Chaplaincy at both sites of the University staffed by one full time and four part-time chaplains, representing a range of Christian denominations. The Chaplaincy is

available to all, of any or no faith or creed and puts students in touch with a religious leader of their own faith in the locality. The Chaplaincy also provides prayer rooms for Muslim students.

Levels of Awareness

In the survey, 77% of students were aware of the service and there was little difference between genders. There was a lower level of awareness among students of non-white European origin 61%, compared to those of white European ethnic origin. Students based at the Stafford site were more likely to be aware of the Chaplaincy than students based at Stoke 79% compared to 76%.

Childcare Services

Description of service

The service is available on both sites to student and staff catering for children aged from 6 months to 5 years at Stoke, and children aged from 2 to 5 years at Stafford. There are also half term play schemes for children aged between 5 and 12.

Awareness

The level of awareness of this service was lower than for the other services, 68%. This is perhaps not surprising since only 8% of the survey population had children. Female students were more likely to be aware of childcare facilities, 74% than male students, 66%. Analysis of the parental status of students indicates that single parent students had the highest awareness rate at 88%, second highest were students in partnerships but with children – 76%. Those students who were single or in a partnership without parental responsibilities were less likely to be aware of the service.

Counselling Service

Description of service

The counselling service is available on both sites to all students, full and part time, and to staff. It offers confidential individual and group counselling and has daily drop in sessions.

Awareness

There were differences in levels of awareness between those students of white ethnic origin, 86%, compared to those of other ethnic origins, 71%. Female students were more likely to be aware of the service – 87% than male students 82%. Younger students, in the 18 to 20 years category were more likely to be aware of the counselling service 87%, than students in the two older age categories.

The Health Service*Description of Service*

The Health service is more developed at Stoke than Stafford. At Stoke there is a branch general practice and University nurses which offer a full range of services five days a week. At Stafford there is one general practitioner surgery a week and at other times a University nurse is present.

Awareness

The overall level of awareness of the student health service was 81%. Female students were more likely to be aware 86%, than males 76%. Couples with children were less likely to be aware than other categories of parental status – 67%. The students in the 18-20 age group had the highest level of awareness of the health service at 85%, compared to 21-24 year olds, 80% – and 25 and over 75%. Couples with children and older students are more likely to be local

residents. They would therefore have remained with their family general practitioner and have no need to know of the University service. Younger students, the 18-20 age group, are more likely to have moved away from home on becoming students and therefore needed to re-register with a general practitioner. Furthermore, it is a requirement of the University that all students be registered with a doctor.

Students from different ethnic backgrounds showed a different level of awareness, non-white European students, were less aware than white European students, 70% to 83%. Students at Stoke had a higher level of awareness, 87%, in comparison to students at Stafford, 74%. This could be a consequence of the lower level of services available at Stafford.

HOW THE SERVICES PUBLICISE THEMSELVES

The student support services use a wide variety of means to advertise themselves to students, both printed and verbal. There are entries in the prospectus and in school handbooks, individual services produce booklets and leaflets. Posters are placed on notice boards and in well used public places, such as foyers and toilets. Articles and posters are printed in the student newspapers and magazines. Staff give talks to new students as part of the Induction Programme and staff also talk about the services at Open Days for applicants through-

	Counselling	Chaplain	Childcare	Health services	Accommodation
Posters	71%	71%	61%	63%	60%
Academic tutors	19%	15%	11%	19%	18%
Friends	11%	6%	17%	17%	23%
University prospectus	0.2%	0.4%	0.7%	0.4%	2.1%
Just saw it	0.3%	1.3%	5%	2%	0.8%
Fresher fayre/handbook	1%	1%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%
Induction week talk	7%	9.3%	6%	8.4%	5%
Student Union	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%		0.3%
Christian Union		0.1%			
Welfare service			0.1%	0.1%	
Not specified		0.2%			0.7%

out the academic year. Staff also inform staff in other areas of the University about the services on offer, both formally at School Boards and in Annual reports and informally by day to day contacts. Most deliberate publicity however, is targeted towards the students rather than the staff.

The survey asked students how they had become aware of the service by listing all the methods known and used in the University. These included formal means under the direction of the Welfare Services and the University for example, posters, the prospectus and handbooks, leaflets, and the informal methods, friends, word of mouth and tutors.

Evaluation of effective formal publicity

The survey indicates that only three of the methods used seem to be effective in awareness raising and two are considerably more effective than any of the others. The findings suggest that students do not carry round with them either in printed forms or in memory, an active awareness of the support services, but need the information to be easily available when they have need of a particular service.

Posters

Posters were the most effective method of awareness raising – 60%-70%, perhaps because they are constantly present and so are there to be seen when needed.

Information from other people, in particular from academic staff and friends

People are very important in raising awareness – 31%-46%. Friends, who were already aware of the services played a significant part in passing on information. Academic Staff were the second highest source as far as information about the Chaplaincy, counselling and health services were concerned.

The induction week talks

These were rated quite low as a way of raising awareness. However, it must be

remembered that the students surveyed were continuing students, therefore it was one to two years since they had attended an induction talk. The average of 7% awareness through this method after that time gap suggests that Fresher induction talks are a moderately efficient way of communicating.

The University prospectus

The prospectus was not an effective awareness arising tool for returning students – but this is not surprising since there would be a gap of two to three years since they had read it. This result might differ if first year students were asked. However, the findings suggest that information in the prospectus on services is not absorbed and retained by students.

CONCLUSIONS

Student support services do need to take active steps to advertise themselves. The percentage of students who "just saw" a service was very low, 0.8% to 5%. Therefore, hoping to filter passively into awareness is not effective.

Information about support services is obtained by students in both personal and impersonal ways. The survey provided useful information of the nature of effective visual information – 60%-70% of students became aware of services through seeing printed publicity material. Students need information to be available when they need to use the particular service. Publicity material therefore should be on display in accessible, well used areas and it should be eye-catching. In the interests of cost effectiveness, it should also be vandal proof and relatively long lasting. Several students suggested specific notice boards for the support services. *"Information about services seems limited or at best lost among the plethora of Ents flyers. Perhaps notice boards devoted specifically to University services could be organised in prominent positions – bars."* Students expressed irritation and frustration at being sent from one service to another in search of the right sort of help. Further confusion arose over service names and functions. Thus, printed publicity

should give clear simple information about the location and nature of the specific service.

