

# Student Services Awareness and Satisfaction in a Private Higher Education Institution amid the Pandemic

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**Abstract** Managing student affairs and services is a dynamic and engaging task that all schools must have to deal with effectively and efficiently. Covid – 19 pandemic has brought new and unprecedented challenges where the Office of Student Affairs and Services has to offer innovative solutions to ensure that teaching and learning will continue. This study was conducted to assess the services offered to students in Saint Mary's University College Department, a private higher education institution in the Northern Luzon, Philippines. It found out that, generally, students were aware and satisfied on the services provided by the school. In all the services presented, students' responses vary from having totally no knowledge at all to very much aware. Further, Gender, School and Year Level were not considered as factors in the way student respond to the level of awareness and satisfaction except on the Student Handbook Development and Student Discipline. The crux of students' awareness and satisfaction rests on how the school could deliver the services faster, stress-free and at the most convenient possible way in the context of students. Finally, this study forwards three important services that could enhance student services, these are creating of a "One – Stop Shop" where students can have all the necessary links and information; reorganization of the student study group program (SSGP) through virtual meetings and enhancement of the activities of the guidance and counseling team.

**Keywords:** *student services and programs, office of student affairs and services, awareness and satisfaction of student services, one-stop-shop website for student services*

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## 1. Introduction

Education is known to be a social equalizer and a mobility avenue that leads students to a successful life in the future. The progress and development of a nation is equally attributed to the education of its citizens. In the statement of the United Nations, education is the basic building block of every society, of every country. It is the single best investment countries can make to build prosperous, healthy, and equitable societies. Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights underscores the right to education of everyone. But education is not just a right but a ticket to human development that opens doors and expands opportunities and freedoms [1].

In 2015, the United Nations championed seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030 and one of which is SDG #4 which is focused on Quality Education. A global movement known as Education for All (EFA) affirmed by the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1990 during the World Education Forum held in Jomtiem, Thailand. This forum emphasized *the benefits of education to every citizen in every society* [2].

Similarly, the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV Section 1 states that *the State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to take such education accessible to all* [3]. The Economics Working Paper of the Asian Development Bank of the Philippines discusses the education outcomes of the country. It presented how Filipino parents value education as one of

the most important legacies they can impart to their children. They also believe that having a better education opens opportunities that would ensure a good future and eventually lift them out of poverty [4].

For education to transpire and achieve its aims, schools possess the pivotal role to make education come into fruition. School is typically defined as a learning institution designed to provide spaces and environments for the teaching of students under the direction of teachers. It is a place where an individual is developed holistically as programs and activities are designed for student development.

Deepika Sharma, a Principal of SRS International School, stated that it is in school that learners are exposed to various sources from whom they can imbibe immense knowledge which are instrumental for their development. Schools play an important role in molding a nation's future by facilitating all round development of its future citizens [5]. Schools, as institutions of learning, whether in the basic education or in higher education, provide avenues of learning, apart from the classroom. Activities are designed to provide opportunities for students to develop their faculties, as well as services made available by the educational institutions to support the learners.

In the United States, student affairs professionals' focus was on the development of the "whole student" which refers to the student's intellectual capacity and achievement, emotional make-up, physical condition, social relationships, vocational aptitude and skills, moral and religious values, economic resources, and aesthetic appreciations [6].

The report entitled *Student Personnel Point of View* issued by the American Council on Education in 1937 is known as a foundation document for student affairs. The said report was developed based on the principle that gave emphasis to the importance of the student's holistic development. The report likewise stressed the necessity of coordinating student personnel functions with other programs and services in the campus [7].

In the American context, colleges and universities have the division of student affairs that provide services to students and support the educational mission of the institution. Examples of these services are academic support services, academic advising, admissions, alcohol and drug education programs, career services, campus ministries, community service and service learning, counseling, financial aid, food services, fraternities and sororities, health centers, housing and residence life, multicultural programs, orientation, recreational sports, student activities, student discipline, and wellness programs [6].

In the Philippine context, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued the CHED Memorandum Order No. 09 Series of 2013, known as the Enhanced Policies and Guidelines on Student Affairs and Services. Section 04 of the said CMO states: "An educational institution seeks to form individuals who can later become productive citizens of the country and the world. Its responsibility is not only confined to the teaching and development of job skills, but also to the acquisition of life skills and values. The individuals produced by the educational institution should be able to contribute positively to the progress of his/her country, and to the improvement of the human conditions [8]."

