

CHAPTER 5—STUDENT SERVICES: STUDENT AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT SERVICES

For the first 40 years of its existence, the New School for Social Research was dedicated to providing an adult population with the opportunity for personal enrichment and intellectual stimulation. Because of this, the institution had less need to provide services associated with student affairs. For the most part, students did not seek housing or health services, nor did they look to the institution for assistance making contact with peers through organized social activity. Rather, they looked to the institution to engage them in conversation and debate. Once outside the classroom, contact with the institution was minimal. But the students we serve have changed and so have their needs. Dramatic changes described below in Part 1 have been made over the last ten years in student affairs. Most recently, this fall the university reorganized enrollment services, an ongoing process described in Part 2.

PART 1: STUDENT AFFAIRS

New School University in 2001 has a degree student population of 7,100; of that group 3,900 are undergraduates. Three schools—The Graduate Faculty, Eugene Lang College and The New School—focus on the liberal arts. Five professional schools—Parsons School of Design, the Jazz and Contemporary Music Program, Mannes College of Music, Actors Studio Drama School and the Milano Graduate School—offer focused education in the arts, design and management. The students who enroll at the university have chosen to do so because it is an institution with a commitment to artistic and intellectual freedom, and because the schools within it are exceptional. They are also attracted to New York City and its wealth of resources. They bring a clarity of purpose to their academic pursuits and the self-motivation necessary to succeed.

New School students also bring certain expectations and demands. Many seek to be active participants in the decisions that affect their academic pursuits. Many seek ways to volunteer time and energy to improve and enrich the lives of those in the surrounding community. Many seek guidance as they contemplate career changes. They desire independence, both in and out of the classroom; however, the large and growing number of undergraduates (many of whom are under 25 years of age) require services such as housing, health care, meal plans, recreation, career services, special student needs and social activities. These are the services one normally associates with student affairs.

Until 1994 student affairs resided primarily within the schools. Few opportunities existed for students to meet peers in other divisions. Duplication of effort was considerable as each school developed its own orientation, handbook and career workshops. In 1994 the university began to bring together these activities with the appointment of an Assistant Provost for Student Affairs. In 1997 the first Vice President for Student Affairs was appointed, underscoring the institution's commitment to provide students with pivotal support services and to carry a voice for them to the institution's highest levels. It responded to the changing

composition of the student body and affirmed the intrinsic value of creating opportunities for students to cross school boundaries.

Student Affairs services and programs were centralized under the Vice President for Student Affairs during the summer of 2000. The goals for this restructuring were threefold. The first was accountability. While centralization would not automatically result in better accountability, consistency and standardization could more easily be managed through one office, rather than many. Second was the desire to enhance services to students. Rather than maintain many generalists, centralization would allow the appointment of experienced administrators in areas deemed vital, ultimately building depth in areas such as student rights and responsibilities, student disability services and student development. Third, centralization would mean increased and convenient access as offices were relocated and clustered together.

As part of the restructuring, a mission statement was developed:

At New School University, the mission of Student Affairs is to foster the intellectual, artistic, cultural and social development of our diverse student body. Through the creation of purposeful out of classroom experiences and services, Student Affairs seeks to integrate constituencies and build community in partnership with students, faculty and administration. Here, students are challenged to take responsibility for building an environment dedicated to the principles of fairness, civility and diversity.

Today, in 2002, the current program structure of student affairs is as follows:

<u>CAMPUS LIFE</u> Housing Medical Services Counseling Services	<u>STUDENT RESOURCES</u> HEOP Disability Services Intercultural Support International Student Services Career Development	<u>STUDENT DEVELOPMENT</u> Orientation Events & Workshops Recreation Student Leadership Student Organizations
<u>STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES</u> Discipline Student Government Policies Citizenship Education “Ombuds”		<u>COMMUNICATIONS</u> Handbook Web Site Information Boards Newsletters Brochures Mailings

Students Served

New School University enrolls several categories of students.

Undergraduates. Traditional undergraduates comprise the largest group of students on campus. These students come directly from high school, or from no more than two years at another college. They are separating from family and learning to live independently. The college years represent a key time in their social development. Parents have a keen interest in their lives and look to the university to serve *in loco parentis*. While many students obtain jobs to help pay for college, the educational experience, broadly defined, is their main focus during the time they are here. Undergraduates also include working adults, on-line students and general credit/certificate students. These are older students. Many are employed full-time, and many have families. They are on the campus primarily for classes. In fact, some are not physically here at all. School is only one aspect of these students' lives. Academic and career issues are of utmost importance. The university's *2001 Fact Book* shows a substantial increase in this population over the past five years.

