

Assessment of the Student Services of De La Salle University Dasmariñas College of Education Graduate Studies: Basis for a Proposed Enhancement Program

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Abstract

The study aims to assess the student services of the College of Education Graduate Studies (COEGS) of De La Salle University Dasmariñas for a proposed enhancement program. The main sources of data came from the graduate students of the College of Education enrolled in the 2015-2016 academic year. A validated questionnaire was designed, highlighting the different student services of the college. Findings from the study showed that the students were very familiar with the library, canteen or food services, bookstore, payment centers and classrooms. However, students were somewhat familiar with the university clinic and campus ministry office. In terms of extent of usage, the results showed that students always used the classroom and canteen services. However, they rarely used the University Research Office (URO), University Clinic, and Campus Ministry Office. With regard to the level of satisfaction, findings show that the students were very satisfied with the classrooms and physical maintenance and cleanliness services of the university. However, students were dissatisfied with the services of the university clinic and campus ministry office. These findings demonstrate the need to have an Action Plan for the Student Services Enhancement Program which will help improve students' level of familiarity, extent of usage and level of satisfaction with all the student services being offered by the College of Education Graduate Studies of De La Salle University Dasmariñas.

Keywords: student services, college of Education, graduate studies, De La Salle university Dasmariñas

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Introduction

Student services have always been an integral part of the university graduate student's educational experience. In today's educational and working environment, student services play an even more important role in the quality of graduate student life. The wide-ranging resources provided by student services are a key strength of residential colleges and universities. Student services are essential to the educational mission—not imaginatively connected to the core of learning—and without them, one of the most powerful arguments for the continuation of residential education will be lost. The intentional integration of coursework and broad student services provides a full educational environment; increasing attention to student services creates an integrated field of experience across students' curricular, residential, and social lives. After all, everything is education—every action and interaction is an opportunity for learning and cultivation.

With campuses becoming more diverse, it is important for the university to consider how their services will impact the variety of students that are served. As graduate students strive to obtain degrees, they face many academic challenges. Student services are the ways and means to provide additional help to the students. Choudhry et al. (2008) points out that the structure and activities of student services are dependent upon the infinite needs of the learners and these services lead to the realization of the instructional objectives of the institution (Gupta, Kokaria and Ghugtai, 2002).

In the Philippines, government subsidy for public tertiary institutions has been steadily dwindling over the years, while student tuition in private colleges and universities has been steadily rising. Sixty percent of government subsidy for public colleges and universities is earmarked for faculty salaries; the bulk of the remainder goes to infrastructure maintenance and the salaries of all non-academic personnel, with little left, if any, for student service programs and activities. Typical student services include: 1) scholarships and financial aid; 2) counseling and guidance; 3) health services; 4) student learning assistance; 5) food and cafeteria; 6) residence halls; 7) assistance to international students; and 8) supervision of student activities, especially social action programs. All Catholic institutions have, in addition, Campus Ministry Offices and Offices for Social Concern and Involvement. Problems and concerns facing many typical Filipino colleges and universities today include: 1) lack of funds, facilities, and especially computer hardware and software to support student services; 2) lack of personnel resulting in an overburdened student services practitioners; and 3) lack of trained staff because of the allure presented by “greener pastures” of other professions. These concerns are understandable within the larger context of Philippine social and economic realities. Most student services offices in these colleges and universities are considered subservient to the academic community. They serve merely as a support system to

the academic life of graduate students in these tertiary level institutions with post graduate studies.

De La Salle University has a student services program, directed and coordinated by a professionally trained staff, which is an integral part of the institutional planning and operation of DLSU D. This program is designed to assist the individual student to attain maximum self-realization and to become effective in their social environment. The institution's program of student services should complement the academic program (Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities Standards).

It is in this light that the researchers, who are the students of De La Salle University Dasmariñas in the College of Education Graduate Studies studying the Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management, were motivated to conduct this study in relation to their major subject, Management of Student Services. They believed that this study will provide the administrators of the COEGS with data and information on how to develop different student services programs to improve the graduate students' levels of familiarity and satisfaction with regards to the services they offer. The researchers were also motivated to conduct this study to be able to share their knowledge and skills that they believed will help the college in formulating student services development program for all the graduate students of the College of Education Graduate Studies at DLSU-D.

