

EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT AFFAIRS AND SERVICES: SERVICE ENHANCEMENT

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this research was to look into the performance of the various Student Services at North Eastern Mindanao State University - Cantilan Campus. Furthermore, from Academic Year 2021 to 2022, the researchers evaluated students' satisfaction with the services offered by the various sections of the Office of Student Welfare and Development. A descriptive survey was carried out to gather insight into students' experiences with the various Student Services units, as well as their perceived degree of implementation and satisfaction with the various units. In addition, ten students were chosen to engage in a focus group discussion to have a better understanding of their experiences. The key findings revealed that the students rated the SAS units as having a good degree of implementation. Respondents also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the various initiatives despite encountering some problems with these services. Aside from problems with student services, the respondents also cited time management, academic workload, and financial problems as the common issues that they face. With this, they recommended programs that would benefit them during their stay at the university.*

Keywords: Student Welfare, Development, Student Services, Satisfaction, Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Students come into the university with little knowledge of where to go or how to best proceed. Thus, they need guidance and tools to get over the hurdles of university life and get back on track. "Student Services" can provide for many of these needs. Augmenting and improving the students' experience from first contact until they become alumni is critical to the success of both the student and the university. The student support services office is expected to be proactive in ensuring that no student is left at a disadvantage as a result of the University or any of its services. Comprehensive and coordinated student support services are critically important for the social, emotional, and character development of students and for the development of learning environments that are conducive to students' achievement of high academic standards. Understanding students' satisfaction with the units of the Office of Student Welfare and Development (OSWD) can be useful for institutions of higher education to help them identify their strengths and pinpoint areas that could be improved. In order to do that, one must look into students' experiences and other factors that contribute to their satisfaction. Moreover, it is important to know how the different units are developed, the models of student affairs that colleges and universities use, and how the needs of students can be addressed by those student services units.

The Office of Student Welfare and Development of North Eastern Mindanao State University Cantilan Campus follows CHED Memorandum Order 9 series of 2013[3]. This is to ensure that students receive free access to quality education to provide a holistic approach to Student Affairs and Services and to comply with the minimum requirements for student affairs and services. The different academic support services are those that relate to student welfare and student development and those that relate to institutional programs and services. In this study, the different areas of Student Services that were assessed were: Admission or Enrolment Services, Cashier, Registrar, Medical/Dental services, the Office of the Student Affairs, Co-curricular activities, Student Assistance/Scholarship, School Publication, Sports Development Program, Information and technology services, Guidance Services, and Library Services.

In a study by Galvez [1], the satisfaction rating of the student

affairs and services of the university, it was revealed that overall, students were very satisfied with the quality of services provided by the Student Affairs and Service department, especially in the Admission Services which earned an "Excellent" rating. However, Sports Services was given a "Satisfactory" rating which was the lowest rating that the department received. All areas under evaluation – Personnel, Facilities and Quality of Services were found to be "Very Satisfactory". Furthermore, Cadag [2] also found that effective student services are highly related to students' development in terms of intellectual, social, cultural, and political aspects. Generally, the student services offered were satisfactorily implemented. However, there have only been a few studies on policies to formulate effective student services [4].

Guided by its mission, the North Eastern Mindanao State University is geared towards producing globally competent professionals, leaders, and entrepreneurs through technological breakthroughs in research, the efficacy of extension, and efficiency in production to ensure the realization of its vision to be an academic pillar of excellence. Assessment of the implementation of the university student affairs services program was an attempt to determine which areas to focus on in order to improve the delivery of services to intellectual consumers. This study determined those areas and assessed the implementation of the students' services in the university through the Office of Student Welfare and Development for policy recommendations.

The study sought to assess the quality of the Student Affairs and Services program as a tool for quality improvement.