Enrollment	1997	2001	Change
Degree & Diploma – Undergraduates	3,508	4,041	15.2%
Undergraduate Enrollment by Division in 2001			Enrollment
The New School B.A. & B.F.A. Programs			530
Parsons School of Design			2,352
Milano Graduate School			111
Eugene Lang College			588
Mannes College of Music (includes Extension Diploma)			168
Jazz and Contemporary Music Program			249
Joffrey/NSU Dance Program			43

Graduates. Full-time graduate students often come directly from college. Most are taking a full course load and, therefore, spend many hours each day on the campus. Like traditional undergraduates, the educational experience is the main focus of the time in which they are here. Part-time graduate students, like undergraduate working adults, spend less time on campus. School is but one piece of these students' lives. Academic and career issues are of utmost importance. This population also has increased over the last five years as shown next.

Enrollment	1997	2001	Change
Degree & Diploma – Graduates	2,915	3,120	7%
Graduate Enrollment by Division in 2001			Enrollment
The New School			623
Graduate Faculty			1,041
Parsons School of Design			422
Milano Graduate School			664
Mannes College of Music			161
Actors Studio Drama School			209

International Students. Throughout our undergraduate and graduate student populations are international students. In fact, more than 20% of the degree student population comes from countries outside the United States. These students leave family and culture behind. They may be unfamiliar with the English language and with this country’s educational system. They require special support.

International Student Enrollment Fall 2001	Number	% within School
The New School	146	12.7
Graduate Faculty	304	29.2
Parsons School of Design	848	30.6
Milano Graduate School	26	3.4
Eugene Lang College	15	2.6
Mannes College of Music	159	48.3
Actors Studio Drama School	27	12.9
Jazz and Contemporary Music Program	50	20.1
Joffrey/NSU Dance Program	1	2.3
Total	1,576	22.0

Students of Color. Throughout our undergraduate and graduate student populations are students of color. More than 20% of degree students are students of color. These students often feel isolated in the classroom. They seek ways to bring their culture to this community and actively pursue having a voice on issues they deem important.

Students of Color Enrollment Fall 2001	Number	% within School
The New School	231	20.0
Graduate Faculty	161	15.5
Parsons School of Design	776	27.9
Milano Graduate School	292	37.6
Eugene Lang College	123	20.9
Mannes College of Music	33	10.0
Actors Studio Drama School	36	17.2
Jazz and Contemporary Music Program	47	18.8
Joffrey/NSU Dance Program	5	11.6
Total	1,704	23.7

Services and Programs

Student Affairs offers a growing range of services and co-curriculum programs.

Orientation. Each academic division presents an orientation program for new students. School orientations introduce students to key faculty members and staff. Specific sessions may focus

on classroom expectations or research requirements. Academic advising and registration are covered. In many cases, there are also social events. Fall 1995, as part of the effort to provide opportunities for students to cross divisional lines and meet one another, a university-wide orientation program was initiated. There were 11 events, including the first Block Party. The program was considered a success.

Fall 2001, there were 35 university-wide orientation events. Many of the sessions were informational such as the Apartment Search, Computing Orientation, Library Orientation, Job Search, Federal Loan Workshop, and Student Health Services Fair. Other events focused on the needs of certain groups such as the International Student Orientation, Students of Color Orientation, Basically for Women, and New School OUT. Some addressed urban issues such as Get to the Core of the Big Apple; Stay Safe On and Off Campus; Introduction to NYC Government, Politics, and Media; and Living in the City. And, there were social events such as the International Student Reception, Reception for Students of Color, Graduate Student Reception, and the Block Party.

To strengthen a first time freshman's connection to the institution between the time of deposit and the start of classes, a new program was initiated for fall 2001. Welcome Weekend was designed to introduce first time freshmen and their families to college to the university, and to New York City. Activities were designed to afford a variety of opportunities for students to meet one another, socialize and begin to develop friendships in a relaxed setting. In addition, students were encouraged to make connections with the offices that would best serve them in times of crisis during the academic year. A separate program of activities was held for the parents.

Housing. Student housing, described in Appendix E, has been available at New School University since the 1970s, when housing was provided to students at Parsons School of Design and the Seminar College (now Eugene Lang College). Leased space in a loft building facing Union Square Park and apartments located on East 9th Street provided these accommodations. In the 1980s, a student housing office was created and housing staff launched an effort to develop a listing service to assist students in their search for off-campus housing. In 1989 a new facility owned by the university opened its doors. The need for student housing continued to grow through the 1990s. In fall 2001 a new leased facility opened its doors, and, in fall 2002, a second facility opened.