Statement of the Problem

The major purpose of the study was to evaluate the following student services of the De La Salle University Dasmariñas College of Education Graduate Studies so as to propose a student services enhancement program.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the students' level of familiarity with the student services offered by the College of Education Graduate Studies?
2. What is the students' extent of usage of the student services offered by the College of Education Graduate Studies?
3. What is the students' level of satisfaction with the student services offered by the College of Education Graduate Studies?

Paradigm of the Study

The assessment of the student services of the College of Education Graduate Studies of De La Salle University Dasmariñas helped the researchers to be able to come up with appropriate enhancement programs to improve the different components of student services that COEGS offers to their students. The research also determined the familiarity, usage and satisfaction of the graduate students with all the services they received from the student services. These appraisals served as determinants of each component and became the basis for designing a proposed enhancement program. These services were:

University Research Office

This refers to a service unit that coordinates the research activities of the university. This office primarily provides the support environment for educational research projects and research skills development.

Library / AEA. DLSU-D's library

It houses collections of books, periodicals, theses, and other reference materials. Also, it houses the Electronic Resource Services (the Internet nook), the Educational Media Services (which holds such media as videos, slides, presentations, and the like), as well as four viewing and conference rooms.

University Clinic.

This refers to a healthcare facility that is primarily to promote the health and well-being of the De La Salle University – Dasmariñas community.

Campus Ministry Office

This refers to a service unit that aims to provide meaningful, relevant, enculturated and dynamic liturgical celebrations and devotional practices, especially the Holy Eucharist, and provides opportunities for the members of the community to participate in the life of the Church through community building and faith sharing activities.

Canteen Services / Food Services

This term refers to a service rendered by the cafeterias/canteens/eateries responsible for any meal prepared for the students and personnel.

Bookstore

This refers to a bookshop within De La Salle University – Dasmariñas.

Payment Centers

This refers to a place/area where payment can be made. This also refers to banks and other payment service providers that offer shops and online services for accepting electronic payments by a variety of payment methods including credit card, bank-based payments such as direct debit, bank transfers, and real-time bank transfers based on online banking.

Parking Area

This refers to a location that is designated for parking, paved or unpaved, utilized by the students of the College of Education Graduate Studies De La Salle University Dasmariñas.

Classrooms: Lights and Air Conditioning Units

These terms refer to a learning area with adequate lighting and full air conditioning that is used by the students of the College of Education Graduate Studies De La Salle University Dasmariñas.

IT Services

This refers to a service unit that handles the technical and systems development of university processes involving the areas of information systems, network, technical services, and web development.

Security / Safe Services

This refers to a department that is responsible for providing security and safe services to students and personnel.

Physical Maintenance and Cleanliness Services

This refers to a service unit that supervises the upkeep of the physical assets of the University by overseeing the construction and maintenance of its facilities.