Student Affairs and Services therefore must systematically and deliberately address this end objective of producing citizens suited to the aims of the country and of humanity. Higher education institutions must provide a set of student-centered services in support of academic instruction intended to facilitate holistic and well-rounded student development for active involvement as future responsible citizens and leaders. These shall be collectively known as Student Affairs and Services [8]."

With regard to student affairs in the Department of Education, the executive arm of the government responsible for ensuring access to, promoting equality in, and improving the quality of basic education, a Center for Students and Co-Curricular Affairs was established. It is a response to popular calls for active youth participation in nation-building, and an innovation in the DepEd system in order to improve its delivery of services, particularly in terms of youth and student affairs [9].

The Center for Students and Co-Curricular Affairs is committed to advance holistic and quality education for all, and focuses on addressing problems, issues, gaps, and concerns of youth and students outside the formal classroom atmosphere. Its mission is to enhance education by providing holistic and quality co-curricular program, projects, and activities that will prepare the Filipino children and youth towards global competition [9].

Student affairs and services are very vital in providing a productive and meaningful life for the students. They work in collaboration with the academic and administrative aspects of the educational institutions. It is therefore imperative that students get the best student services rendered by their schools.

Against this background is the pandemic that disrupted the world in the first quarter of year 2020. The novel coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. Virus has caused severe pneumonia in several cases in China and has been exported to a range of countries and cities. Last February 12, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that the novel disease is officially called Coronavirus Disease 19 or COVID-19, and the virus infecting was referred to as COVID-19 virus [10].

An emergency task force was formed in the Philippines known as Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) and part of the national protocol mandated all schools to be closed in March and April, 2020 as part of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ). When the quarantine was relaxed to modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) and to general community quarantine (GCQ), the schools have to go through online flexible learning (synchronous and asynchronous), modular and distance learning. Education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken on digital platforms as a result of COVID-19 [11].

The health threats posed by the pandemic, a sudden shift to distance learning, and additional responsibilities of learners together with their parents and guardians at home have yielded a stressful and demanding context for educators' workload. It was identified by Levine [12] that equity is more challenging brought by closure of the pandemic where teachers try serving learners online or through phone calls and other platforms. At this time, more than ever, the Office of Student Affairs and Services

(OSAS) are compelled to shape and offer solutions to challenges, and craft innovative responses to ensure that teaching and learning will continue.

In Saint Mary's University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines, it has proven its missionary nature as it has been so strong to provide, first and foremost, the needs of the studentry and employees. In the effort to keep and shelter its stakeholders, the university managed to come up with contextualized solutions. In the first circular it had released a month after the declaration of ECQ, it greatly considered the plight of students and their safety and well-being became its paramount considerations.

Saint Mary's University also responded to the challenges of flexible learning and the adjustment of relevant learning outcomes through its tagline *Compassionate Teaching in CALMS*. This means that the entire faculty members and staff are committed through the SMU Course Augmenting Learning Management System. The core values of compassionate teaching are symbolically presented by 4 Cs – Communication, Clarity, Connection and Care. Hence, the school aligned its policies to the mandate of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) regarding flexible learning and considered the welfare of students as its ultimate stakeholder.

The support systems are carefully laid down for the benefit of students, these are the: Department of Student Affairs, Accounting Office, Registrar's Office, Guidance Office, University Clinic and the offices of Academic Deans are twenty four hours open virtually. The faculty members are also enjoined to look for the well-being of students by checking on them regularly and making sure that instructions and submission of requirements are being carried out relative to the principles of SMU – CALMS [13].

With these entire backdrop and the pandemic continues to affect the lives of students around the world, this study was conceptualized. It aimed to provide a picture of students' level of awareness and satisfaction over the different student services and programs of Saint Mary's University and to come up with recommendations that could help students survive the succeeding school years.

## 1.1. Statement of the Problem

This study generally endeavored to evaluate the various student services and programs for school year 2020 – 2021 at Saint Mary's University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of students in terms of the following:
  - 1.1 Gender;
  - 1.2 School;
  - 1.3 Year Level?
2. What is the level of awareness and satisfaction of students over the following services?
  - 2.1 Information and Orientation Services;
  - 2.2 Guidance and Counseling Services;
  - 2.3 Student Handbook Development;
  - 2.4 Student Council and Organizations Program;
  - 2.5 Student Discipline;
  - 2.6 The Marian;
  - 2.7 Admission Services;
  - 2.8 Scholarship and Financial Assistance Services;

2.9 Multi-Faith Services (Christian Formation);

2.10 E- Sports Activities; and

2.11 Culture and the Arts?

3. Are there significant differences on the responses when grouped according to profile variables?

4. What enhancement activities, policies and/or programs could be crafted to improve the existing student services and developmental programs?

