

## Impact of student services and programs to student performance

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### Abstract

Student support offices enhance students' educational experience through the services and programs that meet student needs. In the Philippines, all higher education institutions are required to provide a set of student-centered activities and services in support of academic instruction intended to facilitate holistic and well-rounded student development. For University of Baguio, these services and programs are provided to ensure quality education. Considering these points, this study was conducted to shed light on the extent to which these student services and programs assist the UBians throughout their university stay. Descriptive-survey research was utilized where 87 graduating students from the second semester of the school year 2020-2021 were able to participate. The analysis of mean averages showed that the student support offices provided services and programs that had an impact on student performance. Also, the comparison of mean values revealed a significant difference in the perceived impact of the services and programs on student development when compared to the office regarding the areas of academic performance and student performance. As can be seen, the services and programs provided by the different student support offices of the university fostered student performance. Hence, the University of Baguio has to ensure that these student support offices remain committed to providing services and programs that matter to student performance.

### Keywords

student support office, student services, student performance, impact, graduating students

### Introduction

Gibbs (2012) suggests that many factors come into play to prepare the students for learning and ensure that they will complete the educational journey. Thus, one of the ways that higher educational institutions address this concern is through their student support services and programs. More so, the services and programs ensure the transition of students from one educational level to the other until they eventually join the workforce.

Steyn and Wolhuter (2008, as cited in Maimane, 2016) suggest that "support services are the specialized non-educational services needed to improve the quality and effectiveness of educational activities." As such, they facilitate opportunities for students to obtain and develop soft skills that support their various needs within their community or industry. More so, support services assist institutions so that the provided education can be more effective and students become more connected to their campus (Cummings, 2014; Maimane, 2016; Rozikin et al., 2020).

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989, as cited in Gibbs, 2012) mentioned that when a student's need directly affects learning, a school must meet the challenge so that the primary goal of education can take place. Schools then are to provide support services beyond academic instruction to meet these student needs. Doing so would increase the effectiveness of a student's educational experience (Tucker, 2005 as cited in Gibbs, 2012). Brock (2010, as cited in Rudge, 2014) also states that it has become evident that student services are associated with student persistence in completing college, while Gibbs (2012) suggests that support services have individual roles to play in making schools more effective. (Prebble et al., 2004) further add that student support

services offered in tertiary institutions make a difference for undergraduate tertiary students in their studies.

Relative to this, the final report provided by Chaney (2010) on the “National Evaluation of Student Support Services” showed that supplemental services were positively correlated with improved student academic outcomes and that the services received by a freshman continued to be important after the freshman year, even showing a stronger relationship in the later years of the student. Through their study, Prebble et al. (2004) suggest that student support services provide a valuable contribution to student outcomes, such as the retention of students or completion of their program or degree on time. The research findings further justified that higher educational institutions should pay attention and invest in their student support services.

Similarly, the study conducted by Maimane (2016) showed that effective student support services impact the level of information that students have on their studies and that support services contribute to academic success. Flanagan (2006, as cited in Rudge, 2014) adds that when students feel academically and socially connected to their institution, they are more likely to graduate.

Also, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2002, as cited in Sison, 2019) reported that addressing student participation, success, and graduation outcomes and ensuring the capacity of graduates to successfully negotiate and undertake careers of first-choice and social or environmental surveys are central to the role of the Student Affairs. Relative to this, assessing the alignment of the planned services and programs to the actual implementation of the services and programs provides insight into performance improvement.

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (2013) requires all Higher Education Institutions to provide a set of student-centered activities and services in support of academic instruction intended to facilitate holistic and well-rounded student development. The Student Affairs and Services are to enrich student learning and achievement through the provision of an ideal campus environment, empower the students to advocate their needs, and develop and harness their leadership skills.

