

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

September 3, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senior Associate Vice President Denise Maybank
Assistant Vice President Vennie Gore
Senior Associate Provost June Youatt

FROM: Provost Kim Wilcox *KAW*
Vice President Fred Poston *FP*
Vice President and Associate Provost Lee June *L June*

RE: Future of Student Support Services

We know each of you is increasingly aware of the impact of these difficult economic times on our University budget. Thus, we join with President Simon in committing ourselves to making decisions which will best serve our current students and those who follow them, by taking steps to better position our University for the future.



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With that in mind, we charge you to reconsider the types of services we are providing to our students, as well as the methods by which we provide that full range of support services. The Learning Alliance Roundtable report, the First Year Experience plan, and the Housing and Food Service Strategic Plan provide groundwork for this effort. In each case, the work groups recommended that we provide services to first year students “closer to home,” that we strip out the redundancy, and that we consider the ways in which this generation of students currently assesses and prefers to access information and services. Our residence hall system, as it moves to a neighborhood concept, provides an excellent opportunity to consider integrated, geographically based, services.

To that end, we are charging the three of you to commence a planning process. The planning should lead to recommendations for a new, integrated organizational model for providing the support our students need to be successful, academically and socially, particularly as they transition to the University. The emphasis should be on creating a model which can be used to provide support to first year students, but one that could continue to provide services in their sophomore to senior years. The planning process should include input from appropriate administrators, staff, and students, and look at the full spectrum of student support services. The process should be driven by the Design Principles and Institutional Metrics which will guide all of our deliberations.

Our budget circumstances have created an environment where we can no longer afford to do many of the things that we have enjoyed in the past; hence we will have to make some difficult choices. Services, programs, and offices will have to be eliminated. Some of these have deep traditions and long histories. In the case of services to students, this will mean trading some of the ways we have done things for new approaches. Our students deserve relevant, inclusive, effective support services as they make the social, cultural, and academic transitions to the University. Our job is to determine those needs and craft a system that is both lean and effective. Although this opportunity is born out of some adversity, we now have the chance to take a fresh look at student needs, and build an exemplary model suited for the early part of the 21st century. Although the new system will not look like our current one, it will build on the important lessons we have learned from our past.

By October 16, 2009, we request a first draft of recommendations for a fully integrated set of academic, social, cultural, and health support services for students. The recommendations will serve as a first step to the reform.

Best wishes in the next stage of this important work.

c: University Community