## 1.2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Managing student services is a gargantuan job that any school has to deal with. The duties and responsibilities range from mental to physical aspects of student life in the school. [14] opined that *the classroom is not the sole province of student learning. Learning is interwoven throughout the students' college experience—from the day they move into their first dormitory as freshmen until the day they hold a diploma in hand*. Managing student services may vary depending on what type of institution one is relating with.

Foremost of the basic and universal law bestowed to administrators, teachers and staff of any higher education institution (also conferred upon those in the basic education institution) is the doctrine of *in loco parentis* or literally known as “in place of the parent”. This was developed during the colonial era of American higher education, it endowed schools, colleges and universities to manage students closely, as students were viewed in those times as emotionally immature and requiring strict adult supervision. During the American colonial era, schools which were often poorly staffed, with faculty serving as live-in teachers who supervised the students in the dormitories and dining halls as well as in the classrooms. Rules and regulations then were developed that governed students' behavior, conduct, and dress, and these were enforced even when students were not on the college premises [14].

From this historical beginning of managing student affairs, foremost of the duties and responsibilities of the OSAS is to educate students in a holistic way. As the cliché goes, learning does not occur exclusively within the four corners of the classroom; hence, the school needs educate students mentally, physically, emotionally, conscious of socio-cultural values, even politically and economically, and of course, spiritually. Therefore, the OSAS have to create programs, projects or activities not only for requirements of any accrediting body or to show-off to outside communities but that will create an impact for the growth and development of students as well.

Next is the unconditional care for students. Since it is the OSAS job to manage student affairs and services, it should be the last office in the school that will take advantage of their weaknesses. Long (2012) forwarded that those professionals working on the affairs and services of students should respect them as individuals who matter and who have dignity. They should recognize that each student is unique in his or her own personal experiences, circumstances, and needs. Lastly, they have to always consider that each student deserves attention, respect, and fair treatment.

Third is to serve the students in a professional manner. Since they are studying a certain profession in a formal

classroom, students are also expected to be managed professionally. This is maybe an obvious responsibility as an administrator of student affairs but sort of a reminder because sometimes the very essence of being a manager is neglected when emotions are mixed with legal and spiritual battle.

Fourth is to promote a community of students and not a division among themselves. Competitions of students and choosing the best among student leaders maybe a usual undertaking in the management of student affairs but after the results, at the end of the day, camaraderie and solidarity should always prevail. Elections and competitions like academic, cultural and sports should always be for unity and bringing the best of students' character. Students would compete with each other to improve and develop and not to create conflict with fellow students.

The last but not the least duty of OSAS is to impose equality in the studentry. Sometimes, equality is not always "equality of all" but sometimes "equality of equals". This means, there are times that all students should be treated equally like all of them should wear their uniform and ID but sometimes, there could be differences in treatment like freshmen can be given a little of leniency over students in higher years. Since the school is inclusive to all types of students such as with those high IQ and the below average ones, students from various indigenous cultural communities, students who are physically challenged, and many more, the rules and regulations should not be generally for all but according to the nature of students. The rules and regulations should not be like a shoe that could fit all the students. The OSAS should become flexible and ready to accommodate differences among students. But most of all, it should be ready to face responsibilities and consequences whether the end could not justify the means it employed.

Finally, Long [14] mentioned some emerging issues in student affairs which include: diversity; student safety and security; mental health issues; parent involvement; campus environments; alcohol issues; and role of technology. In summary, Long stated that managing student affairs in higher education is complex – these range from admission to the exit of students from the school.

## 2. Methodology

This study made use of quantitative approach through the descriptive and comparative methods. The technique in gathering data was through online survey using the Google Form. The descriptive part covered the presentations of the: profile of students in terms gender, school and year level; level of awareness and satisfaction of students over the following services: Information and Orientation Services, Guidance and Counseling Services, Student Handbook Development, Student Council and Organizations Program, Student Discipline, The Marian, Admission Services, Scholarship and Financial Assistance Services, Multi-Faith Services (Christian Formation), E- Sports Activities; and Culture and the Arts. Meanwhile, the comparative part included the significant differences on the responses when grouped according to profile variables.

The study was conducted in Saint Mary's University, College Department. A private Catholic HEI in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines supervised by the *Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae* (CICM). The vision statement relates that SMU is a premier CICM Catholic educational institution drawn into communion by the Wisdom of God, dedicated to forming persons exemplifying excellence, innovation and Christ's mission. Its motto in Latin is *Sapientia a Deo* or Wisdom from God in English. It accommodates students mostly in Nueva Vizcaya but some feeder schools include the provinces of Quirino, Ifugao, Isabela and Cagayan. SMU is one of the top performing schools/university in Region II.