For the University of Baguio, as an institution that aims to educate individuals to be empowered professionals in a global community; student services and programs are also provided by the different offices under the academe, administration, and finance (University of Baguio Manual for Non-teaching Personnel, 2017, pp.8-9). The provision of the services and programs also seeks to help in the realization of the provision of quality education and the realization of two of the core sustainable development goals (SDG) of the university: SDG#4, quality education, and SDG#10 reduced inequalities (United Nations Development Programme, 2022) As such, looking into the extent to which these student services and programs assist the UBians throughout their university stay would be insightful.

More so, evaluating the student services and programs will align with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) endorsement that the student services and programs as a tool for student development are to be monitored and evaluated to ensure that the students are really assisted in their educational journey. Article 11 of CMO No. 9, s. 2013 (Enhanced Policies and Guidelines on Student Affairs and Services) highlights feedbacking mechanisms that assess the effectiveness of Student Affairs and Services. Article 10 of the same memorandum further encourages different higher education institutions to conduct research studies on SAS programs (Sison, 2019). These then provide the thrust to conduct the study on the impact of student services and programs to student performance.

With all that has been presented, the study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the student services and programs of the University of Baguio as regards the alignment with the CHED en-

dorsement that the student services and programs do assist in the educational journey of students. More so, the study specifically aimed to determine how the UBian graduating students perceived the student support services and programs as a tool for their student performance: academic performance, student recognition, and program completion.

Also, the study sought to find out if there would be a significant difference in the provided services and programs when compared according to office. The results will then be utilized to improve or ensure the quality of the services and programs provided by the different student support offices.

### **Materials and Methods**

The study used the descriptive-survey method of research. The purpose of such design is to describe a phenomenon and determine its cause, value and significance. In this study, the situation described was students' perception of the student services and programs as a tool for student performance. More so, a total enumeration of the graduating students enrolled during the second semester of the school year 2020-2021 and who willingly participated as respondents were carried out.

The tool used was a researcher-made questionnaire that reflects indicators based on the tool utilized in the study of Sison (2019) and Ciobanu (2013). It was composed of three parts, and the first part asked for general information. In contrast, the second part was composed of the different offices: Admission and Records Center (ARC), Athletics Office, Center for Counseling and Student Development (CCSD), Extension and Community Outreach Services (ECOS), Library, Linkages, MIS, Office of Student Affairs (OSA), Research and Development Center (RDC), University Clinic, Security, and Student Accounts; to be evaluated in terms of the impact of the services and programs offered to student performance. The third part asked the respondents for their suggestions as regards other activities, programs, or services that can be added so as to enhance what the support offices already offer or provide at this time.

Further, the validity of the tool was established through the assistance of the University of Baguio Research and Development Center by subjecting the tool to the evaluation process carried out by the university tool validators. Considering that the tool to be used is a self-report survey, keeping in mind the different factors (halo effect or reference group bias) that might influence the responses of the participants was essential (Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2020). Once the tool was validated, the questionnaire was converted into an electronic questionnaire through Google forms. More so, assistance from the University of Baguio Research and Development Center (RDC) was sought again, this time in the floating of the e-questionnaire link. The request was carried out by accomplishing the RDC request for assistance form. Assistance was also sought from the different school deans in terms of reminding the graduating students to answer the online survey questionnaire. It has to be noted, however, that despite the efforts to optimize student participation, the researchers managed to obtain 87 accomplished online survey questionnaires out of 444 graduating students. The percentage of gathered data may therefore have an influence on the turnout of the analyzed data.

Once the responses of the participants were collected, the responses were tallied and tabulated, and forwarded to RDC for analysis. To answer question number one, weighted means were computed and interpreted using the scale provided:

An option that reflects “not applicable” was added to accommodate the students who did not have an opportunity to avail of the service or program or who did not see the need to avail of the service or program provided by a specific academic support office.

To compare the mean values of the different areas according to office, the Anova was used. Then to address objective number two, a thematic analysis of the verbatim responses of the participants was carried out. The derived themes were scrutinized by the reviewers assigned by RDC.

The data privacy policy of the university, as well as the ethical consideration of confidentiality, was strictly followed by the researchers throughout the conduct of the study. More so, the right of the respondents to voluntarily participate or withdraw their participation was clearly disseminated. The researchers also ensured that the collected data were treated with objectivity and that the research findings were reported from a neutral perspective. Further, the respondents were informed that the research findings can be obtained from the researchers upon request and that these will also be disseminated through a paper presentation, publication, and sending of copies to the concerned student support offices.