The informal access to information came from personal interactions with friends, teaching staff and induction talks by support service staff. 30-46% of students became aware of services in this way. Both personal contact and referrals are important, both from friends and teaching staff. Academic staff were a significant source of information for students. It is therefore important that these staff have accurate easily accessible information about the support services and know how to make referrals to the services. The awareness raised and retained by induction talks, reinforces the importance of putting a human face to a service.

Student support services advertise themselves to increase usage and enable students to gain access to appropriate help. However, awareness of the existence of a service can in itself be helpful – *“I knew the counselling service was there if I needed it, but I managed on my own.”*

As a result of this survey, Welfare Services reviewed the advertising and publicity in the following ways:

- It retained personal induction talks to first year students by Chaplains, counsellors and health service staff.
- It placed vandal proof plastic notices advertising the counselling service and the harassment and bullying network in all the toilets and halls of residence.
- The service set up a service specific notice board.
- It produced a handbook giving information about the services for staff, and distributed individual plastic cards (credit card size) giving names and phone numbers of services. These were distributed to all staff and first year students.

Day Nursery Facilities in Post Compulsory Education

*Allan Birchenough, Director of Academic Affairs
University of Wales, Cardiff*

*Sheilagh Gunston, Manager of Student Services
University of Wales, Cardiff*

Introduction

In reconsidering the size of the day nursery at the authors' institution attention turned to exploring what size should be recommended to the Board of Governors. The current provision for eighteen children, with no under-two year old facility, was thought to be inadequate for the 7,500 student population and a total staff establishment of nearly one thousand.

Whilst some indication of student demand could be gained from past applications and inquiries, a survey of all staff regarding their childcare needs resulted in a 10% return with all respondents being supportive of quality childcare expansion. Under two-year-old provision emerged as an important extension to current provision, and comments linking the provision with the Institute's Equal Opportunities policy were received, as were suggestions that providing day nursery facilities should be regarded as a duty for large organisations. There were also comments implying that good childcare would assist in attracting and retaining high quality staff and students.

Determining size from the apparent internal demand of students and staff is, however, unreliable given the variables of different student cohorts, fees/subsidy/costs, external private competition and similar parameters. It was decided, therefore, that since Governors would have to agree significant capital investment as well as a strategy for running-cost recovery, the most

productive persuasion would be to determine the institution's current and proposed relative position via surveys of other educational institutions.

Two surveys were conducted, in UK HE and FE establishments, to determine the current state of day nursery provision in the two sectors and the results of these are reported separately elsewhere (refs 1 and 2).

This paper summarises the results, gives an aggregate picture across the two sectors and compares the findings.

Summary of HE Results

A 72.8% return from a postal questionnaire survey at the end of 1995 of all (250) English, Scottish and Welsh institutions of higher education listed in the Education Authorities Directory (ref 3) revealed that 50.5% of institutions provide child day care. (It should be noted that if Cambridge, London and Oxford Universities are counted, as single entities as opposed to including their individual colleges then 75.1% of higher education institutions have day nursery facilities).

Only 15.2% of relevant responses indicated day nurseries catering for twenty or less children, and 69.6% overall had 0-2 years facility. 0-2 years provision in the "new" University sector was notably below that for the remainder of the sector.

Places available varied from 8 to 130 with an overall average of 42. However, because

of the large variation in institutional sizes, it is better to normalise day nursery size against student full-time-equivalent (FTE) numbers. The average student FTE per day nursery place was found to be 175.2 with a spread from below 50 to over 600. The "new" Universities were found to be less generous (214) in their provision than the "old" Universities (155.5) in this regard.

71.6% of relevant responses indicated an institutional subsidy and 14.9% received a subsidy from the Students' Union (seven institutions receiving subsidy from both sources).

60.6% indicated that their facility could be used by people from outside the institution and 76% operated beyond term time but none opened during weekends.

Summary of FE Results

For the survey of further education colleges, which took place at the beginning of 1996, a 50% random sample of further education colleges listed in the Education Authorities Directory (ref 4) was undertaken by postal questionnaire (245 from 490 colleges in England, Scotland and Wales).

The return rate was 71% and 68.4% of respondents indicated that their institution had day nursery facilities.

30.6% indicated day nursery sizes of twenty or less and 58.5% overall had 0-2 years facility.

Places available varied between 8 and 106 with an overall average size of 34.5. The average student FTE per day nursery place was found to be 110.9 with a range of below 50 to above 600.

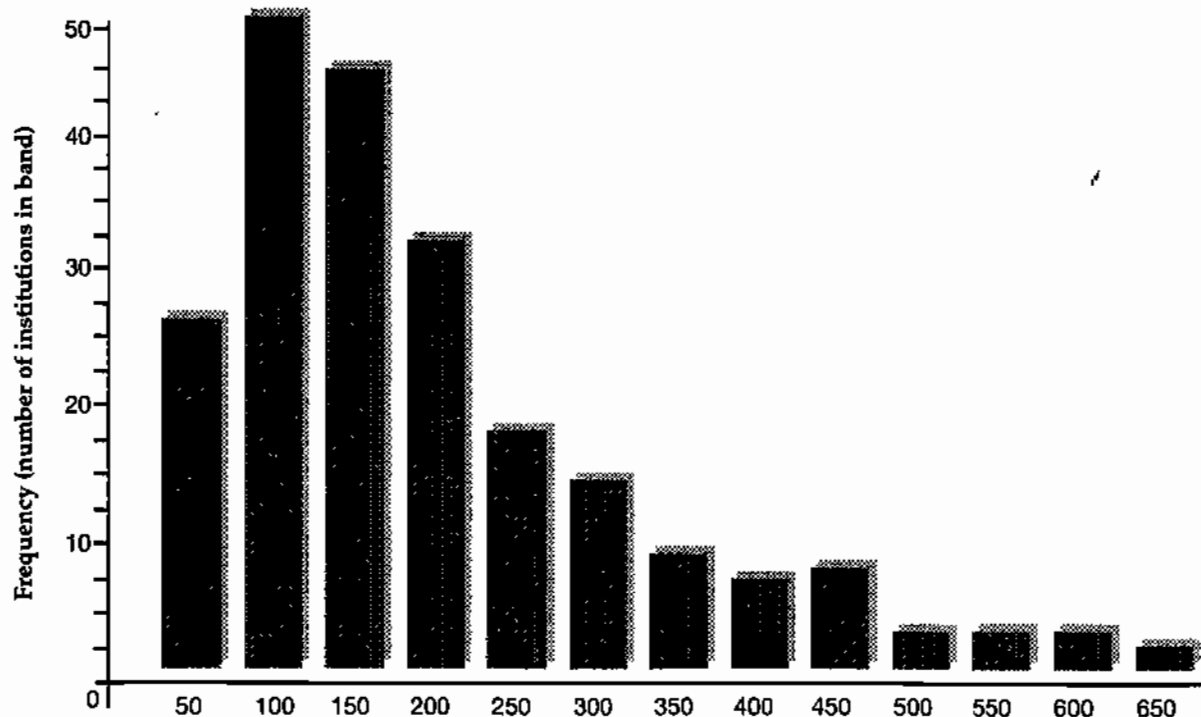
85.3% of relevant responses indicated that their day nursery received an institutional subsidy with only 1.7% receiving subsidy from the Students' Union.

