

MEMORANDUM**of Student Services/Affairs Organisations
to the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education****Paris, 5th of July 2009**

More than ten years after the first World Conference on Higher Education, in the context of globalization and rapidly rising demands for higher education around the world, student services/affairs organizations from different countries and continents call upon the international higher education community to recognize the importance of strong and efficient student services organizations for the social, economic, financial, health and cultural support for all students independent from the organizational structure.

The success of higher education relies upon the three pillars of well-performing tertiary education systems: research, teaching and student services. Excellence in education requires not only top performance in research and teaching but an excellent and competitive social infrastructure and support mechanisms for students.

The preparatory regional conferences to the WCHE 2009 have underlined the importance to include student services/affairs in current debates.

When talking about access to and equity in higher education, the importance of counseling, financial aid and timely information to different student groups is widely recognized and must be clearly understood and promoted by adequate action. This is particularly true for socially marginalized or minority groups, and decisive action is required to achieve progress in their participation in higher education.

Student services/affairs continue to be important in all study phases, generally increase retention, study success and graduation rates and play an important role in the transition to the labor market.

The quality of higher education is very much influenced by research and teaching methods, staff performance and communication with students, but also by providing a positive learning environment that includes not only housing and food but also counseling, cultural activities and social support. The top performance of academic institutions is not just made up of excellent research and professional teaching staff, but grounded in the social learning environment that students find at their institutions.

In order to be competitive on the regional, national and international level, many higher education institutions recognize the importance of well-performing student services/affairs to sharpen their profile and to attract students, staff, researchers, funding, and international cooperation projects.

Last not least, student services/affairs join the effort to educate younger generations in civic values by means of extra-curricular activities such as social and cultural activities, intercultural learning, volunteer work and outreach activities.

Student affairs and services organizations provide the necessary social and economic basis for successful studies in any given country and situation. They run affordable student apartments and restaurants, they consult on and administer loans and grants, they work for social integration, equitable access to and cultural diversity in higher education institutions. Adequate student services/affairs are thus a strategic dimension for higher education systems around the globe.

Therefore, we recommend that a student affairs perspective is thoroughly integrated in all discussions at this conference and inscribed as a cross-cutting theme in the continuing international discussion on higher education. We invite all participants to cooperate with student affairs locally, nationally and globally.

We call upon governments and higher education institutions to recognize the important role that student service/student affairs organizations play in higher education, and urge them to provide adequate means and support for learning environments in which students' social, economic and cultural needs are fully addressed.

Initiator:

DSW - Deutsches Studentenwerk / German National Association for Student Affairs (Germany)

Signatories:

ACPA – College Student Educators International (USA)

ACUI – Association of College Unions International (USA)

ACUHO-I Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (USA)

ACUHO-I SA – Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (South African Chapter)

ADA Office, University of Florida – Americans With Disabilities Act Compliance Office (USA)

ANDISU – Associazione Nazionale degli Organismi per il Diritto allo Studio Universitario (Italy)

ANZSSA – Australia & New Zealand Student Services Association (Australia/New Zealand)

APSSA – Asia-Pacific Student Services Association (Asia-Pacific)

CACUSS – Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (Canada)

CNOUS – Centre National des Œuvres Universitaires et Scolaires (France)

CSSI – Confederation of Student Services in Ireland (Ireland)

DSW – Deutsches Studentenwerk/German National Association for Student Affairs (Germany)

ECStA – European Council for Student Affairs (Europe)

F.C.Q.M.S. / COOPSCO – Fédération québécoise des coopératives en milieu scolaire (Canada)

HKSSA – Hong Kong Student Services Association (Hong Kong)

ICA (International Co-operative Alliance) Committee on University/Campus Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific (Asia and the Pacific)

NACA – National Association for Campus Activities (USA)

NIRSA - National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (USA)

NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (USA)

NFUCA – National Federation of University Co-operative Associations (Japan)

PAASA – Philippines Association of Administrators of Student Affairs Capital Region (Philippines)

VLHORA – Vlaamse Hogescholenraad (Belgium)

European Council for Student Affairs / Deutsches Studentenwerk

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