The sampling process was in random. The link of the Google Form was posted in various students' group chat and then gathered after a month. Table 1 shows the total respondents and the summary of enrollment for the first and second semester as provided by the University Registrar.

The research instrument was modified from the earlier study conducted by the OSAS regarding student services and programs for School Year 2019 – 2020. This time an evaluation for school year 2020 – 2021, the year when the mode of learning shifted to virtual classes, synchronous and asynchronous, because of Covid- 19 pandemic. There were eleven services presented in the questionnaire, these were the services and programs that actually offered to students, these are: Information and Orientation Services, Guidance and Counseling Services, Student Handbook Development, Student Council and Organizations Program, Student Discipline, The Marian, Admission Services, Scholarship and Financial Assistance Services, Multi-Faith Services (Christian Formation), E- Sports Activities; and Culture and the Arts.

A four-likert scale was used and expressed in the following: A) Level of Awareness: 1 – 1:49: Not Aware; 1.5 – 2.49: Slightly Aware; 2.5 – 3.49: Aware; 3.5 – 4.0: Very Aware; B) Level of Satisfaction: 1 – 1:49: Not Satisfied; 1.5 – 2.49: Slightly Satisfied; 2.5 – 3.49: Satisfied; 3.5 – 4.0: Very Satisfied.

## 3. Results and Discussions

### 3.1. Profile of Respondents

Gender, school and year level were taken as the respondents profile variables. These were perceived to be important since these are objective and distinguishing features of the students. Table 1 presents the frequency and percent of these profile variables.

**Table 1. Respondents of the Study with their Profile Variables**

Gender	f	%	School	f	%	Year Level	f	%
Female	662	71.9	SAB	398	43.3	First	330	35.9
Male	225	24.4	SEAIT	123	13.4	Second	472	51.3
Prefer not to say	33	3.7	SHANS	225	24.4	Third	114	12.4
			STEH	174	18.9	Fourth/Fifth	4	.4
Total	Frequency = 920, Percent = 100							

As shown, in terms of gender, 662 or 71.9% were females and 225 or 24.4% were males. With regard to the school, there were 398 or 43.3% were from the School of

Accountancy and Business, 123 or 13.4% came from School of Engineering Architecture and Information Technology; 225 or 24.4% were from School of Health and Natural Sciences; and 174 or 18.9% came from School of Teacher Education and Humanities. Lastly, for year level, there were 330 or 35.9% were first year students, 472 or 51.3% came from the second year, 114 or 12.4% were from the third year and 4 or .4% from the fourth and fifth year.

All in all, there were 920 respondents in the study. Based on the above table, it could also be inferred that this study was dominated by female students, who are from SAB and at the second year level.

## 3.2. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction

### 3.2.1. Information and Orientation Services

It was evident in Table 2 that the surveyed students were generally aware and satisfied on the information and orientation services provided by the university. The highest rating was on the statement that *the university has Online School Management Information System (eSMIS) where pertinent information about the school, enrolment, payment, among others, could easily be accessed* (Mn=3.35). Meanwhile the lowest was on the following question: *Are you aware that there is an open line communication with the school administration regarding university programs, projects and activities (PPA) affecting students?* The students here were (Mn=2.62) aware but slightly satisfied (Mn=2.44) on the services provided.

Information and orientation services are considered to be very important for students as these would provide

initial knowledge and what to expect about the school structures and functions.

### 3.2.2. Guidance and Counseling Services

Table 3 shows that the students were also aware and satisfied on the guidance and counseling services of the university. The highest was on the statement that *the guidance office ensures privacy and confidentiality during virtual counselling sessions* (Mn=3.39). Meanwhile, the lowest was on the statement that *the University has an accessible website where significant information about the guidance office could be found* (Mn=2.65).

Guidance and counseling services are indeed vital in this time of pandemic. The guidance counselors of the university are perceived to have been doing their jobs to the best of their capabilities. They also adhered to the important etiquettes of counseling such as catering to the different needs of students and maintaining privacy of whatever being transpired in all counseling sessions.

### 3.2.3. Student Handbook Development

Table 4 provides the rating of students on the student handbook development. In general, the students were aware but not slightly satisfied. Their highest rating was on the idea that *students are made aware of the provisions of the student handbook through orientation programs and other means, i.e. circulars* (Mn=3.29). Their lowest rating was on the statement that *the student handbook is updated with the new rules and regulations, policies and other pertinent and related laws, particularly in relation to Covid 19 protocols* (Mn=2.12).