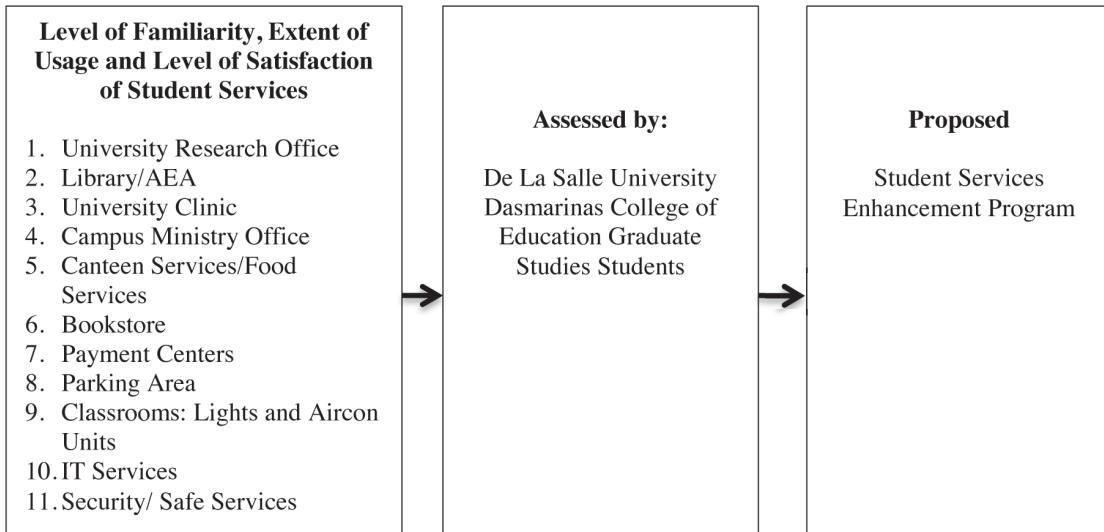


Figure 1 Student Services Assessment

Methodology and Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive method of research to assess the student services of the College of Education Graduate Studies, De La Salle University Dasmariñas for a proposed enhancement program. The respondents of this study were the enrollees of the College of Education Graduate Studies of De La Salle University Dasmariñas for the first semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. The purpose of this study was to assess the familiarity, usage and satisfaction with the student services performance to the present conditions that exist. The questions dealt with the level of familiarity, the extent of usage and level of satisfaction of the graduate students from the different services of College of Education Graduate Studies.

A survey questionnaire was the main data gathering instrument. The research questionnaire was composed of two sets. The first set was the Student Information Sheet. It covered the demographic information of the respondents, such as program and major. The second set dealt with the level of familiarity of the different components of student services offered in the university, the extent of usage of these services and the level of satisfaction based on the experience of the respondents. Questionnaire for the level of familiarity, extent of usage and level of satisfaction was adopted and modified from the Student Satisfactory Survey of Southwestern College. Students were queried with regard to their familiarity on the 11 university services and departments. Likewise, five questions for each service and department were asked also.

For items on the level of familiarity, extent of usage and level of satisfaction with the student services, the weighted points, score range and verbal interpretation are as follows:

Table 1 Scale Used in the Study (Likert Scale)

| Scale | Range | Level of Familiarity Verbal Interpretation | Level of Extent of Usage Verbal Interpretation | Level of Satisfaction Verbal Interpretation |
|-------|--------------|---|--|--|
| 5 | 4.21 to 5.00 | Very familiar | Always | Very Satisfied |
| 4 | 3.41 to 4.20 | Familiar | Often | Satisfied |
| 3 | 2.61 to 3.40 | Somewhat Familiar | Sometimes | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 to 2.60 | Not familiar | Rarely | Dissatisfied |
| 1 | 1.00 to 1.80 | Never heard of it | Never | Not applicable |

Table 2 Profile of College of Education Graduate Studies Students

| Program | Major | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| PhD | Educational Management | 57 | 13.77 |
| | Counselling | 11 | 2.66 |
| MA | Educational Management | 176 | 42.50 |
| | Guidance and Counselling | 107 | 25.85 |
| | Special Education | 40 | 9.66 |
| | Physical Education | 23 | 5.56 |
| TOTAL | | 414 | 100 |

Table 2 shows the profile of college of education graduate studies students of De La Salle University Dasmariñas during the 1st Semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. The table shows that Masters of Arts in Education Educational Management major had the most number of enrollees with 42.50%, while Doctor of Philosophy Counselling major had the least number of enrollees with 2.66%.

Results and Discussion

Problem 1 What is the students' level of familiarity with the student services offered by the College of Education Graduate Studies?

Table 3 Students' Level of Familiarity with the Student Services

| No. | Student Services | MEAN | Verbal Description |
|--------------|---|-------------|--------------------|
| 1 | University Research Office | 3.26 | Somewhat Familiar |
| 2 | Library / AEA | 4.54 | Very Familiar |
| 3 | University Clinic | 3.20 | Somewhat Familiar |
| 4 | Campus Ministry Clinic | 3.38 | Somewhat Familiar |
| 5 | Canteen Services / Food Services | 4.67 | Very Familiar |
| 6 | Bookstore | 4.56 | Very Familiar |
| 7 | Payment Centers | 4.46 | Very Familiar |
| 8 | Parking Area | 3.94 | Familiar |
| 9 | Classrooms: Lights and Aircon Units | 4.42 | Very Familiar |
| 10 | IT Services | 3.67 | Familiar |
| 11 | Security / Safe Services | 3.91 | Familiar |
| 12 | Physical Maintenance and Cleanliness Services | 4.01 | Familiar |
| TOTAL | | 4.00 | Familiar |

Table 3 shows the students' level of familiarity to the student services offered by the College of Education Graduate Studies with a total mean of **4.00** that has a verbal description of **Familiar**.