68.6% indicated that use could be made of the facilities other than by staff and students, and 51% extended opening beyond term-time, sometimes to year-round operation. Four institutions claimed term-time weekend use.

Aggregate Findings

Bearing in mind that the HE survey was based on a 100% sample whilst the FE survey was based on a 50% sample, the

Figure 3: Ratio of Student FTEs per available Day Nursery Place



combined response rate was 71.9% which is a remarkable figure for a postal questionnaire and, perhaps, demonstrates a high level of interest.

Overall, the responses from both sectors indicate that 59.3% of institutions have day nursery facilities with 63.3% catering for the 0-2 years age group. Just over three quarters of all day nursery facilities were for more than twenty children. (It should be noted that the threshold of twenty children is significant since below this number the day nursery manager can be counted in the staffing ratios as given in the Children's Act 1989 whereas above this threshold the manager counts as an additional member: there is, therefore, an additional salary cost for over-20 facilities).

The average FTE per place available is estimated to be 131.4 across the two sectors and the spread of FTE/place is given in Fig 3.

Using the average day nursery sizes in HE and FE institutions and the respective percentages of those which have facilities, it is possible to estimate the total day nursery places available in post compulsory education as being nearly 17,000. If the average cost per place is in the region of £90/week (ref 5), this represents an annual yearly investment (34 weeks/year) of approximately £52 million. From the responses, it is apparent that this cost is met from a combination of subsidy, fees, access funds, commercial income and specific grants.

79% of all respondents said that their day nursery facility received an institutional subsidy, whilst 8.5% received some funding from the Students' Union.

Comparisons

It would appear from the two surveys that day nursery facilities in Further Education institutions are more widespread than they are in institutions in the Higher Education sector. Whilst in the FE colleges there are notable gaps in provision, for example in specialist colleges (Art and Design, Music, Theatre/Drama, Agriculture), approaching

three quarters had facilities compared to only around half of HE establishments.

Additionally, the provision is, on the whole, more generous in the Further Education sector (less students per child place) and a greater number of FE colleges receive institutional subsidy (though the level of subsidy was not explored). This is against a background of, in some instances, very large (30,000+) part-time student populations, and the staffing problems that must accompany such a variable clientele.

However, the FE sector has more twenty-or-less day nurseries than its HE counterpart, and a lower percentage of facilities which cater for children under two years. There is a higher "beyond term time" emphasis in the HE colleges.

Discussion

The broad comparisons given above do not necessarily give a complete picture, particularly if one is tempted to conclude that one sector is better developed than the other in child day care. The characteristics of the two sectors is an important consideration with the HE sector having much more consistency in regard to student population, ie an overall concentration on full-time students. The FE sector, on the other hand, is almost as varied as there are institutions, and the day care facilities it offers must reflect this appropriately. However, with an average 36% more students per place available in HE day nurseries than in FE, institutions of higher education may feel the need to take note.

The authors' own institution, with 18 places and a student FTE of around 6,500, currently lies within the 350 to 400 band of Figure 1. The reader may wish to know that the Board of Governors, in large part because of the information collected through the surveys, has now agreed to the establishment of a 40 place day nursery with under two years facility. This takes the institution into the 150 to 200 band, much closer to the average value across the two sectors, and below the average for the HE sector.

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Student Affairs – Reflections and Future Direction

A Hong Kong Experience

Esther Yu, Director of Student Affairs, City University Hong Kong

Introduction

Hong Kong, being conveniently located in Southern China, has always been subject to the influences or practices of both West and East, and has served as the gateway to enter China. Renowned as an entrepot trading centre and an international city, Hong Kong enterprises have availed themselves of opportunities to reference their developments to those of the more advanced countries in other parts of the world. In anticipation of a bigger role for Hong Kong in Southern China after 1997 when China resumes sovereignty over Hong Kong, tertiary education in the territory has experienced very rapid expansion. It is against this background of dynamic changes that this paper is written.

The author has headed the Student Affairs Office at the City University of Hong Kong since its establishment in 1984. The University currently has around 11,000 commuting FTE student population, which will grow to 13,500 by 1997/98. Courses offered range from Diploma, Higher Diploma to Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and PhD, with subjects covering Science and Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences, Business and Law. Below is an attempt to reflect on the theoretical framework by which the institution's Student Affairs is moulded to develop, analyse the circumstantial context in which Student Affairs operates, draw up a mission and goals statement, as well as anticipate coping strategies.

Scope of Student Affairs

Student affairs in the American College experience has undergone three major historical paradigms, namely:

1. **in loco parentis** – the emphasis is on controlling student behaviour and inculcation of prescribed moral values and enforcement of institutional standards.
2. **student services** – the emphasis is shifted to providing supplementary (to the academic programme) services that students want as consumers, compatible with the educational mission of the institution. Services were also targeted to help 'problem' students with remedial services.
3. **student development** – the focus is for student affairs to act as an educator i.e. using theories of individual and group development in designing policies, programmes and services that help students learn and develop.

At City University, the Student Affairs Office has adopted the latter two paradigms, focusing on student matters that are neither disciplinary nor academic in nature. Hence services, programmes developed include personal counselling, placement and career counselling, leadership and life-skills training, financial aid, scholarships and prizes, student activities and advice to student organisations, study skills, student orientation, recreational activities and health service.