**Table 2. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Information and Orientation Services**

Information and Orientation Services	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
1. The university has Online School Management Information System (eSMIS) where pertinent information about the school, enrolment, payment, among others, could easily be accessed.	3.35	.74	Aware	2.75	.72	Satisfied
2. Are you aware that the university conducts virtual orientation programs to all students to help them adjust and adapt to life in tertiary education.	2.71	.89	Aware	2.61	.78	Satisfied
3. Are you aware that the University has a mechanism to inform the students about programs and activities that are responsive to their needs.	2.91	.84	Aware	2.89	.78	Satisfied
4. Are you aware that there is an open line communication with the school administration regarding university programs, projects and activities (PPA) affecting students.	2.62	.90	Aware	2.44	.82	Slightly Satisfied
5. Are you aware that students are well informed and well oriented about university's Programs, Projects and Activities in various media (i.e. like policy on discipline, student services, scholarships).	3.01	.76	Aware	2.93	.76	Satisfied
Overall Mean	2.92	.83	Aware	2.72	.77	Satisfied

**Table 3. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Guidance and Counseling Services**

Guidance and Counseling Services	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
1. The University has an accessible website where significant information about the guidance office could be found.	2.65	.90	Aware	2.76	.84	Satisfied
2. The guidance office is staffed with qualified, committed and compassionate counselors.	3.29	.77	Aware	3.20	.77	Satisfied
3. There are programs of the Guidance office that caters to the different and various needs of the students.	3.0	.85	Aware	2.99	.85	Satisfied
4. The guidance office has an adequate and appropriate follow-up and referral schemes in counseling students.	2.99	.83	Aware	2.93	.83	Satisfied
5. The guidance office ensures privacy and confidentiality during virtual counselling sessions.	3.39	.84	Aware	3.45	.82	Satisfied
Overall Mean	3.06	.83	Aware	3.07	.82	Satisfied

CHED memorandum on student services and programs provide that the manual should be updated annually, however, this is one of the most difficult services to be updated since it has to go through myriad of proof readings, comments and suggestions. The solution in most universities is to come up with bulletin boards for posting of updates on the various services for students and the updating of manual are being done gradually. Since the conditions at present regarding Covid-19 effects are very fluid where changes happen anytime, such updates in the Student Handbook or Manual may not really be performed on time.

**3.2.4. Student Council and Organizations Program**

Table 5 reflects that most of the students surveyed were aware and satisfied on the students council and organization programs. The highest rating was on the statement that *each student was given ample opportunities to know and elect his or her student representative to the student council* (Mn=2.95). The lowest was on the accessibility of website where the officers are available for consultation by students when needed (Mn=2.67).

Again, there were students here who complained on the accessibility of website just like the previously mentioned student services. There is really a need to improve on this

digital concern so students could also be eased on their problems in connecting to various SMU online accounts. However, in general the students were aware and satisfied.

**3.2.5. Student Discipline**

Table 6 showed that the students surveyed were aware and satisfied regarding student discipline. Their highest rating was on the statements that the officers in charge of discipline (ADSAS for Men and Women) participate in the formulation of policies on student discipline (Mn=3.19). Meanwhile, the lowest rating was on the statement that there is proper dissemination or explanation of provisions of the student handbook on student discipline (Mn=2.66).

Behaviors and activities adhering to the standardized student discipline in this time of pandemic were all focused on the virtual classrooms and platforms. In this light, the Vice President for Academic Affairs included at the Learning Management System (LMS) of SMU some policies and guidelines for students and teachers. These are being updated every now and then relative to the national IATF pronouncements. Many of these policies and guidelines also speak about the schools clean, safe, friendly and safety (CHSF) environment program.