1. How do the students perceive the services offered by the University in terms of the following:

- 1.1. Student Welfare
 - 1.1.1. Information and Orientation Services
 - 1.1.2. Guidance and Counseling Services
 - 1.1.3. Career and Job Placement Services
 - 1.1.4. Economic Enterprise Development
 - 1.1.5. Student Handbook Development
 - 1.1.6. Alumni Relations Services
- 1.2. Student Development
 - 1.2.1. Student Activities
 - 1.2.2. Student Organization and Activities
 - 1.2.3. Leadership Training

- 1.2.4. Student Council/ Government
- 1.2.5. Student Discipline
- 1.2.6. Student Publication
- 1.3. Institutional Programs and Services
 - 1.3.1. Admissions Services
 - 1.3.2. Scholarships and Financial Assistance
 - 1.3.3. Food Services
 - 1.3.4. Health Services
 - 1.3.5. Safety and Security Services
 - 1.3.6. Multi-faith Services
 - 1.3.7. Foreign/ International Student Services
 - 1.3.8. Services for Students with Needs and PWD
 - 1.3.9. Cultural and Arts Programs
 - 1.3.10. Sports and Development Programs
 - 1.3.11. Social and Community Involvement Programs
- 2. What is the level of student’s satisfaction with the quality of student services in the following areas:
 - 2.1. Student Welfare
 - 2.2. Student Development
 - 2.3. Institutional Programs and Services
- 3. What are the common issues and problems encountered by the students during their stay at the University?
- 4. What policies and program interventions can be proposed to further improve the quality of student affairs services?

Methodology

The researchers used the descriptive research design in this study to describe the current state of student services at the university. The focus was on describing the characteristics of a phenomenon and thus, observation and survey tools were employed to gather data. The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. It involved the collection of quantitative information that was tabulated to describe categories of information in a group situation. In the qualitative aspect, this provided a better and deeper understanding of a phenomenon on the basis of an in-depth study of the phenomenon.

The respondents of this study were students who are enrolled in School Year 2021–2022. A stratified random sampling was utilized to select participants from different programs across different year levels. For the interview or FGD, the researchers identified 5 to 10 key informants who were chosen based on random sampling using the list of students. The study adopted and altered the CHED (CMO no. 9 series of 2013)[3], *Students’ Services Assessment* based on the culture and services of the university. It consisted of four parts: Part I – Respondents’ Profile, Part II – Services Offered under Office of Student Affairs, Part III - Rating of Students in the Services offered in the University, Part IV – Issues and Problems encountered by the students and lastly, Part V – Suggested Policies and Programs for Intervention. The instrument used a 5-point scale with description per level: 5-Best; 4-Better; 3-Good; 2-Fair; and 1-Needs Improvement. The instrument has a reliability coefficient of 0.827, computed using Cronbach’s alpha, and was evaluated by six subject matter experts for content validity.

The data was analysed and statistically interpreted using the percentage analysis and mean. To determine the effectiveness of student services and awareness of students in the services, the researchers used the arbitrary scale below:

- 4.21 – 5.0 Fully Implemented / Fully Satisfactory
- 3.41 – 4.2 Highly Implemented/ Highly Satisfactory
- 2.61 – 3.4 Moderately Implemented / Moderately Satisfactory
- 1.81 – 2.6 Slightly Implemented / Slightly Satisfactory
- 1.00 – 1.8 Not Implemented/ Not Satisfactory

For the qualitative data collected, the interview sessions were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceived Level of Implementation

Table 1. The Perceived Level of Implementation of Student Welfare Services

STUDENT WELFARE	MEAN SCORE	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Information and Orientation Services	4.39	Fully Implemented
Guidance and Counseling Services	4.23	Fully Implemented
Career and Job Placement Service	4.3324	Fully Implemented
Economic Enterprise Development	2.6	Slightly Implemented
Student Handbook Development	3.45	Highly Implemented
TOTAL MEAN	4.1	Highly Implemented

Student welfare refers to services that improve the physical, emotional, and social well-being of students. These services promote the healthy growth and development of children, establish a loving and supportive school community culture, and offer equal learning opportunities for all. Based on the evaluation conducted on students regarding the amount of implementation of the different Student Welfare Services, table 1 shows a mean score of 4.1, indicating that all Student Welfare Services are highly implemented. Furthermore, the respondents acknowledge that Information and Orientation Services (4.39), Guidance and Counseling Services (4.23), and Career and Job Placement Services (4.33) are fully implemented.