New School University has recognized the important role played by student housing and is committed to its continuation and expansion. This has not always been the case. Historically, as an institution dedicated to providing the adult population with the opportunity for personal enrichment and intellectual stimulation, there was no need to offer student housing. In the last 30 years, however, the number of degree students has grown and the composition of the student body has changed. Student housing has, in part, made this evolution possible. Student housing has been a critical factor in the evolution of the university as it exists today. The academic schools and colleges are able to recruit, enroll and retain students from all parts of the world and from all social and economic strata because there is student housing. By offering a safe, convenient and service-oriented living arrangement, student housing provides essential academic support. The supportive environment encourages personal growth and stimulates connections with peers. Student housing is an essential component of the overall

educational experience. Together with the other key facilities, it forms a campus in an urban setting.

Health Services. In 1994 the university created a university-wide student health services program, which included a primary care clinic staffed by medical and counseling professionals, a low-cost group health insurance plan and immunization oversight. The student health services program supported degree-seeking students who needed basic health care. Enrollment in these services varied by academic status and required a semester or annual payment. Today the student health services program continues. Additional space has been allocated to accommodate counseling staff. Clinician hours have been extended to increase access for students. Changes in plan administrators and expanded coverage have provided students with an enhanced insurance package. Medical services include primary outpatient care such as diagnosis and treatment of illness or injury. Routine gynecological consultation and treatment are available, and routine laboratory tests are performed. In addition, prescriptions may be written following consultation. Complicated cases are often referred to medical specialists whose services are known to the professional staff. The medical services staff includes licensed nurses, physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners. Counseling services provide short-term therapy. A psychiatrist is available to conduct evaluations and prescribe medication where necessary. When long-term treatment or specialized treatment is advised, a referral is made to a professional whose services are known to the professional staff. The counseling services staff includes psychologists, psychiatrists and clinical social workers.

International Student Services. Prior to the summer of 2000, there were four international student advising offices within the various schools. These offices have now merged into one Office of International Student Services, providing technical services, coordination and liaison services, and counseling and advising services. A team of international student advisors assists with the multi-step process of obtaining a visa, which includes issuance of the Form I-20. They advise students about employment, course loads, travel, practical training, tax returns, immunization, health insurance and maintaining legal INS status. They offer ongoing programs and activities to ensure that international students have the necessary tools to succeed both in and out of the classroom. There are also programs that educate staff, faculty and other students about international student issues. International Student Advisors serve as referral sources for those who require special support.

Student Organizations and Activities. Prior to 1998, all student organizations were attached to a particular academic division (described in Appendix E). Since that time, the policy on recognized student organizations has been amended to promote university-wide organizations. In fall 2001 there were 14 such organizations. These groups have access to space for meetings and activities as well as access to funding to support their endeavors. Almost all of the departments within Student Affairs program activities for students. These may be information sessions, social events, cultural programs or lectures. Some of the activities occurring during the 2001-02 academic year include:

- “Spiritual Café” - An evening with some of NYC’s spiritual leaders
- “Got Résumé?” - Find your passion, where the jobs are, win the interview
- “Students of Color Network” - Communicate, share, connect
- “Basically for Women” - Women in the arts

“Friday Coffee House” - Live music, free coffee and homemade desserts
“Women’s Body Image Group”
Movies and Discussions for International Students

Student Disability Services. Until May 2001, the student affairs administrator at each school served students with disabilities. In an effort to improve, standardize and expand services, a Director of Student Disability Services was appointed in May 2001. The Director has provided services to students that include assistance with grade appeals, notification letters for instructors and coordination of academic accommodations. The Director has also conducted information workshops for students and faculty. A faculty handbook and student handbook were developed and distributed in fall 2002.

Career Development. To provide basic service and programming for students in those schools that do not have offices of career services, a Director of Career Development was hired during the summer of 2001. The Director maintains a job board and offers ongoing programs on resume writing, interview techniques and finding employment.

Intercultural Support. For many years, the university annually appointed a Bridge Advisor to Students of Color. The Bridge Advisor, a part time employee working 16 hours per week, served as an advisor to individual students of color who desired assistance in solving problems and who sought to know how and where to raise a concern. To expand and strengthen this service, the university created the Office of Intercultural Support during the summer of 2002. This office, fully staffed with 35 operating hours throughout the week, will now continue the work of the Bridge Advisor. In addition, the office will support student of color organizations and promote programs and workshops to address the needs of this population.

PART 2: ENROLLMENT SERVICES

Before fall 2001, the offices that comprise enrollment services were not managed as one unit. Rather, each held a distinct place in the university’s organization. The Bursar reported to the Executive Vice President whereas the Registrar, Registration and Records as well as Financial Aid reported to the Provost. And the eight admissions offices each sat under the dean of the particular school. While the offices worked together toward the common goal of enrolling students, boundaries were placed around the responsibilities of each. To students for whom the process of enrolling is “one event,” this insular approach was confusing and frustrating.