Findings reveal that COEGS students are very familiar with the library, canteen and food services, bookstore, payment centers and classrooms. However, students are somewhat familiar with the university clinic and campus ministry office with means of 3.20 and 3.38, respectively.

This shows that students were not well-oriented with the different services offered by the university clinic and as well as the campus ministry office. The offices should conduct an orientation program for the students so that they will be informed of the different kind of services that they can avail from the said offices.

Familiarity with students' services is very important. Purnell and Blank (2004 cited in Dietsche, 2012) claimed that offering an array of support services to meet the diverse needs of post-secondary learners assumes that these services improve success by providing students with compensatory resources and opportunities for engagement.

Problem 2 What is the students' extent of usage of the student services offered by the College of Education Graduate Studies?

Table 4 Students' Extent of Usage of Student Services

| No. | Student Services | MEAN | Verbal Description |
|--------------|---|-------------|--------------------|
| 1 | University Research Office | 2.48 | Rarely |
| 2 | Library / AEA | 3.99 | Often |
| 3 | University Clinic | 1.89 | Rarely |
| 4 | Campus Ministry Office | 1.87 | Rarely |
| 5 | Canteen Services / Food Services | 4.51 | Always |
| 6 | Bookstore | 3.56 | Often |
| 7 | Payment Centers | 3.88 | Often |
| 8 | Parking Area | 2.77 | Sometimes |
| 9 | Classrooms: Lights and Air Conditioning Units | 4.40 | Always |
| 10 | IT Services | 2.89 | Sometimes |
| 11 | Security / Safe Services | 3.44 | Often |
| 12 | Physical Maintenance and Cleanliness Services | 3.60 | Often |
| TOTAL | | 3.27 | Sometimes |

Table 4 shows the students' extent of usage to the student services offered by the College of Education Graduate Studies with a total mean of **3.27** and verbal description as **Sometimes**.

Results suggest that students always used the classroom and canteen services. However, they rarely used the University Research Office, University Clinic, and Campus Ministry Office with a mean of 2.48, 1.89 and 1.87 respectively.

The university should make a program that will let the students know the different services of the said office that they rarely used so that they will be able to utilize them properly.

Research shows that student's satisfaction correlates with the kind of student services the institution offered. Noel-Levitz (2004 cited in Bailey-Chen,2007) claimed that a willingness to address student satisfaction issues enables institutions to systematically improve the quality of the educational experience and offer more educational value to students. Gray (1997 cited in Bailey-Chen, 2007) assessment may also serve the institution as an effective tool for fostering continual improvement, allowing institutions to attract and retain students.

Problem 3 What is the students' level of satisfaction with the student services offered by the College of Education Graduate Studies?

Table 5 Students' Level of Satisfaction to the Student Services

| No. | Student Services | MEAN | Verbal Description |
|--------------|---|-------------|--------------------|
| 1 | University Research Office | 3.52 | Satisfied |
| 2 | Library / AEA | 4.13 | Satisfied |
| 3 | University Clinic | 2.52 | Dissatisfied |
| 4 | Campus Ministry Office | 2.50 | Dissatisfied |
| 5 | Canteen Services / Food Services | 3.94 | Satisfied |
| 6 | Bookstore | 3.69 | Satisfied |
| 7 | Payment Centers | 3.64 | Satisfied |
| 8 | Classrooms: Lights and Air Conditioning Units | 4.45 | Very Satisfied |
| 9 | IT Services | 3.24 | Neutral |
| 10 | Security / Safe Services | 3.84 | Satisfied |
| 11 | Physical Maintenance and Cleanliness Services | 4.26 | Very Satisfied |
| TOTAL | | 3.61 | Satisfied |

Table 5 shows the students' level of satisfaction to the students services offered by the college of education graduate studies with a total mean of **3.61** and verbal description as **Satisfied**.

The findings show that the students were very satisfied with the classrooms and physical maintenance and cleanliness services of the university. However, students were dissatisfied with the services of university clinic and campus ministry office, with means of **2.52** and **2.50** respectively. The university should design a program that will help the students

know the different services of the university for proper utilization specially those services that they are not satisfied.

Noel-Levitz (2004 cited in Bailey-Chen, 2007) purported that student satisfaction plays an important role in student engagement, retention, and learning. Research on college student satisfaction indicates that institutions with more satisfied students have higher graduation rates, lower student loan default rates, and higher alumni giving. Satisfaction with an institution includes a combination of academic factors as well as areas related to campus services.