**Table 4. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Student Handbook Development**

Student Handbook Development	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
The student handbook is updated with the new rules and regulations, policies and other pertinent and related laws, particularly in relation to Covid 19 protocols.	2.12	.80	Slightly Aware	2.16	.84	Slightly Satisfied
The student handbook is made into accessible formats, i.e. electronic, for dissemination, information and guidance of students and other stakeholders. Students, through the SCC officers, are represented in the development and revision of the student handbook.	2.29	.77	Slightly Aware	2.20	.78	Slightly Satisfied
There is an office responsible for the implementation of the provisions of the student handbook.	3.0	.85	Aware	2.16	.83	Slightly Satisfied
Students are made aware of the provisions of the student handbook through orientation programs and other means, i.e. circulars.	2.99	.83	Aware	2.33	.82	Slightly Satisfied
Overall Mean	2.74	.81	Aware	2.37	.82	Slightly Satisfied

**Table 5. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Student Council and Organizations Program**

Student Council and Organizations Program	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
1. The University supported the election at large by the students of their official representative to the University administration.	2.93	.92	Aware	2.91	.82	Satisfied
2. Each student was given ample opportunities to know and elect his or her student representative to the student council.	2.95	.95	Aware	2.86	.93	Satisfied
3. The Student Central Council (SCC) has an accessible website where its officers are available for consultation by students when needed.	2.67	.98	Aware	2.70	.90	Satisfied
4. The SCC officers are visibly active and functioning well in representing the student body to the university administration.	2.80	.87	Aware	2.84	.86	Satisfied
5. The SCC officers are visibly active through its programs and activities designed for the promotion of student welfare and development.	2.83	.83	Aware	2.82	.84	Satisfied
Overall Mean	2.84	.91	Aware	2.83	.87	Satisfied

**Table 6. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Student Discipline**

Student Discipline	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
1. The officers in charge of discipline (ADSAS for Men and Women) participate in the formulation of policies on student discipline.	3.19	.86	Aware	3.15	.79	Satisfied
2. There is proper dissemination or explanation of provisions of the student handbook on student discipline.	2.66	.88	Aware	2.77	.86	Satisfied
3. There is a functional mechanism to address student grievance, i.e. reporting of complaints and handling of disciplinary cases.	2.84	.87	Aware	2.71	.87	Satisfied
4. The university has gender and disability sensitive rules and regulations and violations are dealt with by competent and gender sensitive personnel.	3.0	.91	Aware	3.01	.86	Satisfied
Overall Mean	2.92	.88	Aware	2.91	.85	Satisfied

**Table 7. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of The Marian (SMU Student Publication)**

The Marian	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
1. There is an accessible website for the student paper and publication where contributions of students may be submitted.	2.41	.89	Slightly Aware	2.44	.88	Slightly Satisfied
2. The Marian staff encourage students to submit their own contributions and provide a screening procedure for contributions from students.	2.44	.92	Slightly Aware	2.52	.80	Slightly Satisfied
3. The University clearly and openly supports responsible campus journalism and the Campus Journalism Act of 1981.	3.04	.89	Aware	3.13	.78	Satisfied
4. The University students' publications are available to all students on line.	2.37	.98	Slightly Aware	2.39	.86	Slightly Satisfied
Overall Mean	2.57	.92	Aware	2.62	.83	Satisfied

### 3.2.6. The Marian

It was apparent in Table 7 that most of the students surveyed were aware and satisfied in terms of the services provided by The Marian, the official student publication of SMU. Their highest rating was on the idea that *the University clearly and openly supports responsible campus journalism and the Campus Journalism Act of 1981* (Mn=3.04). On the other hand, the lowest was again on the *accessibility of website for the student paper and publication where contributions of students may be submitted* (Mn=2.41).

It is gratifying to take note that most of the students surveyed perceived SMU as clearly and openly supporting responsible campus journalism. This is somehow a relief and an encouragement for students to air or write whatever they know as long as these would not violate other laws. It is also greatly expected that The Marian would support and promote the vision and missions of SMU.

### 3.2.7. Admission Services

For admission services, most of the students surveyed were aware and satisfied with what SMU is providing. Their highest rating was on the accessibility of the school's website (Mn=3.57) and the lowest was on the proper information of the guidelines to the students (Mn=2.99).

### 3.2.8. Scholarship and Financial Assistance Services

With regard to scholarship and financial assistance, the students were also aware and satisfied. Their highest rating was on the statement that *scholarship and financial assistance offered to poor but deserving students in various forms, i.e. as service scholarship or for working students* (Mn=3.65). This is second to the highest overall rating where the students were very aware and very satisfied. Their lowest was on the idea that *the structure and policies on scholarship are widely and promptly disseminated to students in various media* (Mn=3.20).

In SMU, scholarship and financial assistance, despite the pandemic, were generously given to deserving students in various means such as having a sibling or siblings, service scholarship to the Marian writers and SCC officers, academic and entrance scholars, and the like. Aside from these, there are also scholarship grants from the government like DOST scholarship and *Tulong Dunong* of CHED.

### 3.2.9. Multi-Faith Services (Christian Formation)

Table 10 showed the ratings of students in terms of the Multi-Faith Services of the university. Here, most of the students were very aware and very satisfied. Their highest rating (also the highest rating so far) was on the observation that *the University admits students from different religious groups* (Mn=3.66).