**Table 1. Interpretation table**

Mean Range	Descriptor	Verbal Meaning	Interpretation
1.00-1.75	negligible assistance	insignificant impact	the service/program did not provide assistance
1.76-2.50	slight assistance	minor impact	the service/program somehow provided assistance
2.51-3.25	moderate assistance	average impact	the service/program provided assistance
3.26-4.00	great assistance	great impact	the service/program provided great assistance

### Results and Discussions

According to Gibbs (2012), the different support services have individual roles to play in making schools more effective. Thus, it would be insightful if these were academically investigated. This part of the study presents the analyzed data and the discussions thereof.

#### *Perception of the UBian students towards the student support services and programs as a tool for student performance*

The weighted means and standard deviations of the offices in the three aspects of student performance: academic performance, student recognition, and program completion are shown in Table 2. Higher means indicate that the provided service and/or program is perceived as to have a great impact on student performance as they were seen to have provided assistance or great assistance throughout their college stay.

**Table 2. Student perception towards support services and programs as a tool for student performance**

SUPPORT OFFICE	WTD MEAN	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
<b>ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>			
1. Admission and Records Center (ARC)	2.91	.95	provided assistance
2. Athletic Office	2.75	1.25	provided assistance
3. Center for Counseling and Student	3.08	.96	provided assistance

Development (CCSD)			
4. Extension and Community Outreach Services (ECOS)	2.89	1.06	provided assistance
Library	3.08	.89	provided assistance
6. Linkages	2.99	.99	provided assistance
7. MIS	3.13	.96	provided assistance
Office of Student Affairs (OSA)	2.99	1.10	provided assistance
Research & Development Center.	2.69	1.22	provided assistance
0. University Clinic	3.26	.90	provided assistance
1. Security	3.28	.80	provided great assistance
2. Student Accounts	2.89	1.06	provided great assistance
Area Mean	<b>3.00</b>	1.01	provided assistance
<b>STUDENT RECOGNITION</b>			
1. Admission and Records Center (ARC)	3.02	.87	provided assistance
2. Athletic Office	2.75	1.25	provided assistance
3. Center for Counseling and Student Development (CCSD)	3.06	.97	provided assistance
4. Extension and Community Outreach Services (ECOS)	2.96	.96	provided assistance
5. Library	2.79	1.05	provided assistance
6. Linkages	3.00	.95	provided assistance
7. MIS	2.85	1.01	provided assistance
8. Office of Student Affairs (OSA)	3.04	1.01	provided assistance
9. Research & Development Center.	2.96	1.12	provided assistance
10. University Clinic	2.64	1.23	provided assistance
11. Security	3.20	.98	provided assistance
Student Accounts	3.31	.78	provided great assistance
Area Mean	<b>2.96</b>	1.01	provided assistance
<b>PROGRAM COMPLETION</b>			
Admission and Records Center (ARC)	2.97	.91	provided assistance
Athletic Office	2.82	1.16	provided assistance
3. Center for Counseling and Student Development (CCSD)	3.03	.99	provided assistance
4. Extension and Community Outreach Services (ECOS)	2.97	1.01	provided assistance
5. Library	2.95	1.02	provided assistance
6. Linkages	3.06	.93	provided assistance
7. MIS	2.91	1.04	provided assistance
8. Office of Student Affairs (OSA)	3.05	1.00	provided assistance
9. Research & Development Center.	3.02	1.09	provided assistance
10. University Clinic	2.70	1.25	provided assistance
11. Security	3.16	.96	provided assistance



Student Accounts	3.25	.87	provided assistance
Area Mean	2.99	1.02	provided assistance
Overall Mean	2.98	1.01	provided assistance

In this study, student performance is seen as composed of three aspects: an academic performance which refers to “a multidimensional construct composed of the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of a learner that contribute to academic success in the classroom” (Hijazi & Naqvi, 2006 as cited in Twum-Ampofo & Osei-Owusu, 2015); student recognition, which refers to the positive feedback given to students for a job well done (PaperDirect, 2011); and program completion which refers to the completion of the required number of years of study (Philippine Statistics Office, 2022). For the University of Baguio, these three areas are seen as essential aspects of student performance.