Likewise, Nerad (1997 cited in Butler, 2002) claimed that improving the graduate culture through the provision of support services is a key element in attracting and retaining graduate students and providing them with a more fertile ground for success. Therefore, student satisfaction with regard to student services is very important.

Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing findings, the study showed that there were 346 graduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Education major in the Educational Management, Guidance and Counselling, Special Education and Physical Education majors; a total of 68 graduate students enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy in Education Management and Counselling majors.

Students' level of familiarity with the student services of the university had a general result of Familiar. However, the students were Somewhat Familiar with the university research office, university clinic and campus ministry office. Students' extent of usage of the student services of the university had a general result of Sometimes. However, they Rarely Used the university research office, university clinic and campus ministry office. Students' level of satisfaction with the student services of the university had a general result of Satisfied. However, they were Dissatisfied with the university clinic and campus ministry office of the university.

Recommendations

The College of Education Graduate Studies should come up with an enhancement program that will improve the students' level of familiarity, extent of usage and satisfaction with the different student services they offer. The university should come up with an enhancement program that will improve the level of familiarity to the different student services that they can avail, especially those that they are not familiar with; encourage the students to maximize the use of the different student services; and evaluate the different

services that the students found unsatisfactorily, to know the factors, and how to improve each service. It is recommended also that the university should organize an orientation program to improve the student's level of familiarity.

Table 6 Action Plan on Student Services Enhancement Program

| Objectives | Key Results Area | Performance Indicator | Strategies/ Programs/ Activities | Time Frame | Concerned Unit/Person | Resources |
|---|----------------------|---|---|------------|--|------------------------------|
| To increase the awareness and familiarity of students on the different student services offered by the school such as University Research Office, University Clinic, and Campus Ministry Office | Level of familiarity | 100% of students are aware and knowledge able of the student services being offered by the school | Organize a responsible and innovative Student Services Division that will be accountable for the operations of University Research Office, University Clinic, and Campus Ministry Office Conduct "Campus Orientation Program" for the entire COEDGS students on the first week of every semester Include description and clarification of each student service in the Student Manual. | Year round | Dean Director Student Council Focal Person in each service Faculty | School Fund/ Self-funding |

Table 6 Action Plan on Student Services Enhancement Program (cont.)

| Objectives | Key Results Area | Performance Indicator | Strategies/ Programs/ Activities | Time Frame | Concerned Unit/Person | Resources |
|---|-------------------------|---|---|-------------------|--|------------------------------|
| To increase the awareness and familiarity of students on the different student services offered by the school such as University Research Office, University Clinic, and Campus Ministry Office | Level of familiarity | 100% of students are aware and knowledge able of the student services being offered by the school | Organize a responsible and innovative Student Services Division that will be accountable for the operations of University Research Office, University Clinic, and Campus Ministry Office Conduct “Campus Orientation Program” for the entire COEDGS students on the first week of every semester Include description and clarification of each student service in the Student Manual. | Year round | Dean Director Student Council Focal Person in each service Faculty | School Fund/ Self-funding |

Table 6 Action Plan on Student Services Enhancement Program (cont.)

| Objectives | Key Results Area | Performance Indicator | Strategies/ Programs/ Activities | Time Frame | Concerned Unit/Person | Resources |
|---|--|--|--|------------|--|------------------------------|
| To maximize the usage of the student services that are rarely utilized by the COEDGS students such as University Research Office, University Clinic, and Campus Ministry Office | Utilization of student services/ Increase extent of usage | 100% of students avail, enjoy and appreciate the different student services. | Provide schedule for every student in the utilization of those services which are rarely used | Year round | Dean Director Student Council Focal Person in each service Faculty | School Fund/ Self-funding |
| To increase the satisfaction level of students with regard to student services which they found unsatisfactory such as University Clinic and Campus Ministry Office | Satisfaction Level | 100% of students are highly satisfied of the student services offered by the school 90% Increase in retention rate on the next semester | Encourage the Student Council to promote the services offered by University Clinic and Campus Ministry Office Lead, design and conduct researches to measure and assess the satisfaction level of students in the utilization of student services | Year round | Dean Director Student Council Focal Person in each service Faculty | School Fund/ Self-funding |

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