This outcome can be attributed to the university's regular information and orientation efforts. Every year, two orientation activities are held for new students. Despite the pandemic's restrictions, the university was able to conduct information and orientation activities. The Office of Student Welfare and Development was able to conduct virtual orientations, webinars, and face-to-face orientations at the various localities of the students while still ensuring that the IATF guidelines on COVID-19 were followed. Information materials are also made available and accessible in the frontline offices under the student development office.

In order to address the needs of students dealing with adjustments and anxieties caused by COVID-19, the Guidance Center at NEMSU Cantilan provides services to students and clients. Services such as online counseling, e-profiling, online and virtual information services, and the evaluation of these services for the purpose of improvement, can all be accessed online through a variety of devices. The university's career and job placement services are also very

well implemented. This is demonstrated by the active networking of the school with the community, alumni, and other relevant agencies for students' career and job placement.

On the other hand, the Economic Enterprise Development (2.6) and the Student Handbook Development (3.45) are evaluated as slightly implemented and highly implemented, respectively. Due to COVID-19 constraints, the university failed to promote and expand student economic ventures. Meanwhile, handbooks are available for the distribution, information, and guidance of students and university stakeholders. Nonetheless, there are still some students who failed to obtain the handbook since they live away from campus.

The Student Development Services received a better result than the Student Welfare Services earning a mean score of 4.345 compared to the latter's 4.1. Student Activities garnered a mean score of 4.41, Student Organization and Activities (4.34), Leadership training (4.43), Student Council/Government (4.46), Student Discipline (4.33), and Student Publication/Yearbook (4.10). These results can be justified by the active participation of the students in student activities and organizations.

Table 2. The Perceived Level of Implementation of Student Development Services

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT	MEAN SCORE	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Student Activities	4.41	Fully Implemented
Student Organizations and Activities	4.34	Fully Implemented
Leadership Training	4.43	Fully Implemented
Student Council/Government	4.46	Fully Implemented
Student Discipline	4.33	Fully Implemented
Student Publication/Year Book	4.10	Highly Implemented
TOTAL	4.345	Fully Implemented

The result indicates that the OSWD is able to recognize, supervise, and monitor student organizations and their leadership. Each year, student organizations are required to submit folders containing bylaws, lists of officers, proposed activities, and actual activities. Every year, a process of accreditation, re-accreditation, monitoring, and evaluation is carried out utilizing institutional procedures and processes to recognize student organizations. The OSWD also supports student organizations by allocating budgets to their annual activities.

The office also creates leadership development programs and recognizes students' freedom to govern themselves as a student body. This is justified by the yearly conduct of the Supreme Student Government election, as well as the regional and national trainings attended by the student leaders.

The university's publication, which promotes and documents students' accomplishments, activities, and performance in both academic and non-academic settings, is likewise closely monitored and implemented. This shows that the OSWD implements R.A. 7079, often known as the Campus Journalism Act of 1991, which mandates the conduct of journalism-related training, seminars, and conferences.

Table 3. The Perceived Level of Implementation of Institutional Student Programs and Services

INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	MEAN SCORE	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Admission Services	4.33	Fully Implemented
Scholarships and Financial Assistance (SFA)	4.27	Fully Implemented
Food Services	4.315	Fully Implemented
Health Services	4.37	Fully Implemented
Safety and Security Service	4.358	Fully Implemented
Student Housing and Residential	4.19	Highly Implemented
Multi-faith Services	4.11	Highly Implemented
Foreign/International Students Services	3.73	Highly Implemented
Services for Students with Special Needs and Persons with Disabilities	4.15	Highly Implemented
Cultural and Arts Programs	4.36	Fully Implemented
Sports Development Programs	4.367	Fully Implemented
Social and Community Involvement Programs	4.36	Fully Implemented
TOTAL	4.58	Fully Implemented

The Institutional Student Programs and Services are also fully implemented. The Admission Service achieved a rating of 4.33, indicating that it is fully implemented as well. As a result, the University is ISO 9001 2015 Quality Management Systems accredited, indicating that the University adheres to established procedures and rules in the delivery of the admission process. Admission requirements and processes are also in place with students fully informed of the University's admission standards and procedures.