Table 2 presents how the students perceived the services and programs of the different support offices as a tool for their student performance.

Data shows that the different services and programs provided by the support offices were perceived by the respondents to have assisted in the different aspects of student performance: academic performance, student recognition, and program completion. This would then imply that the support offices were able to provide services and programs which were beneficial to the UBian students as they moved from one educational experience to another.

Support services and programs have always been associated with student academic performance since these are seen as important in the education system (Farajollahi & Moenikia, 2010). This statement is consistent with how the respondents saw the services and programs of the university in light of their own academic performance ( $M=3.00$ ). The perception that the different support offices provided services and programs that were instrumental to academic performance is alluded by Ciobanu (2013), who mentioned that students associate their academic success and learning experience with how services contribute to these aspects. More so, the Atlanta Metropolitan State College (n.d.) identifies the use of support services as one of the keys to student's academic success. Also, support services or programs that were observed to be aligned with student needs contribute to the educational success of students (Dagdag et al., 2019). Relatively, the study findings of Prebble et al. (2005) showed that institutional student services, which are perceived as comprehensive and address student needs, improve student outcomes.

Thus, the use of library resources, provision of counseling and placement services, processing of school fees and essential documents, provision of on-the-job-trainings, availability of research-related assistance, or experiencing safety in the school environment are just some of the experiences which the students have associated as contributory to their pursuit to be academically successful. As such, whatever form of service or program that they have availed during their university stay was observed to have been useful.

Together with student academic performance, the respondents also perceived the support office services and programs as contributory to student recognition ( $M=2.96$ ). When student recognition is given, it is the schools' way of celebrating and recognizing the outstanding accomplishment of students inside or outside of the school (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2016). Giving certificates and plaques or announcing the achievement of students on various social media platforms of a university are just some of the ways to give student recognition (PaperDirect, 2011). At the University of Baguio, similar strategies are carried out to recognize top board takers, students who win in competitions, students who shine academically, or students who excel in specific fields. The university ensures that due credit is given to the UBians who display outstanding performance.

In addition, student recognition is considered as a “positive nudge” to students which motivates and encourages them to continue to work with excellence. The “positive nudge” also strengthens the positive persistence lift, fostering student self-efficacy and self-regulated learning (Bliven, 2021). Similarly, Olinger (2018) states that student recognition motivates students and increases the chances of success as they progress through the educational system and student recipients tend to become more determined and exert greater effort in finishing their course (Stover et al., 2014, as cited in Bliven & Jungbauer, 2021). Even more so, the provision of student recognition creates a positive school culture where the students feel valued and where relationships with the school community itself are fostered (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2016). Given these, it is foreseeable that the respondents positively associated the recognition given by the university with their student development.

Program completion was also seen by the respondents as fostered by the services and programs provided by the different support offices ( $M=2.99$ ). Program completion is associated with the persistence of a student to finish his program within a specified period of time (Chaney, 2010). At the University of Baguio, the student support offices provide services and programs which ensure that UBians do not drop out. It has to be noted that there are services and programs which provide direct assistance to the students in this specific area, such as the counseling and information services of the Center for Counseling and Student Development office. However, the research finding does not downplay the assistance provided by the other offices. The direct and indirect impact of the services and programs on the program completion of students is supported by Chaney (2010), who suggests that the persistence of students is influenced by the support services when they are seen as supplementary to their pursuit of education. More so, when student support services foster the growth and success of students or when the provided support services are comprehensive and well-designed, the students are assisted in their goal to graduate (Prebble et al., 2004; Rudge, n.d.). The research findings imply that regardless of the service or program availed, the students saw that these had a bearing on their determination to finish their course or program.