**Table 8. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Admission Services**

Admission Services	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
1. The requirements and procedures for admission are in place with reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, tribal groups, financially disadvantage and others.	3.11	.82	Aware	3.20	.77	Satisfied
2. There is a website with competent staff that takes charge of admission processes.	3.57	.87	Very Aware	3.37	.77	Satisfied
3. Students are properly informed of the guidelines of the admission process.	2.99	.82	Aware	3.09	.78	Satisfied
Overall Mean	3.22	.84	Aware	3.22	.77	Satisfied

**Table 9. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Scholarship and Financial Assistance Services**

Scholarship and Financial Assistance Services	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
1. Scholarship and financial assistance offered to poor but deserving students in various forms, i.e. as service scholarship or for working students.	3.65	.74	Very Aware	3.58	.75	Very Satisfied
2. Scholarship and financial assistance have clear structure and policies about availability, qualification requirements and procedures for availment of scholarships and financial aid.	3.28	.77	Aware	3.29	.72	Satisfied
3. The structure and policies on scholarship are widely and promptly disseminated to students in various media.	3.20	.82	Aware	3.30	.79	Satisfied
Overall Mean	3.38	.78	Aware	3.39	.75	Satisfied

**Table 10. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Multi-Faith Services (Christian Formation)**

Multi-Faith Services (Christian Formation)	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
1. The University admits students from different religious groups.	3.66	.67	Very Aware	3.57	.68	Very Satisfied
2. The university encourages the community to ensure respect for students of different religious beliefs.	3.59	.68	Very Aware	3.55	.70	Very Satisfied
3. The university has an online streaming of Holy Eucharist Celebrations where students could commune with God in prayer.	3.60	.71	Very Aware	3.61	.69	Very Satisfied
Overall Mean	3.62	.69	Very Aware	3.58	.69	Very Satisfied

The students also greatly commended on the online streaming of the Holy Eucharist celebration and the way the university encourages the community that respect for students of different religious beliefs are respected.

**3.2.10. Sports Activities**

With regard to sports, the university resorted to online games since there was no face-to-face encounters and here, generally, the students were aware (Mn=2.86) and satisfied (Mn=2.81).

**3.2.11. Culture and the Arts**

Table 12 presents the Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Culture and the Arts. Most of the students surveyed here were very aware (Mn=3.52) and were satisfied (Mn=3.28) on the activities conducted.

**Table 11. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Sports Activities**

Sports Activities	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
There were programs and activities for physical fitness and wellness (e-sports) intended for all students?	2.96	.98	Aware	2.91	.92	Satisfied
Overall Mean	3.38	.88	Aware	3.40	.75	Satisfied

**Table 12. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction in terms of Culture and the Arts**

Culture and the Arts	Level of Awareness			Level of Satisfaction		
	Mn	SD	QD	Mn	SD	QD
The University had sets of activities or presentations that promote culture and the arts and national pride and consciousness among students (i.e. Activities during CHSF Re-launching, Linggo ng mga Bagong Marian, Arts' Month)?	3.52	.71	Very Aware	3.28	.72	Satisfied
Overall Mean	3.45	.78	Aware	3.85	.75	Satisfied

**Table 13. Significant Differences of Responses in terms of Level of Awareness and Gender**

Services	Gender	N		Mn	SD	Qualitative Description	Sig.	Decision
		f	%					
Information and Orientation	Male	225	71.9	2.95	.90	Aware	.128	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	3.05	.88	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.80	.96	Aware		
Guidance and Counseling	Male	225	71.9	3.06	.84	Aware	.209	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.80	.75	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.90	.76	Aware		
Student Handbook Development	Male	225	71.9	2.44	.57	Slightly Aware	.04*	Reject Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.94	.78	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	3.01	.76	Aware		
Student Council and Organizations Program	Male	225	71.9	2.84	.53	Aware	.220	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.94	.74	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.70	.76	Aware		
Student Discipline	Male	225	71.9	2.42	.75	Slightly Aware	.002*	Reject Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.98	.76	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	3.05	.84	Aware		

**3.3. Significant Differences of the Responses when grouped according to Profile Variables**

**3.3.1. Level of Awareness and Gender**

Table 13 provided that based on the p-values computed, there were significant differences of the responses regarding *student handbook development* (.04) and *student discipline* (Mn=.002). Other p-values were all greater than .05 which indicates that there are no significant differences of responses on these students' services.