Eisma (2017) [4] defines the Cultural and Arts Program as a chance for students to improve their skills and talents, as well as their passion and values in supporting culture and the arts. According to the students, this program is also fully implemented. Every year, auditions are held to choose new members for these organizations. Outstanding achievers are offered the option to compete in both local and national competitions. Cultural organizations, such as the NEMSU drum and bugle corps, the Haraya dance troupe, the choir, and the dramatics guild, are also established.

Sports Development Programs and Services are also well implemented, according to students. Even with COVID 19, students can participate in a variety of sports programs, intramurals, and national sports competitions that build camaraderie, discipline, and teamwork. This also provides an opportunity for students to promote physical fitness and wellness. Furthermore, the University launched social and community involvement activities. These provide chances for students to participate in socio-civic activities that allow them to volunteer, help and support the environment and community, and improve their social well-being.

In terms of scholarships and financial aid, there is clear evidence that the OSWD has made sure that scholarships and financial aid are readily accessible to students. Students were also able to participate in the UNIFAST and CHED programs as part of RA 10931. NEMSU Cantilan Campus alone has 887 Tertiary Education Subsidy Grantees.

Food Services (4.315), Health Services (4.37), and Safety and Security Services (4.358) are also rated as very well implemented. The university ensures sanitation and proper hygiene both inside and outside the cafeteria. Furthermore, there are systems in place to handle disaster risk reduction and management issues, as well as COVID-19 concerns. As a result, the Commission on Higher Education approved the University's Crisis Management established policies and procedures for COVID-19. Additionally, the Department of Interior and Local Government awarded the University with a safety seal.

Other services with a high implementation rate include student housing and residential, which has a mean score of 4.19, multi-faith services (4.11), foreign/international students services (3.73), and services for students with special needs and persons with disabilities (4.15). The university ensures that academic accommodations are made available to students with disabilities and special needs, as well as to foreign or international students. Furthermore, dorms and housing facilities are readily available to students, particularly those with disabilities, to ensure that they can stay in a safe, affordable, and conducive learning environment. The university also created a multi-faith service, however only a few religious activities were held due to COVID-19 constraints.

Overall, the results suggest that the numerous programs administered by the Student Affairs and Services office are well-implemented. This also implies that the institution is actively providing services and addressing the various needs of its students, as indicated by the students' highly positive response to its overall performance.

The Level of Satisfaction as Perceived by Students

Based on the respondents' level of satisfaction with the various services provided by the Office of Student Welfare and Development, the students are satisfied with the programs and services offered.

In terms of Student Welfare, only Economic Enterprise Development and Student Handbook Development are rated as "Moderately Satisfactory" and "Highly Satisfactory," respectively, while the rest of the services are rated as "Fully Satisfactory." This means that the Guidance Office and Placement Office are able to deliver programs that adequately address the needs of the students. Likewise, the Alumni Relation Services are evaluated as "Fully Satisfactory", indicating that students are pleased with the way activities and services linked to them are carried out. This can also be justified because these programs are ISO-certified, demonstrating that quality services are provided to ensure customer satisfaction. The Economic Enterprise and Student Handbook are regarded as not "fully satisfactory", indicating that these areas require additional attention and development.

In terms of Student Development Services, all of the

programs are rated "Fully Satisfactory" by students, with the exception of Student Publication, which is rated "Moderately Satisfactory." This means that the office teaches students self-discipline through the implementation of rules and regulations in the colleges, as well as develops leadership skills through seminars led by the office itself.