In as much as the respondents saw that the different services and programs provided by the support offices were instrumental to student performance, it is notable that there were occasions when the services and programs of specific offices were seen to be of great assistance. This is observed for the security office in relation to academic performance; and the Student Accounts Office in relation to academic performance and student recognition. One factor which contributes to the disparity of the perception of students is multiculturalism where Major & Mangombe (2014, as cited in Sison, 2019) suggests that an all-encompassing support services have to be apparent to students of diverse cultures for them to recognize how this complement student performance. Thus, students tend to recognize these services and programs at varying degrees.

Rozikin et al. (2020) add that support services that are seen as appropriate and sufficient would be discerned as services that were clearly conveyed as well. Systems theory, on the other hand, proposes that the different support offices provide services and programs that have individual aspects; but these are still seen as a whole (Mele et al., 2010, as cited in Sison, 2019). Students may then perceive a particular service or program as more or less helpful depending on how they saw it as visible in its role in assisting them during their college stay. On the other hand, the perceptual process suggests that differences in the interpreted experiences during the university stay are due to the series of steps involved when an individual organizes information and puts meaning to the information and the various factors which could have influenced the series of steps itself (Cherry, 2022; Management Study Guide, n.d.). Considering these, students would tend to have varying regard toward the services and programs provided by the student support offices.

Given the research findings, it can be said that the University of Baguio support offices generally provide visible services and programs as regards fostering student performance. More so, the role that these services and programs play in student performance goes without notice among the graduating UBians.

***Perception of the UBian students towards the student support services and programs as a tool to student performance when compared according to office.***

Student support services are seen to provide many benefits not only to the students but also to the faculty (Perry & Lausch, 2020). In addition, the study of Neal (2012) suggests that effective student services are those that aid the student in their pursuit of success. In relation, the services and programs provided by the different support offices of the university were seen to have a great impact on the student performance of the students. Nevertheless, looking into the probable differences among the provided services and programs of the different offices is also vital. This part of the study explores the perception of the graduating students as regards the impact of student support services and programs to student performance when compared according to office.

**Table 3. Perception of the UBian students towards the student support services and programs as a tool to student performance when compared according to office**

		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Student Recognition	Between Groups	33.63	11	3.06	2.92	0.00	significant
	Within Groups	1079.84	1032	1.05			
	Total	1113.47	1043				
Program Completion	Between Groups	20.13	11	1.83	1.74	0.06	not significant
	Within Groups	1084.70	1032	1.05			
	Total	1104.83	1043				
Academic Performance	Between Groups	31.21	11	2.83	2.78	0.00	significant
	Within Groups	1054.06	1032	1.02			
	Total	1085.27	1043				

Table 3 shows that when it comes to the provided services and programs of the different student services, a significant difference can be observed when it comes to the perceived impact in the areas of student recognition and academic performance. Taking this into consideration, the respondents perceived that the services and programs had an individualized approach to providing assistance to student performance. More so, the individualized approach is distinct when it comes to the pursuit of the students to be academically successful and when it comes to receiving due recognition for outstanding performance. The disparity can be attributed to the pre-formed perceptions of the students about the university, which prompts the students' decision if their expectations were met or not (Kattara et al., 2004, as cited in Nell & Cant, 2014; Tan & Kek, 2008, as cited in Nell & Cant, 2014). On the other hand, Wilson et al. (n.d.) suggest that a diverse student population tends to influence the expectations of the students towards the delivery of student services. More so, the man-



ner in which the delivery of the services and programs are delivered could be influenced by the knowledge and beliefs of the staff who are tasked to carry out the implementation process (Ciobanu, 2013). This kind of perception is further described as influential in the verdicts that students give as regards the services that they have experienced and the personnel that they had contact with (Nell & Cant, 2014).