Basic Assumption and Beliefs

Many of these assumptions are held by other people in higher education. However the combination of these assumptions in the student affairs field is distinctive. Together, they shape our perspective as professionals, guide our choices and priorities, influence our responses to new issues and changing times.

1. **The primacy of the academic mission of the institution** – Universities organise their primary activities around their academic mission. Student affairs, like other essential activities (curriculum, library, etc.) enhances and supports the academic mission.
2. **Each student is unique** – Today's institution tends to be large and impersonal. Student affairs work aims to counter the impersonalisation of the college experience by creating social, physical and organisational environments that allow the individual to shine through.
3. **Feelings affect thinking and learning** – The concept of a student as a whole person results in equal attention to both the cognitive and affective development of students. Student affairs is concerned with students' emotional make-up, their physical condition, their social relationships, their vocational aptitudes and skills, their moral and religious values, their economic resources and their aesthetic appreciation. Healthy development in these areas can enrich students' engagement with academics and heighten motivation to excel.
4. **Each person has worth and dignity** – Increased opportunities in higher education for racial minorities, immigrants, disabled and mature adults have posed new challenges of creating caring and supportive environments for these groups.
5. **Student self-determination** – Students learn responsibility and independence best when they have to bear the consequences of their actions or inactions. Students therefore should

be involved and encouraged to make decisions.

6. **Students are helped by community and friends** – Healthy communities are settings where students learn to make and keep friends, work together, care about others' welfare, balance freedom and responsibility and appreciate human differences. Surveys in City University show that 80% of students seek help from friends or classmates when they encounter problems. Therefore student affairs should consciously nurture settings where friendships are formed, and support and care are available through professionals, volunteer staff and peers.

Roles for Practice

Several roles have been identified for student affairs, though the emphasis on a particular role may vary depending on the specific duty being discharged at the time.

1. **The Administrator Role – Designing and Managing Programmes**
This focuses on involvement in planning, organising, budgeting, managing, motivating, assessing needs, controlling, etc. Four main functions may be identified:
 - **welfare** e.g. financial aid, health service, counselling
 - **control** e.g. records, discipline, admission, progress
 - **activities** e.g. extra-curricular programmes, student governance
 - **instructional** e.g. remedial clinics, orientation programmes, life skills training
2. **The Counsellor Role – Guiding, Supporting and Advising Students**
There are different levels of training in counselling, different methods and techniques and sometimes different goals, depending on where we practice within student affairs, as a professional counsellor or a student affairs personnel using counselling as one of the helping techniques available. Underpinning the

role is our respect for the uniqueness of each individual and the recognition of the value of a developmental perspective. Therefore our focus is on normative and not pathological human development; our emphasis is on facilitating growth and not remediation.

3. The Student Development Role – Fostering Intellectual and Personal Growth

Various dimensions may be identified:

- personal identity, including a sense of purpose, a value system, a vocational purpose
- interpersonal skills, including communication, socialisation
- intellectual and academic skills, which enable students to pursue lifelong learning
- aesthetic development, such as appreciation of arts, creativity
- physical recreation skills, including integration of physical activity into a life-style

4. The Campus Ecology Manager Role – Creating a Climate for Successful Student Development

Arrangement of the campus environment can have implications for such issues as facilities usage and control, human interaction, territoriality, privacy and personal space, community, isolation, noise, access, identity and comfort. These issues, in turn, depending on how they are resolved, are important for the quality of students' campus experience and can serve as prohibitive or positive forces for student development. Recognising the influence of the environment on the process of individual adaptation, coping and development, the manager should address the need for the campus to change (since it is not only the student who should adjust), and foster the ability of the students to determine and manage their own designs through involving their participation.

5. The Bridger Role – Ensuring Better Communication to Effect Conflict Mediation/Resolution

Student affairs serve both students and the institution. It is not always the case that both parties will agree on issues. Student affairs therefore has a distinctive role in communicating with all sides on issues, promoting dialogue and understanding with the aim of resolving conflict and reducing ill feelings.

6. The Crisis Intervenor Role

Student affairs assumes primary responsibility for managing the crisis situation of the moment, e.g. a student suicide attempt, a tragic accident, a demonstration on campus issues; while long term solutions to the problem would necessarily be sought later as a follow-up.

City University of Hong Kong – Background and Mission

City University of Hong Kong is one of the newer tertiary institutions in Hong Kong, being established in 1984 by the Government as a Polytechnic with special emphasis on business, technical and professional studies, so that its graduates may work in disciplines relevant to the changing needs of commerce and industry. From a modest start in 1984 with some 500 full time and slightly more part time students, the institution today has nearly 15,000 full time and part time students enrolled in more than 70 courses and was granted a new name, and status, the City University of Hong Kong, in November 1994.

Its mission is "to provide its students with a quality higher education; to contribute to the advancement of knowledge; to interact with other institutions of higher education and professional bodies; to interact with industry, commerce and the community; and to offer access to its human, physical and technological resources for the benefit of society. Anticipating and responding to local and regional needs and the effects of rapid social and technological change, City University of Hong Kong emphasises professional education and practice, and applied research." The mission

shows the direction of the institution and serves as a reference for the planning of strategies and services of student affairs.

