The University of Michigan Student Services Report Card

An evaluation by the Consultants Team of Student Services at the University of Michigan:

5...among the best
4...good
3...about average
2...poor
1...among the worst

Institutional Mission

1 Support and explain the values, mission, and policies of the institution
1 Serve as an integral part of the institutional governance structure
4 Adhere to high ethical principles and professional standards in the discharge of their campus responsibilities

Educational Equity

3 Play a central role in improving the access, retention, and graduation of students from underrepresented groups
3 Ensure that student services and development programs meet the needs of the full range of students
2-3 Address cultural insensitivity by helping to cultivate an appreciation of multicultural diversity

Faculty support

1 Assist faculty in their work with students by providing consultation and intervention when requested
1 Serve as a resource to faculty in their work with individual students and student groups
1 Develop, in concert with students and faculty, standards of student conduct consistent with institutional goals.

Campus Learning Environment

4 Encourage the development of a rich and diverse campus learning environment for students
3 Establish policies and programs that contribute to a safe and secure

campus

1 Identify potential problem areas for students and develop suitable institutional responses

3 Encourage faculty participation (and joint faculty-student services participation) in out-of-classroom activities and programs for students

Student Services and Programs

4 Provide institutional services--academic support, financial assistance, counseling and career planning, housing and food service, physical health and safety, cultural development and recreation, and student activities--that contribute to the general welfare of the campus community

1 Coordinate student services with academic affairs, business affairs, development, and other major components of the institution

4 Effectively manage the fiscal resources for which student services is responsible

1 Effectively manage the human resources for which student services is responsible

1 Assume leadership for responding to student crises

Student Research and Information

1 Provide information to the campus regarding the characteristics of current and prospective students

1 Assess the educational and social experiences of students in order to improve the overall quality of institutional curricular and co-curricular programs

1 Interpret information about students to assist campus officials in determining institutional policies, services, and priorities

Student Advocacy

2 Serve as an advocate for student needs, concerns, and rights in the institution and community when appropriate

1 Ensure that students receive fair and timely hearings on all matters of concern within the institution

1 Provide for the broad participation of students in institutional affairs including decision making processes

1 Assure effective communication channels for students throughout the institution

Staff Development

1 To be intellectually and professionally active

General Comments and Recommendations

After reviewing materials describing the organization, philosophy, practices, and activities of Student Services at Michigan and interviewing over 80 students, faculty, and staff over a three day period on campus, the Consultants Team has reached the following conclusions:

1. It is clear that the University of Michigan is facing an urgent situation because of a prolonged absence of effective leadership both at the top and throughout its entire Student Services organization. It is at high risk because of the almost total absence of effective policies, practices, and procedures, forcing it to "ad hoc" almost everything.

2. Although this situation has arisen from almost two decades of poor leadership and neglect of student services areas, it is also clear that little has happened during the past year. The obvious yet hard decisions and actions simply have not been taken.

3. It is clear that most of the Student Services organization is seriously isolated from the rest of the University, with inadequate communication and reporting channels. Many components of Student Services do not consider themselves responsible to the University administration and have become quite decoupled from general University policies and practices.

5. Hence, the Consultants Team recommends both unanimously and in the strongest terms that the University move rapidly to conduct a search for permanent leadership of Student Services. In particular, the Team recommends that the University seek the following characteristics:

- strong, experienced leadership
- confine the search to external candidates (both because there are no apparent internal candidates, and because the Michigan Student Services culture is very inbred and seriously out of step with most other institutions)
- provide the new Vice President for Student Services with the total backing of the Executive Officers and Regents for a five year period, or longer if necessary, to accomplish a major overhaul of the entire operation.