

MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

November 25, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**FROM:** Provost Kim Wilcox  
Vice President Fred Poston  
Vice President Lee June

**RE:** Shaping the Future of Student Support Services

Thank you for your work on a planning process which will lead to a more integrated organizational model for providing student support. You were asked to submit, by October 16, 2009, a first draft of recommendations for a fully integrated set of academic, social, cultural, and health support services for students. We have reviewed these recommendations, along with your summaries of earlier work, including the Learning Alliance Roundtables and the first year transition report completed by Associate Provost Estray.



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Noted in your work was the opportunity to use the neighborhood framework outlined in the Residential and Hospitality Services strategic plan to reorganize some aspects of student services. For example, this plan suggests the realignment of residential zones into neighborhoods in support of student community and development, and the creation of programmed spaces for intentional student interaction that will encourage academic success.

We endorse both the configuration of student support services around a neighborhood concept and the process you have proposed for moving in that direction. Specifically, we urge you to move forward with a plan which will lead to the following outcomes:

**An integrated and maximized system for residents' support.** The living environment and the standards for living in that environment are connected; building community, keeping that community safe, caring for 'place and space', and learning to live as a community, are not separate functions. An implication of this recommendation is the possible consolidation of the current residence life and campus living staffs.

**A unified set of academic success and engagement services.** Support for setting academic goals, exploring choices of major and career, out-of-class engagement, improving academic skills, making course choices and scheduling, and tutorial assistance should be integrated as a core set of academic success services. An implication of this recommendation is some re-configuration of the University Undergraduate Division and consideration of the roles and services offered by units such as the Office of Supportive Services, the Writing Center, the Math Learning Center and college-level services.

**A system for the local delivery of integrated services to promote health and wellness of students.** Some medical care and programs that promote fitness and physical and emotional well-being should be an important part of the array of neighborhood services. An implication of this recommendation is some re-configuration of services currently offered at Olin Health Center and the Counseling Center, working with programs and services of the Intramural Sports & Recreative Services Department.

**Integrated services to promote academic success and engagement for academically at-risk students.** Learning enhancement, supplemental instruction, structured study opportunities, intensive academic mentoring, and tutorial services should be linked to the support services provided for all students. An implication of this recommendation is some re-alignment of specialized student support services with the re-configured academic success and engagement services.

**Integrated services to promote inclusion, globalization and internationalization should be part of each neighborhood.** Each neighborhood provides an opportunity for students to assume leadership roles as they come to appreciate the diversity within the community and “understand, engage and embrace the opportunities to learn, develop and grow as a result of interaction with others.” An implication of this recommendation is some re-alignment of relevant programs and services.

In order to move forward in achieving the outcomes listed above, we endorse your proposed two-phase process as described:

Phase One: Community Engagement to receive comments on the five outcomes:

1. Neighborhood Symposium participants to be reconvened in late November/early December
2. Several smaller engagement groups of student affairs, academic affairs, support services staff, faculty and undergraduate deans
3. Student groups to include: student support services participants, residence hall students, undergraduates living off campus, resident mentors, OCAT aides, student leaders, graduate students, potential students, and young alumni

## Phase Two: Integration of Vision and Reality

The task of integrating the vision articulated with the reality of our fiscal constraints will be complex. While ultimately any decisions must reflect sound stewardship and cost-savings, they must also be tested against our core values and our design principles. As a part of this phase, financial and human resources analyses should be conducted. Selected consultants may assist in the analysis and planning.

Please note that one of the outcomes refers to the health and wellness of our students. As you assemble groups to work toward planning for the five outcomes, we ask that you coordinate with Associate Provost Hillard. While we endorse the planning for some health care services to be provided within each neighborhood, other student health services are best organized centrally.

Your planning should reflect the following principles:

- Neighborhoods and services reflect the university values of quality, connectivity and inclusivity
- Neighborhoods are places where students live and learn in community and maintain a connection throughout undergraduate matriculation
- Undergraduate students (those living in residence halls and commuter students) find the resources to support learning and engagement, personal development, healthy living and the opportunity to participate as a member of an inclusive community
- Programs with which the student interacts are working toward the same set of outcomes; the messages and purposes are coherent
- Student and academic support services are horizontally integrated
- Support for students become more student-centered, rather than issue or service-centered
- Programs, activities and services within the neighborhoods, centralized services, and college-based services are coordinated and articulated
- Highly specialized services or those which are primarily “equipping” in nature remain centralized
- Neighborhoods are “customized” based on an assessment of the needs and interests of students within each neighborhood; services within the neighborhoods may be modified from semester to semester based on needs
- Faculty members are involved in meaningful ways in each of the neighborhoods
- Students employed within the neighborhoods serve as exemplars of the “engaged student.” This has significant implications for selections and training as well as for an expanded role of graduate students
- Technology is broadly used to provide information, connect to services, deliver services, and to enhance the creation of the physical and social community (real and virtual)

- Student-centered processes are developed whereby the standards, ambiance and character of each neighborhood are shaped by its residents and friends
- Activities within each neighborhood are rigorously evaluated, and changes are evidence-based

We have the opportunity to make a transformational change for our campus, in ways that significantly enhance the undergraduate student experience while recognizing the formidable challenge of finding significant cost-savings.

We ask for your interim report by mid-March. After additional vetting by the University community, we intend to move toward the implementation of a pilot project to be located in Hubbard Hall.

Thank you for your continued leadership and creativity.

c: University Community