The HERE & NOW Context within which Student Affairs Operates

1. Government's policy of extending tertiary student places from 12% of 1991 17-20 age group to 25% of the 17-20 age group in 1994, or from 34% of 1991 matriculants to 85% of the matriculants in 1994 carries new implications. This means that tertiary education in Hong Kong is no longer a privilege for the limited elite. Consequent to this vast expansion, there is an observed lowering of the standards in the students admitted, particularly in language proficiency and learning motivation.
2. According to the various admission statistics studies conducted among the seven Government-funded tertiary institutions in Hong Kong, it is apparent that City University is not among the top priority choices of potential applicants. Amongst the students admitted, there is a proportion of low self-image, disgruntled group who have negative attitudes which if not resolved, could adversely affect their academic experience.
3. The Government's decision to increase the tuition fee from 11% of cost recovery rate in 1992 to 18% in 1997 translates in real money terms an increase of around HK\$5,000 per year or in annual percentage terms a rise of 47% to 16%. Such a substantial increase, at a higher rate than inflation (usually at 8% to 10% per annum) inevitably poses undue hardship to many students and has financial implications for the institution.
4. Because of the expanded places, more students are being admitted after working for 1-2 years, or after having partially or wholly completed post-secondary courses at Technical Institutes or elsewhere. These students, either because of their age or because of their earlier experience, very often have difficulty in obtaining family support (i.e. emotional as well as financial) for their studies. This has financial aid implications for the institution.
5. Student surveys consistently show that approximately 60% of the students live in Government-subsidised housing and 90% are first generation tertiary education beneficiaries. The low socio-economic background means that majority of the students are limited in exposure, with hardly any experience of encounter with the norms and culture of the middle class which they aspire to join after graduation. This poses a challenge to student affairs in developing programmes to help assist their satisfactory social and emotional adjustment in the higher socio-economic strata.
6. In recent years, the number of research students has increased significantly (300 in 1994 to approximately 500 by 1998). Their needs will probably be very different from those of current students and demand proper addressing.
7. Plans are underway to develop a limited exchange student programme. The expectation of having international students on campus, and the introduction of residential facilities pose new challenges for student affairs.
8. Recent financial allocation to the University by the Government, which may not even keep pace with inflation or student growth, forces intensive scrutiny of all expenditure. Increasing emphasis on quality and performance appraisal demands a re-examination of services and procedures and the establishment of quality assurance procedures. Public accountability and outcome assessments are additional pressures.
9. The run-up to 1997 when British rule ends and Hong Kong becomes a Special Administrative Region of China poses uncertainty and new demands on students and the institution. The increasing regionalisation means that students have to be better prepared in Putonghua (which is quite different from the indigenous dialect used in Hong Kong), as well as understanding the Mainland culture and norms.

10. The increased number of local graduates, the influx of returned emigrants and the availability of the graduate pool in Mainland China for employment pose keen competition for job seekers. The world recession and the community's wholesale emphasis on consolidation presents additional pressures. The rapid technological changes, the information explosion, the increased globalisation, the change in Hong Kong's economy focus following the opening up of Mainland China pose new demands for employability. Graduates are expected not only to be technically competent, but also, more importantly, to possess transferable skills such as ability to analyse complex issues, logical thinking, decision making, vision and creativity, effective communication, leadership. Student affairs will have to develop innovative strategies to cope with these challenges.
11. Because of the vocational orientation and narrow but practical focus of the normal academic courses, it is very difficult for students to develop a broader career perspective or to appreciate the benefits of a broader based personal development, with exposure to the humanities and arts.

The change in student profile, the lowering of standards in language proficiency, the prevalence of low self-image and low learning motivation among certain student groups, the increasing incidence of financial hardship cases as well as the new demands of the employment market all pose real issues for student affairs personnel to address. The constraints of resources (in terms of financial and manpower support) are additional challenges to be tackled.

Mission of Student Affairs

The mission of the Student Affairs Office is to advance the educational goals of the University by providing a congenial, supportive and yet challenging environment so that students can attain whole-person development, lead a fulfilling life and contribute to society. This mission is accomplished through services and programmes

designed to cater for students' welfare, mental and physical well-being, to develop students' study and life skills, to foster students' positive attitudes towards life and society, as well as to facilitate communication between students and the University.

Goals – to promote students' whole-person development across the following spectrum:

1. **intellectual** – through integration and synthesis: a focus on quality of thinking which acknowledges intellectual exposure to and acceptance of varying perspectives.
2. **emotional** – enhance self-understanding and acceptance, develop confidence.
3. **spiritual** – develop a sense of purpose and direction in one's life through increased responsibility to oneself, to other people and to the broader community.
4. **interpersonal** – develop acceptance of individual differences due to diversities in values, religion, intellectual capabilities, race, etc.; move towards strengthened relationship with others through greater openness, respect and trust; develop teamwork, negotiation and mediation skills.
5. **career** – develop transferable skills relevant to success and a more complex view of careers and the world of work.
6. **physical** – develop healthy and happy personalities through physical activities, fitness and health programmes.

Coping Strategies

1. **Student experts** – We must be prepared to provide information regarding the student population in a timely and useful fashion as the institution makes decisions. Therefore surveys and research on students' socio-economic background, attitudes, concerns, values, living patterns, perceptions, use of facilities, should be conducted on a regular basis. Student development and college experience are useful research topics too.
2. **Strengthen ties with the academics** – We should move towards more collaborative efforts with the academics e.g. in

- orientation programme for new students, in making new academics aware of students' needs and learning styles, in actively involving academics in student affairs activities, in engaging in joint projects with academic departments such as teaching of general education modules, study skills and career education.
3. **Ensure staff competence** – We should provide a work environment that nurtures continuous learning, supports professional renewal in order to help staff avoid unmanageable stress cycles, situational burnout on specific tasks and isolation, as well as to prepare staff with the competence and insight to cope with new opportunities and issues. Conscious attempts are also being made to recruit new staff from practitioners with experience and expertise not traditionally being considered for student affairs personnel, so as to obtain fresh thrust and stimulus for the profession. For example, people with personnel management or training background may prove to be very good career counsellors.
 4. **Computer technology** – Even though the University is already one of the better provided in South East Asia in office automation and computerisation, we must make better use of computer technology for planning, facilities management, record keeping, other management functions and communication with students. At the same time, we must be alert to the risk of the dehumanisation of students and staff that may occur with the increased use of computer technology.
 5. **Student-centred approach** – All services and programmes are offered or reviewed with students as the focus in terms of contents, approach, publicity and scheduling. Programmes are scheduled for times more convenient for students' participation e.g. lunch hour, evenings, weekends, semester breaks. Programme contents are revised or planned in response to findings of student feedback and surveys.
 6. **Innovative marketing strategies** – To promote students' penetration, outreach publicity through more use of the campus computer network, staging of thematic exhibitions, happy hour free discussion sessions, tailor-made career or leadership programmes for particular groups or courses, etc. should be continued. Special marketing efforts will be targeted at reaching out to Year 1 students, through an orientation programme tailor-made to help ease their adjustment, and through collaborative efforts with student societies or class associations.
 7. **Increase emphasis on self-learning packages and self-help models** – This is particularly effective with the better-motivated students. A Personal Development Centre, equipped with reading materials, software packages and video tapes designed to widen students' knowledge exposure and aesthetic appreciation, enhance their self-awareness and understanding of life skills, and provide resources for leadership activities has been established for students' access and usage. Also, readable Tips and Hints pamphlets on special topics are made available for students' easy reference. Students are also encouraged to form mutual help discussion groups on matters of common concern.
 8. **Training for student leaders and scholarship awardees** – Some intensive training programmes, using experiential learning as the means, are conducted with the objective of developing a core group of 300-500 students with high motivation, leadership, communication and interpersonal relationship skills. These students are expected to serve as role models for their fellow peers, and exert a spill-over effect in helping to build a supportive campus environment.
 9. **Increase use of paraprofessionals, students and alumni** – Trained student paraprofessionals who act as front line personnel to detect problems and make timely referrals where appropriate can be very effective in helping with the

adjustment of new and/or overseas students. On the other hand, a good networking system with the alumni can be very helpful in career planning/counselling programmes for students.