The university appointed a senior administrator summer 2001 to supervise university admissions. The assignment was to standardize data input, facilitate reporting and enhance communication across schools regarding admission strategies and policies. With the challenges attendant to organizational change coupled with the implementation of the new student information system, BANNER, and hampered by the events of September 11, the task of creating better communication and more efficient administrative techniques became tedious. Progress was much slower than expected. In addition, while no one disagreed regarding the concept of centralization and improved coordination, debate arose over specific policies and practices.

Summer 2002 brought new changes. The administration, recognizing the strong service connection among the separate offices, reorganized the reporting structure. Now the Registrar, Registration, Records, Bursar and Financial Aid report to the newly appointed Senior Vice President for Student Services. School admissions offices still report to the respective dean, but an Office of Enrollment Management, also reporting to the Senior Vice President, would emerge to facilitate communication and cooperation among all of the admissions areas. This new group of offices is now called Enrollment Services. The university had intended to devote an entire chapter to enrollment management, with empirical studies of retention and enrollment trends. For the reasons described earlier, that goal was unworkable. While data on enrollment trends exists (see Appendix A as well as the University 2002 Fact Book), we are not able to show analyses of these trends. Protracted discussions in the Officers Meeting have led to retention becoming a serious topic. For the larger schools, enrollment growth has not been the struggle it has been in other institutions. Possibly the university had not needed to look closely, like their peers, at retention because new students were reasonably easy to find.

Summary of Accomplishments for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services

- Doubling of on-campus housing availability
- Establishment of a student health services program
- Creation of a comprehensive and unified student handbook
- Development of a university-wide welcome weekend for first-time freshmen and a university-wide orientation program for all new students
- Initiation of university-wide recognized student organizations
- Restructuring in Student Affairs has enabled the establishment of offices of international student services, student disability services, and career development
- Creation of the Office of Intercultural Support
- Restructuring the offices within enrollment services
- Developing the Office of Enrollment Management

Challenges for Student Affairs

Good progress establishing a new university office has been made, but challenges remain. Students and families continue to “shop” for colleges. While their primary focus is on the academic program, they evaluate the services and programs in Student Affairs. Often ancillary services play a determinative role in the decision to enroll. The university must continue to meet high expectations and real needs in order to recruit and retain a diverse and talented student body. On-campus housing opportunities have expanded, and a student health services program was initiated. There is now a comprehensive student handbook and a university-wide orientation program. There are centralized offices for student disability services and career development. The focus here, however, has been primarily on the needs of traditional undergraduates. It is now time to begin to assess the needs of the adult learner and develop appropriate services and programs for them.

After seven years of building and strengthening programs and services, it is time to measure success. New students have expectations of what the college experience will be like. It is important to determine what these are, and then to measure how well the institution is able to live up to them. The university should engage in ongoing assessments of student expectations and experiences, and it has started to do so. At the start of the fall 2002 semester, the university conducted the CIRP survey, designed to measure the expectations of first-time freshmen. Later in the fall 2002 semester, a survey will be conducted to measure student satisfaction with services. Being an urban institution, space will always be limited at New School. The allocation of space, however, can impact the ability to deliver quality services. If all of the programs and services of Student Affairs were located under one roof, students would be able to take care of various needs without shopping from one building to the next. In addition, services would be available as long as buildings were open offering access to both day and evening students. If there was a university-wide student center, students would have more opportunity to connect with their peers outside of the classroom. Now, students congregate in cafeterias and local lounges. A university-wide student center would enhance a sense of community. The creative and productive utilization of limited space is essential.

Goals for Enrollment Services:

- To permit every new student a seamless entry to the university, enhancing communications and collaboration among the offices from time of inquiry to arrival.
- To offer a self-service environment to all students, using technology so that a student can register and pay online as well as obtain grades, account balances and course schedules.
- To facilitate the search for answers and resources for all students, creating a student information center to service prospective and current students.

Recommendations

1. Recognizing the important role student affairs plays in recruitment and retention, continue to strengthen the programs and services now in place.
2. Begin to focus on adult learners and part-time graduate students who spend little time on campus, and develop new or enhance current programs and services.
3. Create an ongoing assessment program to measure student expectations and program success.
4. Explore the feasibility of consolidating offices for student affairs and creating a university-wide student center.
5. Develop a positive relationship among the offices of enrollment services, focusing on the needs and perspectives of students.
6. Move toward the implementation of a one-stop shopping environment where students can resolve problems and obtain vital information without visiting multiple offices.