It is also notable that among the different student support offices, the services and programs from the Students' Accounts Office, Security Office, Medical & Dental Clinic, and the Library showed distinct impact to student performance. The observed differences of impact are attested by the study conducted by Arangote (2018, as cited in Gervacio & Pascual, 2019), where the observed effectiveness of the services and programs tend to be associated with how these offices answered the needs of the students at particular occasions. For the Student's Accounts Office, the services often availed by the students were the assessment of fees and the issuance of permits, whereas the security office ensured the safety of students through the enforcement of university policies, rules, and regulations. The Medical & Dental Clinic, on the other hand, was associated with services pertaining to the physical health of students. At the same time, the use of available university resources was provided by the Library. This finding is further supported by Mercado (2015, as cited in Gervacio & Pascual, 2019), who suggests that when student services and programs are implemented within the minimum standard, students will more or less perceive them as having an impact on their development. The study conducted by Sarabia et al. (2021), on the other hand, suggests that the impact of using student services is also associated with the situational barriers encountered by the students. On account of these, there were various factors that influenced the observed impact of particular student support services or programs to student performance, consequently leading to the differences in how these same services and programs were delivered and received.

#### ***Suggested support office services and programs***

This section presents the themes derived from the different verbatim responses of the respondents as regards suggested services and programs. It can be observed however that instead of identifying specific services or programs which the support offices can add to the roster of existing services and programs, most of the suggestions leaned towards the enhancement of what is already existing. Also, considering that the respondents were graduating students last May 2021, the experiences on services and programs were mostly on the face-to-face delivery of services. Related studies and concepts are also presented in lieu of the research findings.

#### ***Convenient services***

One of the essential elements of a positive student experience is how quickly and easily they can access and receive the service they need (Carter, 2017). The accessibility of available support services increases the effectiveness of the student experience (Gibbs, 2012). These statements may shed light on the suggestions made by the respondents for specific offices to provide services that will fit their particular needs, such as for MIS to provide "a website for software commonly used by the students" or for the CCSD to "conduct counseling through zoom meetings ."Thus, students perceive that when services suit their needs, it raises the chance that they will meet or exceed the provision of a satisfactory experience. The suggestions are consistent with the claim of Dagdag et al. (2019) that services and programs that are aligned with student needs nurture the educational success of the students concerned. To add, students look forward to services and programs which are in harmony with their needs (Cadosales & Ejercito, 2009).

#### ***Deliverability***

When services and programs meet the needs and expectations of students, student trust is strengthened (Commence, 2018). Further, services and programs are to be provided in meaningful ways for students to have satisfactory progress (Rudge, 2014). These statements can be observed from particular comments made by the respondents: "accurate fees" to be given by the SAO, for the Library to have "more updated books," or for ECOS "to conduct fun activities ."It is then insinuated that the quality-of-service delivery influences the evaluation of students as regards the total customer experience. These suggestions are supported by Mercado et al. (2015), who suggest that student services and programs are to be designed to empower students in their studies or personal growth. For the SERVQUAL model, these suggestions will compose the reliability of the institution to respond to the needs and expectations of its clients. Reliability suggests that the services delivered to coincide with the assurance given by the institution that the provided student services and programs are dependable and accurate. (LeBlanc, 2014 as cited in Pamatmat et al., 2018; Pamatmat et al., 2018).

In view of the derived themes, it can be observed that the students mostly gave suggestions that intend to enhance the delivery of existing services and programs. This insinuates that when it comes to the services and programs themselves, the students perceive them as already sufficient in providing the assistance that they need as regards student performance. The derived themes also imply that when students experience the services and programs as convenient, timely, and accessible, they would consequently perceive them as satisfactory and contributory. The expressed suggestions are also consistent with the research findings of Gonzales et al. (2021), who stated that in as much as the quality of services is significantly based on the perception of the students, it has to be kept in mind that the students relate their success to the quality of services and programs that were made available to them.

### **Conclusion**

As presented, the services and programs provided by the different university student support offices were perceived to have a bearing on student performance, making the students perform academically, value student recognition, and finish their program on time.

More so, the experienced services and programs were seen as customized or appropriated to the needs of the students.

With these research findings in mind, forwarding a copy of the study results to the concerned offices might prove beneficial, for it justifies the importance of consistently providing services and programs.

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