10. **Evaluate and revise programmes** – This must be a continuous and conscious process in the light of the rapid changes in the campus environment and the student profile. New approaches and contents have to be experimented with in order to meet changing student needs. This process helps to achieve the purpose of accountability and improvement.
11. **Sharing of resources and expertise among institutions** – More collaborative projects can be developed among institutions as a cost-effective measure in productivity improvement e.g. Joint Careers or Health Education Exhibitions may be staged on a "circus round" in all campuses. This should be especially feasible in Hong Kong with a small number of Universities in close proximity to each other.
12. **Quality assurance mechanisms** – These should be drafted and implemented conscientiously to enhance efficiency and accountability. Benchmarking with student affairs offices in Hong Kong and world-wide could be an interesting area for future exploration, whilst the adoption of strategic planning and team building as renewal mechanisms have been found to be helpful.

Implementation of the above strategies is not without resistance or hassles. The emphasis on a pro-active student-centred approach with extensive outreach efforts necessitated staff moving out from the 'comfort zone' of staying back to help students only when the latter come to see them, and forced them into experimenting with unfamiliar but more open, high-profile marketing strategies. This kind of perspective transformation needs encouragement and support not only from the senior management, but also courage on the part of the front-line professionals to take risks and commitment to acquire and test out new approaches for students' benefit. On the

other hand, students, patrons of our service, need a transformation in their perception of university education and student affairs too. Tight schedules of academic studies and personal life also affect their response to and participation in such programmes.

Increased office automation and better use of computer technology has ensured better efficiency and opened up additional ways of ensuring better communication with students. However the delusion of computerisation leading to manpower-saving continues to be a source of frustration, where staffing strength remains static while student numbers grow incessantly.

The adoption of strategic planning has helped the Office to concentrate attention to both micro and macro issues, thus providing a balanced systemic perspective in the review of on-going services and planning of new ones. The overall impact of the proactive initiatives of the Office has been encouraging. To cite an example, the quantity of services rendered in both individual counselling and group programmes has been doubled in the last three years, as did the student participation rate (while staffing strength remains the same). Moreover, the participation of students in year one and two is increasing quite remarkably, and in spite of all the difficulties and frustrations which staff have encountered, an opinion poll conducted by the Students' Union has rated two of the services – Physical Education and Health Centre – as the best and 2nd runner-up respectively of all the University services provided for students over the last two years.

Conclusion

The challenges ahead for student affairs are many and varied, so are the constraints. While recognising the increasing diversity of our students, we must be alert to students' changing profile and interests, develop responsive programmes and campus environments that enhance students' academic and personal development, as well as provide basic facilities and services that meet students' needs and take care of students' welfare in an efficient and

effective manner. We must support the academic mission of the institution, forge closer collaborations with the academics, be more assertive in creating a professional and organisational presence that ensures our participation in the overall development of students and governance of the institution. We must conduct surveys to update our knowledge of students' needs, expectations, and values, as well as expand the use of studies to assess the effectiveness and the appropriateness of our programmes, services and facilities. Most importantly, we must develop our staff to anticipate and meet the changing demands of higher education, our students and our profession (which may possibly be very acute in the new situation Hong Kong faces); while at the same time reinforcing their sense of commitment, ethical standards and principles. After all, positive staff attitudes, together with updated knowledge and competent skills is a big asset to enable any office to excel.

"The future isn't what it used to be. There is no future in believing something can't be done. The future is in making it happen." With this conviction, student affairs should be able to survive this transitional period with poise and glamour.

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(AN OCCASIONAL SERIES)

A Week in the Life...

Carol Smith, Student Services Manager, Leeds Metropolitan University

Week of 17 June 1996

Monday

Struggle into LMU – early – under the weight of around 50 Hardship Applications which I've reluctantly squeezed into the weekend's routine of chores, theatre, church, gardening... Term may be over but student hardship continues.

Time for a quick word with my Manager, University Secretary (aka Mike) before he disappears into the usual Monday Executive Board – BUDGETS are the main worry. Throughout the day, student hardship issues crop up – an apparent abuse of our food voucher system, late compulsory field trips which some students can't afford, vouchers to sign, an indignant student with an eviction notice who demands "how much more desperate do I have to be" and wants cash NOW...

I run through the E-mail, check the OHPs and handouts for a staff awareness session tomorrow and escape to the library to write an urgent report – a potential student in prison for a serious offence has requested a residential place. I've talked to his Probation Officer and can now make a recommendation to Mike. Meet late morning with Counselling Co-ordinator. We discuss various staff problems but concentrate on sorting out issues of insurance and BAC Membership for the growing number of voluntary Associates, now 26. The 'contract' we give them clearly needs renewing. We fix a date to do this and to discuss staff counselling and some staff development work with the 4 paid staff.

Grab a sandwich and spend lunchtime scribbling comments on David Ball's proposed revised membership scheme for AMOSSHE and post it back.

After lunch, off to a meeting with one of our Dyslexia Assessors, accompanied by the Dyslexia Support and Development Officer. There have been some problems with some of the LEA's – not too keen on reports by someone who isn't an Educational Psychologist. We discuss the way forward for him for next year – perhaps more individual support sessions, after diagnosis, and little or no testing.

Spend the last hour setting up some 'review' meetings with staff, check the typing on the memo on the student in jail and take it down the corridor to Mike. Collect more materials for tomorrow's talk...