Table 4. The Level of Satisfaction as Perceived by Students

Student Welfare	Mean Score	Verbal Description
Information and Orientation Services	4.51	Fully Satisfactory
Guidance and Counseling Services	4.47	Fully Satisfactory
Career and Job Placement Service	4.44	Fully Satisfactory
Economic Enterprise Development	3.34	Moderately Satisfactory
Student Handbook Development	4.1	Highly Satisfactory
Alumni Relations Service	4.43	Fully Satisfactory
TOTAL	4.215	Fully Satisfactory
Student Development	Mean Score	Verbal Description
Student Activities	4.58	Fully Satisfactory
Student Organization and Activities	4.54	Fully Satisfactory
Leadership Training	4.53	Fully Satisfactory
Student Council/Government	4.50	Fully Satisfactory
Student Discipline	4.55	Fully Satisfactory
Student Publication	3.4	Moderately Satisfactory
TOTAL	4.35	Fully Satisfactory
Institutional Programs Service	Mean Score	Verbal Description
Admissions Services	4.46	Fully Satisfactory
Scholarships and Financial Assistance	4.09	Highly Satisfactory
Food Service	4.40	Fully Satisfactory
Health Service	4.48	Fully Satisfactory
Safety and Security Services	4.50	Fully Satisfactory
Multi-faith Services	3.39	Moderately Satisfactory
Foreign/ International Student Service	3.27	Moderately Satisfactory
Services for Students with Needs and PWD	4.2	Highly Satisfactory
Cultural and Arts Programs	4.43	Fully Satisfactory
Social and Community Involvement Programs	4.44	Fully Satisfactory
TOTAL	4.166	Highly Satisfactory
GRAND TOTAL	4.24	Fully Satisfactory

Although Multi-faith Services and Foreign/International Student Services are assessed as "Moderately satisfactory",

which could be attributed to the government's mandate to halt all in-person gatherings due to the pandemic, in general, the Institutional Programs Services are scored as "Highly satisfactory," indicating that students are extremely satisfied with the programs and services provided by this institution. As shown in table 5, it can be gleaned that 83.38% of the respondents don't have any issues or problems encountered in their stay in the University while a few of the respondents (5.48%) reveal having a financial problem. In a study conducted by Bernardo (2018) [5], he stated that financial pressures are one of the sources of stress for students that have been noticed in higher education systems around the world. Unsurprisingly, financial stress and uncertainty have a negative impact on student well-being. Financial stress among students is linked to increased self-reported mental health needs, difficulty in college adjustment, and a variety of negative behaviors, social relationships, and academic outcomes. Furthermore, financial stress is not uncommon among Filipino students, and government figures indicate that a sizable proportion of the school-age population faces financial challenges. Beginning with primary school, nearly 20% of Filipino children who dropped out cited a lack of financial means as the primary reason for leaving school (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015). Dropping out of school was most likely among 17-year-olds, especially those from low-income homes. The highest reason for not attending college or university in the college-age population was the high cost of higher education; additionally, around 16.0% of those who chose not to pursue higher education did so in order to hunt for a job to support their families.

Table 5. Problems and Issues Encountered by the Respondents

Problems and Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Financial Problem	104	5.49
Academics	55	2.90
Time Management	20	1.06
Infrastructure and School Equipment	39	2.06
Personal Issues	19	1.0
Social Issues	33	1.74
Student Services	42	2.22
Covid 19 Pandemic	3	0.15
None/No problems and issues encountered	1580	83.38
TOTAL	1895	100%

***MR**

Academics are also seen as concerns that students confront. In the interview, respondents mentioned changes to restricted face-to-face classes, scheduling and room assignment conflicts, bad internet connections, and other technical concerns such as faulty computers and gadgets as factors affecting their studies. Students are also challenged by course requirements and a plethora of activities. According to the respondents, the teacher component is also viewed as a

concern, as are students who are less competent.

Infrastructure and other educational equipment were also cited as issues by the students. These include a lack of safety equipment, cleaning materials, comfort rooms, parking lots, water dispensers, ceiling fans, garbage cans, and classrooms. This is due to the development of four academic buildings. Two of the academic buildings were also used as quarantine facilities by the Municipality's Rural Health Unit.

Students also cite time management as another issue that they have. According to Razali, et.al. (2018) [6], time management is critical, and it can have an impact on an individual's overall performance and achievements. Students nowadays frequently complain about not having enough time to accomplish all of the work assigned to them. Furthermore, the flexibility and independence of a university setting can distract students who have not acquired time management skills. Another factor that affects poor time management of students are their negative attitude towards time management and the use of gadgets and social media.

