

6. STUDENT SERVICES

DESCRIPTION

The strategic goal developed by the Student Services Division in November, 1990 for the Institutional Plan reads as follows:

To meet student needs and goals by offering a full range of effective student development services based on identified student characteristics.

The following services represent Mohegan's efforts to assist students to achieve academic and personal growth for both individual and community benefit: admission counseling before entry into college, mandatory placement testing, orientation for new students, course and career counseling, personal counseling, transfer evaluation service, financial aid, student clubs and organizations, college transfer advisement, recreational activities and trips, college transfer advisement, recreational activities and trips, special workshops and seminars. Many services are implemented in individual conferences with highly trained professionals.

Mohegan continues its endeavors to ensure appropriate services and facilities for students in all programs, especially for the minority, physically disabled, learning disabled, women, international, foreign, and veterans' groups. Mohegan identifies the characteristics and learning needs of its student population and is especially adept in assisting them to resolve their educational problems by meeting developmental needs first and providing ongoing academic assistance.

Particular emphasis has been placed on continued improvement of off campus services. Recently, a half-time, bi-lingual educational assistant was hired to provide service to students at the Waterford High School site and at O.I.C. (Opportunities and Industrialization Center), an agency which provides occupational training to the low income residents of New London County. The assistant provides service to low-income/high-risk students. She assists with advising, registration, and communication with the main campus. In addition, a full-time administrator, who has responsibility for the Naval Submarine Base, spends a considerable amount of time at the Subase, acting as a liaison with the military and other educational programs, evaluating military training and providing academic advice to students. She also facilitates support services there, such as the computer lab and library services. The Minority Access, The Institutional Assessment Plan, and Retention Plan and the Disability Task Force Plan/Document direct the College in ensuring appropriate services and facilities.

A wide range of financial aid is provided through an equitable and well-publicized program that awards grants and scholarships, facilitates loans, and provides work-study opportunities from federal, state, and local sources. An on-site federal and state audit for process and review of the financial aid program is done biennially. Since the 1985-86 year, applicants, recipients, and disbursement have increased in spite of decreases in two major federal categories.

During the last ten years, the College recognized the need to develop a comprehensive plan to address the institution's goal to improve the retention and advising of students. To achieve this goal, we developed such a plan in 1986-87 to address admission, placement, orientation, academic advising, and instructional support services. The plan, implemented in the 1987/88 academic year, interweaves responsibility for this goal between the student services and instructional divisions.

In accordance with this plan, Mohegan conducts new student orientation sessions prior to the Fall and Spring academic terms. Orientation is a comprehensive, three-hour program which describes College services, such as financial aid, counseling, student life, career planning, college transfer, and tutoring, as well as the requirements for specific degree programs. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni are involved in the planning and the presentations. An evening and a day session are offered, giving all students the opportunity to participate.

We also implemented a new advising program. Every full-time faculty member and the professional staff in Admissions and Student Development are assigned advisees. Staff are matched with an individual student on the basis of the advisee's degree program. Students meet with their academic advisors during their first semester to plan their programs of study. Only after a student meets with an advisor can he or she register for the following semester. Students usually remain with the advisor while they are at Mohegan.

Before students can enroll at Mohegan, they are required to take a placement test which assesses an incoming student's English, basic math, and reading skills. Testing was voluntary until 1985, when it became a requirement for all incoming students. In 1989 the Connecticut Community College System adopted a uniform testing measure that would be used at the twelve community colleges. Currently, all new degree-seeking students are required to take this placement examination before registering.

Child care services for three to five-year old children of students and staff have been offered at the Mohegan since 1983. The program was initially operated by the Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) through funding from the Department of Human Resources, but as a community center it did not primarily benefit Mohegan students. To better meet students' day care needs and the academic program of Early Childhood Education, a task force recommendation was implemented during 1988-1990 and Mohegan assumed greater responsibility for day care operations. To further assist students with older children, the College offers an activity program for school age children on campus during elementary school vacations that do not fall during college recess.

In the area of health care, Mohegan provides informational sessions on drug and alcohol education and has hosted Health Weeks. Faculty and staff consult the Student Development staff concerning an individual student's classroom behavior or interaction with other staff and students. Students are referred to counselors for crisis counseling, learning deficiencies, or short-term assistance.

If a student needs long-term, therapeutic counseling, he or she is referred to professional agencies.

Volunteer staff and student EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) provide the only health care on campus, exclusively on an emergency basis. W. W. Backus Hospital, which is only a few miles from the College, has emergency department services. On-site immunization clinics for measles have been provided to assist students to satisfy recent related legislation.

Students are given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills through their involvement in the wide variety of student organizations on campus. Student organizations are open to any interested student. Students develop the organizational structure and plan and initiate activities in organized clubs and activities, support groups, and ad hoc groups concerned with transient concerns, politics, or interests. Student organizations have changed over the past ten years in response to student and institution interest and need. Students are encouraged to run for a seat on the 15-member Student Senate and have voting privileges on Mohegan's governance structure. Training sessions have been run for members of the Student Senate. Student leaders have participated in annual statewide student leadership conferences.