Tuesday

Collect leaflets and OHPs and spend a useful hour talking to Library staff about what Student Services does – and about the student experience. Put up my usual OHP which spells out the £.p of student grant and loan compared to Income Support. Gasps of horror! – I'm always surprised at this but then I suppose that it isn't common knowledge.

Next into regular meeting with Mike. Heavy stuff over budgets. We both want to see a nursery on site within the year in addition to our current childcare support. Can we make it happen now? As usual, I come out with a list of things to do. Debrief myself and then scribble a hasty reply to the

local Samaritans who want to come and talk to us about their services.

Then into monthly meeting with Chaplaincy Co-ordinator. We have four Christian Chaplains (2 shared with University of Leeds), a Jewish rabbi and an Islamic Adviser. The latter two cover a huge area and many other institutions. The Christian team take it in turns to co-ordinate their services – this term it's the fairly new Anglican Chaplain. We have a mutual update of information and inevitably talk about next year's budgets...

Passing through our general office, hear some good news. A South American student who came to the University while still a refugee has achieved her postgraduate Diploma in Architecture with 3 merits. Our International Student Development Officer, who has given her a lot of support, is as thrilled as she is...

Finally escape to a late lunch and a walk to the shops around 2.00 pm.

The fortnightly Access Fund Hardship Panel starts at 4.30 pm. Today there are five of us – the Admissions Officer, one of the Students' Union Vice-Presidents, and two of the Faculty reps – both Senior Administrators. We have around 50 cases to consider. The budget is running low and term has ended so we're a bit 'meaner' than we have been. Awards tend to be around £100 rather than £300 – except for a single parent, a seriously ill student and one who's been harassed (by local gangs) from his house.

We finish around 6.45 – not bad, sometimes we've gone on till 7.30. Dash home and grab a bite to eat before going to Parochial Church Council...

Wednesday

Off to Beckett Park site today – nearer home, quieter and greener. Our base there is the old Warden's house in one the few Halls which have not been converted to teaching or admin blocks. It's used all the time by Counsellors and sessionally by the rest of us. After reloading the fax, I settle myself in

what would have been the front bedroom and catch up on admin.

Then over to the main lecture theatres for an unusual presentation. A final year BSc Computing student has been working on a project to present Student Services in a 'multi-media' way. The presentation is excellent. Michael suffers from cerebral palsy and is a student we've arranged personal helpers for but this is very much his own work. Lots of us have come to watch and join in and we all get excited about the possibilities of free-standing machines with 'touch' screens and friendly bits of dialogue and/or music, and photos of staff and links to the Internet Site, etc, etc... !! Then we think about budgets – again. Michael is happy for us to use his ideas and his tutor thinks another student may also be interested next year. Everyone 'feels good' for at least an hour afterwards...

Back at the office, start redrafting the 'AMOSSHE Guidelines on Student Employment' after a recent meeting with Thelma. They go into shape surprisingly easily. Then move on to preparation for monthly Student Support team meeting next week. Check the minutes, draw up the Agenda. Items include a review of Information – leaflets, staff seminars, road shows, etc – for next year, where we've got to with our Confidentiality Document, and a new sickness monitoring scheme which is bothering some people... Remember we're having problems with misuse of Disabled Parking Spaces, and with identifying overseas students with 'Orange Badge' equivalents. Ring Social Services for advice and information – get passed from pillar to post and the person I finally need is out... Ring a student who wants advice about a review of his final award – he answers his mobile phone on a coach coming to Leeds! We arrange to meet tomorrow.

Home on a lovely evening to the garden, the pond and the virgin courgettes which can't seem to get started.

Thursday

In horribly early as I'm going straight out from work tonight and we'll only need one car, so get a lift into town from partner. At 7.40 am, LMU is blissfully quiet. Time to debrief myself, do accumulated washing up, and filing, and a diary check, and E-mail.

Meeting with student. We've just brought in new review and appeal regulations and I struggle to get my head round the changes. This student got a 3rd – he had two repeat years and lots of problems and he can't challenge 'academic judgement'. He thinks he didn't get a clear enough explanation that these two repeats would limit his final award – he wouldn't have come back if he'd known... Don't feel I can help further as my job is to explain the system re mitigation, procedural irregularities, etc. Suggest he goes to the Students' Union to discuss a possible grievance but warn him that this is a long shot...

Straight into meeting of International Student Support Group. This comprises colleagues from External Relations, Admissions, Secretariat, and myself and our International Student Development Officer. Today there's just us two and the Admissions Officer. We continue our review of LMU's performance against the CVCP Code of Practice and note areas for improvement.

After lunch, message from Student Financial Support Scheme Administrator – we've overspent on Access Funds! Can't quite believe this – we check the printout again. Imputing error – the interest hasn't been added in. We have about £2,800 left till 31 July, and some previously purchased food vouchers.

Write up student's case from this morning, fax 'Employment Guidelines' to Thelma. Just setting off for the staff bar to meet the Students' Union Advice Service Manager for an end of term drink when he rings to say "too busy". Another workaholic...

Leave early to catch the train to York and the Mystery Plays. God is a woman this year – much less fazed by this than by the butchering of the medieval texts and a choir boy singing amongst Herod's Heavies! Home at midnight.

Friday

The longest day today – and also 'Go Home on Time Day' as I remind Mike in the car park.

Set up urgent meeting with Management Information Systems colleague. I need printouts of all expenditure on Fee Remission for Part-time Students so we can look at ways of possibly saving money. He'll do his best but maybe not today! Two Student Support colleagues ask for urgent meeting about an overseas student with huge fee debts. He won't get his degree unless he clears them. His enrolment on a further course after DipHE seems to have been unwise – can I persuade the Faculty to write off his debt so he can graduate? Not very hopeful – I'll see what I can do.

Find a note in my pigeonhole from a Fine Art finalist – a student with several disabilities. "I got a First", it says, "thank you all for your support". Students are coming in to collect their Hardship awards – the irate student with the eviction notice on Monday says "Thanks for the help – I've got a job interview" – staff seldom get thanked, so this is appreciated.

Deal with a few urgent hardship applications and visit the Fine Art degree show. The computer print-outs arrive at 3.30.

Start chasing overseas 'Orange Badges' (again), deal with some more academic review enquiries, catch up with E-mail and GO HOME EARLY (well, earlier than usual) with the print-outs for some light weekend reading...