Personal experiences (1%) and social issues (1.74%) are also viewed by the respondents as their problems. Prioritization, transportation, not eating a balanced meal, being alone, and homesickness all contributed to their stress. Adjustment to college life also affects the performance of the students. Low academic performance and college adjustment are not new occurrences in global education institutions. According to Alipio [7], 60% of students who are unable to acclimate to college drop out before the end of their first year. According to Sahin, Arseven, and Kilic [8], students who are unable to form positive relationships with their peers, teachers, and school administration, and who dislike their school and topics, are more likely to be absent and drop out. Furthermore, one of the specific causes of school dropouts is the difficulty of adjusting to the school curriculum. Moreover, in Fan and Wolter's study, respondents also claimed that students who are not disciplined, corruption concerns, plagiarism issues, language barriers, bullying, a lack of friends, and peer pressure were some of the social issues they encountered during their university experience.

There are relatively few Students Services (2.22%), which respondents perceived as negative. Such include housing issues, student ID, school uniforms, religious activities, the university's no vaccine no admittance policy, the attitude of frontline employees, a lack of student aid, a lack of books, and health-related issues. This can be related to the university's transition from Surigao del Sur State University to North Eastern Mindanao State University, as well as the increased worry and restrictions caused by the Covid-19 outbreak. Finally, the impact of Covid-19 on the students' lives also impacts their psychological state, which necessitates measures and interventions to assist them.

The table below provides the students' suggested programs and interventions, as well as the office in charge of implementing such suggestions. It may be deduced that 67% of respondents believe that additional improvements and implementation of various student services are required.

Table 6. Suggested programs and interventions that the Office of Student Welfare and Development will conduct

Programs and Interventions	Frequency	Percentage	Focal Office
Student Services	134	67	All Offices under OSWD
Development of Social Skills	17	8.5	Extension Office
Academic	18	9	TESDA
Infrastructure and School	10	5	Department/ College Administration/ Physical Facilities
Equipment	16	8	Administration
Free Uniform	5	2.5	ICT
TOTAL	200	100%	

Respondents have suggested the following interventions: allow students to participate in sports activities every week, allow students to showcase culture and arts, improve the university's health services, proper posting of announcements, career/job training, journalism, more leadership training, and other activities that will aid in student development. A few respondents have also urged that a dormitory be opened for occupation. The office should also encourage student discipline and find a way to get the handbook to all students. Counseling and other symposiums should be held on a regular basis to ensure the well-being of the students. Finally, the most strongly recommended action under student services is the provision of more scholarship programs, financial literacy training, and student financial assistance.

Students have also recommended programs for the development of social skills. In the interview, students revealed that they want to improve their social skills, participate in community or extension activities such as feeding programs, and participate in a variety of training.

Students advise that an ordered schedule, room assignment, and full face-to-face classes be used in order to boost academic performance. They also propose that the institution should help students who are already working by offering night programs. Teachers and students must also have a solid rapport through participating in events such as Christmas parties and sports activities with students and teachers. Finally, assistance for students who are struggling academically is also suggested.

It is recommended that parking areas, laboratories, and other rooms be accessible to people with disabilities, and that water dispensers be put in every room if possible. Lastly, respondents suggest free uniforms and free wifi.

While some students proposed these programs and interventions, others were very satisfied with the institution's services and no longer suggested any programs.

CONCLUSION

The services, programs, and activities designed by the different units of the Office of Student Welfare and Development are evaluated as very high in implementation. This indicates that the students are also satisfied with the assistance and opportunities provided for them. This further

means that the University promotes and ensures programs in accordance with CMO 9 series of 2013 and CMO 8 series of 2021. This further concludes that there is a balance in the provision of opportunities intended for the holistic development of the students.

The result also shows that there are still programs that need improvements. Several suggestions for plans of action have also been laid out in order to respond to the several problems and issues encountered by the students and reported to the SAS.

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The OSWD units will discuss programs that address the needs and problems of the students. Each activity will be evaluated to make sure that it addressed the needs of the students.
2. To future researchers, conduct follow-up research that is well-thought and founded on legal bases and carefully crafted from reliable and credible reviews of related literature and studies regarding student affairs, welfare, and services programs.

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