



# Organizational Structure of Student Life Divisions: Communicating Who We Are and What We Do

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# Rationale for Study



- \* Programs and services that enhance and support student learning and success have become an increasingly important component of most postsecondary institutions
- \* Despite increases in administrative structures to support student success in recent decades, there is little understanding of the various ways in which student services divisions are organized
- \* This is the first phase of an ongoing research study examining the role of student services in supporting student success in Ontario's postsecondary institutions.

# Research Questions



1. How are student services divisions organizationally structured?
2. How do student services divisions communicate their programs and services to students?

# Methods



- \* **Sample** - 14 institutions (9 universities and 5 colleges) from across Ontario
- \* **Analytic method**
  - \* Compared and contrasted organizational charts to examine reporting structures across institutions
  - \* Drafted an organizational chart of the student services division at each institution based on the programs and services depicted on the institutional website
  - \* Compared and contrasted the organizational chart we constructed from the website to the official one provided by the institution
  - \* Reviewed the websites for ease of navigation, consistency of website, and programmatic and service content

# Results – Organizational Structure

Table 1. Terms Used to Reference Senior Students Officer

	Universities	Colleges
Student Services	1	3
Student Affairs	4	2
Generic “student”	4	0

# Results – Organizational Structure

Table 2. Senior Student Officers' Titles and Reporting Structure

	Universities	Colleges
AVP to Provost (VP-Academic)	5	0
Vice President to President	1	5
Vice Provost to Provost	1	0
Vice Provost to President	1	0
Vice President to President, dotted line to Provost (VP-Academic)	1	0

# Results-Organizational Structure

Table 3. Registrar Reporting Structure

	Universities	Colleges
Reporting to Student Services/Affairs	4	4
Reporting to Provost, Vice President (Academic)	5	1

\*At one of the universities the senior student officer is also responsible for academic programs.

# Results- Portfolio

Table 4. Tentative University and College Portfolio Comparisons

	Universities	Colleges	Totals
Residence	8	1	9
Registrar	4	4	8
Student Awards and Financial Aid	4	4	8
Athletics	7	5	12
Recreation	7	4	11
Alumni	0	2	2
Campus Ministries	9	0	9
Library	1	2	3



# Results – Portfolio, commonalities



- \* First-year programs, including orientation
- \* Student leadership and community development (this often includes service learning and civic engagement initiatives)
- \* Counselling services
- \* Health services
- \* Career services
- \* Accessibility services (also called services for students with disabilities)
- \* Academic skills or learning services centre
- \* Services for diverse students (these often includes Aboriginal student services, international student services, women's centre, and LGBTQQA centre)

# Results - Portfolio, divergences



- \* Athletics and Wellness – may also report to VP-Administration
- \* Residence - may also report to VP-Finance
- \* Registrar – may also report to the Provost
- \* Alumni Affairs – among universities, tended to report to VP-Advancement/Development
- \* Library – more commonly in portfolios among the colleges

# Results – Communication

- \* Mission - Clearly communicating student services' **mission** orients students to the overall purpose of programs and services

“As Student Services professionals, we support and promote the present and future well-being of students. We enhance student development and success through innovative programs, services and partnerships. We help to create a community that is accessible to all, one where diversity is celebrated and good citizenship is valued.”

The Brock logo consists of the word "Brock" in a white, bold, sans-serif font, set against a red rectangular background. A small circular icon with radiating lines is positioned between the 'o' and 'c'.

# Results - Communication

- \* Interactive opportunities –Providing a place for students to ask questions or make a comment/suggestion signals they are co-constructors of their learning experience



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Peer Mentoring-Speed Dating



# Results - Communication

- \* Synergy of site - Consistency of colour, font, and layout of information allows students to use search strategies from other student services web pages to find the information they need



**Student Services**



**Welcome to Counselling Services**

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