Sorry I didn't get to go anywhere exotic – Cardiff, Newcastle and Birmingham were my furthest expeditions this year! This was a fairly typical week.

Realizing the Educational Potential of Residence Halls

by Charles C. Schroeder, Phyllis Mable and Associates
Jossey-Bass Inc, San Francisco

1994 336pp ISBN 0-7879-0018-4.

Keith Cooper, Head of Student Services, Oxford Brookes University

It may seem to some to be quaintly anachronistic to feature material on halls of residence when so many of the macro-trends influencing higher education point towards student population and participation patterns which suggest the demise of halls of residence and when Baroness Blackstone, a key thinker on education in the party which is likely to form the next government, has described them as "a nineteenth century anachronism".

And yet... and yet... Many universities, old and new, have recently undertaken quite ambitious halls of residence construction programmes; indeed 100,000 additional places were created between 1990 and 1995 at a cost of one billion pounds. Whilst most of this work has been triggered by attempts to compete more effectively for students within the existing landscape of the marketplace, there may be more than a short-term role for halls of residence in a significant sector of the market. Recruitment of international students may be influenced by the three part pincer movement of declining British world influence, the desire and capacity of more countries to offer higher education within their national boundaries and competition from more providers but many UK institutions are likely to remain active in this field and will wish to provide halls of residence to support their activity. In addition, it is quite probable that the British (or perhaps to be more precise, the predominantly English) middle class rite of passage which involves 18-22 year olds

attending a University away from their home town, full-time for a period of years, may prove more persistent than some current analysts anticipate, despite the further changes in student funding which are likely to occur in the next five years.

It may seem equally wrong-headed to feature the review of a book which looks at the educational potential of halls of residence when explicit and structured 'development' programmes in halls have, generally speaking, not been adopted within British Universities and, some would argue, they are very alien indeed to the student expectations of hall life in a British University.

Despite all these points, I think it may be appropriate for us to think carefully, critically and radically about how the structure and organisation of halls of residence can contribute to achieving and meeting some newly emerging University goals and concerns and, as a consequence, to justify giving 'air-time' to this review. What follows is not a critique of the text in terms of the strength of its theoretical foundations, or an evaluation of the outcomes which it claims for the programmes it describes or the qualities of the text. Instead, it is an invitation to reflect upon the opportunities suggested by a book which focuses on explicitly structuring, organising and facilitating halls of residence communities in order to support and integrate student learning across a whole range of curricular and co-curricular issues.

At an early point, the book acknowledges that halls of residence may be construed differently by different professional and interest groups when it asks the question "Is it possible that the goals of those building, maintaining and operating halls of residence do not have student learning as their goal in the first place?" Most British readers – used to literature on halls of residence which emphasises facilities management – would probably answer with a qualified 'yes'. A view which would be supported by many of Martin Blakey's observations in his recent essay on Student Accommodation (in Hazelgrove, S, Ed., 'The Student Experience, SRHE/Open University Press, 1994). He writes "in common with many other non-teaching functions, accommodation services have been separated from the academic side of the institution. Involvement by academics in student accommodation... has been minimised." Later, he goes even further – "By transforming themselves into major accommodation suppliers and separating student accommodation from the academic agenda, many institutional providers are now in the same situation with regard to student tenants as the private sector... Indeed, it may be easier in the future if accommodation officers saw themselves as being straight housing suppliers..."

Mabel and Schroeder's book takes quite the opposite view. True, it is critical of some current strategies underpinning personal development programmes in halls of residence in the USA, quoting with approval the words of one critic who suggests that they simply reflect the latest whim of pop psychology and are rarely linked to specific academic or educational outcomes. But it goes on to describe and evaluate a number of other hall-based programmes, staffed by teams of teaching staff, student services staff and student mentors/tutors. Programmes described include: schemes based on subject elements of the standard curriculum; language theme halls; the development of international and cross-cultural understanding; a shared commitment to environmental issues; foundation programmes concerned with values and

freshman year orientation programmes concerned with developing the skills of studentship and reflection upon the process of being a student.

Listing the problems of translating programmes like these into UK higher education is relatively easy. How will they be staffed? The involvement of teaching staff in residential programmes runs counter to the increasing distance between the professional roles and personal lives of university staff noted by John Earwaker (in *Helping and Supporting Students*, SRHE/Open University Press, 1992). The logistics of registration and module selection would make it difficult to allocate students to hall areas according to subject and many might feel that allocation procedures based on these principles would themselves be unacceptably alien. UK Halls tend to have a high turnover of residents which disrupts residential communities. Architecture and housing law may provide different but equally unyielding constraints. Students may perceive the programmes as intrusive and have the feeling of being 'overdosed on education'.

On the other hand there are forces for change which suggest that the terrain of UK higher education could be fertile territory for such ideas. Established influences such as *Enterprise in Higher Education* and *Higher Education for Capability*, in conjunction with anticipated changes in graduate employment patterns have placed personal development (previously and predominantly the preserve of Student Services specialists) on University agendas. There is a growing acknowledgement of the importance which student peers, mentors and tutors can play in the educational process; the Robertson Report (*Choosing to Change*, HEQC, 1994) has suggested that Universities should structure and support such influences by awarding academic credits to those who participate. Institutions are concerned about the anonymity and fragmentation associated with mass higher education and modularisation. On a different level, a number of Heads of Student Services are concerned about the levels of vandalism in halls of residence. Universities

are concerned about attrition rates which Williams and Fry (in 'Long Term Prospects for British Higher Education', Institute of Education for CVCP, 1993) have described as becoming a major cause for concern in the 1990's.

All who are concerned with these developments and challenges may find it worthwhile to turn aside to look at Mabel and Schroeder's work, which introduces us to schemes which claim to demonstrate evidence of improving academic performance, enhancing personal development and creating a stronger sense of community and belonging.

The concept of the student as customer and uneasiness about echoes of "*in loco parentis*" may lead many to be sceptical of programmes of this kind on the grounds that they are intrusive and paternalistic. Others might argue that Student Services' current obsession with consumer babble is preventing us from making what could be described as "responsible interventions" based on a commitment to facilitating learning.

Word Processing

by Sharon Lee, Department of Student Services

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by the Department of External Relations

at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle

for the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education