Mohegan supports publication of an award-winning student newspaper. A full-time faculty member teaches journalism, desk-top publication, and publication practice - all of which train students in the practical skills and educate them in the larger legal and philosophical issues. Although the courses provide training, the

actual paper is produced independently by the students and is overseen by an Advisory Committee. The paper is funded by the Student Senate, the Instructional Division (because of its connection to academic courses) and advertising revenue.

In the area of recreational and athletic needs, Mohegan offers limited opportunities for students. In 1983 the College made a decision to eliminate intercollegiate athletics, reasoning that an insufficient number of students participated in this costly program, in part because our student population was drawn from older, working people. In response to student petitions, Mohegan formed an Athletics Task Force in 1989 to look into the feasibility of reinstating an athletics program. The results of a college-wide survey indicated a desire to participate in intercollegiate athletics. After further review, it was apparent that despite the desire, Mohegan could not financially support an intercollegiate athletics program.

At present, Mohegan offers discount memberships at the YMCA in Norwich on a semester basis. The College holds annual volleyball games on the grounds and a student organization promotes recreational tennis. On a few occasions, there have been student-planned intermural sessions with Thames Valley. As of the Fall 1992 semester, full-time students were being recruited to play on the Thames Valley basketball team. Mohegan is also converting a locker room into a weight/fitness area.

Mohegan students took the initiative in communicating with students at Thames Valley Technical College and planning a jointly funded picnic at the end of the Spring semester.

Individuals responsible for cocurricular activities are qualified by formal training, work experience, and personal qualities to represent the student needs effectively.

Clearly stated standards of ethical practice are detailed in the College catalog and student handbook which contain policies on student rights and responsibilities, grievance procedures, racism and acts of intolerance, sexual harassment, disabilities, drug and alcohol use, student discipline, and academic dishonesty.

Policies for retention and disposal of student records are defined in the Department of Public Records Administration, Connecticut State Library Schedule III Administrative Records: State Agencies. The limited access Markos Data Base holds all student information securely including: admission data, placement data, registration, course and grade data, honors, probation, advisor, graduate, and transfer data, as well as the graduate survey data. Records and student rights are further protected by the Family Education Right and Privacy Acts of 1974 (Buckley Amendment). Appropriate policies have been established by the Board of Trustees for all community and technical colleges and are endorsed in full by Mohegan.

Appraisal

The Student Services Division reviews annually the delivery of services to students. At the conclusion of each orientation, students are asked to complete an evaluation form. Additionally, in 1989 the counseling services performed a thorough self-study during which services were evaluated by both staff and students. Services are monitored and modified to meet the increasing needs of the growing student population. The cocurricular goals and needs of students have also been assessed and evaluated annually through the Institutional Plan and graduate surveys and intermittently by other surveys, e.g., Counseling Services Self-Study Report, 1989. A telephone survey in December, 1991 sampled 58 randomly selected students. Most were aware of individual student service activities and their use of these services varied, with course selection advisement (79%) and academic counseling (55%) being most frequently utilized. Personal counseling (14%), workshops and seminars (16%), trips and transfer evaluation services (21% each) were the activities reported as least utilized by this group. Increased office space and personnel would provide more extensive offerings of activities. Data collection has precipitated many expanded student services previously mentioned, such as orientation, admission procedures, and academic advising. The counseling staff in particular has been extremely resourceful in reducing congestion in limited office space to meet student needs capably and confidentially. Through Perkins Grant monies, a counselor for career development/job placement was added in the Spring, 1992. Health

services to the college community are sorely lacking without appreciable improvement anticipated.

Mohegan is proud of being able to offer many services, of having increased the amount of financial aid to students despite cuts in some federal programs, of nurturing a representative and active Student Senate, of supporting an outstanding student newspaper and a host of activities. Our staff has been resourceful in meeting student needs.

PROJECTION

Mohegan will continue to provide services for the identified student needs as the socioeconomic and demographic changes impact the school's population. Social issues, such as racism and sexism, will affect our students, and we will need programs to help them deal intelligently with these issues. Merger with Thames Valley Technical College may provide students with increased opportunities for activities, such as intramural sports because it has a gymnasium as part of its facility and some established intercollegiate athletics. Services will be monitored and modified accordingly. Anticipated space in our new facility will ease office congestion, and greater implementation of service to groups rather than individuals will conserve limited personnel resources until additional student service staff can be funded.

Projections for 1992/93 include the following major objectives which are specified in the College's Institutional Plan:

- 1) Continue to expand training opportunities for student governance and other student participants in preparation for "TVSTC" merger.
- 2) Increase college commitment to, and funding for, a coordinated program on world/national cultural and societal issues such as cultural diversity and racial/ethnic tolerance.
- 3) In cooperation with the Student Senate, expand programs and events in the areas of individual fitness and intramural competition.
- 4) Provide for the merger of existing student organizations at "Mohegan" and "TVSTC" and enhance opportunities for combined student body to participate.
- 5) Establish a Career Center for student use in career development and job search activities.
- 6) Develop a comprehensive Financial Aid award system and increase by a reasonable percentage the number of complete Financial Aid applications.
- 7) Develop a comprehensive plan to encompass class schedule, registration procedures and record keeping for the merged institution.
- 8) Design a long range program for under-represented adolescents to increase their educational and personal aspirations.
- 9) Enhance record-keeping system to ensure consistent retention of all permanent records required for federal compliance.