For both services where there were significant differences, it could be observed that the female students were more aware than male ones. One possible explanation here was on the unequal frequency of male and female respondents. There were about two third of the respondents who were females and only one third were males.

Services	Gender	N		Mn	SD	Qualitative Description	Sig.	Decision
		f	%					
The Marian	Male	225	71.9	2.57	.56	Aware	.508	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.80	.45	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.40	.35	Aware		
Admission	Male	225	71.9	3.22	.36	Aware	.219	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.70	.34	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.80	.55	Aware		
Scholarship and Financial Assistance	Male	225	71.9	3.38	.58	Aware	.608	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.90	.76	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.80	.86	Aware		
Multi-Faith (Christian Formation)	Male	225	71.9	3.62	.96	Very Aware	.549	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.80	.36	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.40	.56	Aware		
Sports Activities	Male	225	71.9	3.38	.47	Aware	.219	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.80	.88	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.95	.98	Aware		
Culture and the Arts	Male	225	71.9	3.38	.65	Aware	.106	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.80	.55	Aware		
	No Answer	33	3.7	3.05	.76	Aware		

Table 14. Significant Differences of Responses in terms of Level Satisfaction and Gender

Services	Gender	N		Mn	SD	QD	Sig.	Dec.
		f	%					
Information and Orientation	Male	225	71.9	2.85	.89	Satisfied	.126	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	3.02	.85	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.60	.94	Satisfied		
Guidance and Counseling	Male	225	71.9	3.03	.84	Satisfied	.209	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.50	.75	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.70	.76	Satisfied		
Student Handbook Development	Male	225	71.9	2.44	.67	Slightly Aware	.03*	Reject Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.74	.78	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	3.0	.76	Satisfied		
Student Council and Organizations Program	Male	225	71.9	2.82	.63	Satisfied	.220	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.74	.74	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.78	.66	Satisfied		
Student Discipline	Male	225	71.9	2.52	.75	Satisfied	.000*	Reject Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.99	.56	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	3.01	.84	Satisfied		
The Marian	Male	225	71.9	2.67	.56	Satisfied	.507	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.70	.45	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.30	.35	Satisfied		
Admission	Male	225	71.9	3.22	.36	Satisfied	.234	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.70	.34	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.80	.45	Satisfied		
Scholarship and Financial Assistance	Male	225	71.9	3.38	.58	Satisfied	.123	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.90	.76	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.80	.86	Satisfied		
Multi-Faith (Christian Formation)	Male	225	71.9	3.62	.86	Very Satisfied	.349	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.80	.36	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.50	.56	Satisfied		
Sports Activities	Male	225	71.9	3.38	.47	Satisfied	.219	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.80	.78	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	2.95	.98	Satisfied		
Culture and the Arts	Male	225	71.9	3.18	.65	Satisfied	.116	Accept Ho
	Female	662	24.4	2.850	.45	Satisfied		
	No Answer	33	3.7	3.05	.76	Satisfied		

**Table 15. Significant Differences of Responses when grouped according to School**

School	N		Awareness			Satisfaction				
	f	%	Mn	QD	Sig.	Dec.	Mn	QD	Sig.	Dec.
SAB	398	43.4	2.95	Aware			2.88	Satisfied		
SEAIT	123	13.4	2.88	Aware	.322	Accept Ho	2.97	Satisfied	.521	Accept Ho
SHANS	225	24.4	3.03	Aware			3.01	Satisfied		
STEH	174	18.9	2.90	Aware			2.95	Satisfied		

**Table 16. Significant Differences of Responses when grouped according to Year Level**

Year Level	N		Awareness			Satisfaction				
	f	%	Mn	QD	Sig.	Dec.	Mn	QD	Sig.	Dec.
First	330	35.9	2.85	Aware			2.95	Satisfied		
Second	472	51.3	3.02	Aware	.221	Accept Ho	3.01	Satisfied	.221	Accept Ho
Third	114	12.4	2.60	Aware			2.70	Satisfied		
Fourth/Fifth	4	.4	2.9	Aware			2.94	Satisfied		

### 3.3.2. Level Satisfaction and Gender

Similarly, Table 14 above presents that based on the p-values computed, there were significant differences of the responses with regard to *student handbook development* (.04) and *student discipline* (Mn=.002). Other p-values were all greater than .05 which indicates that there are no significant differences of responses on these students' services. This finding could mean that gender has no bearing in the way student responded except for the services on *student handbook development* (.03) and *student discipline* (Mn=.000).

### 3.3.3. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction when grouped according to School

Table 15 and Table 16 show the level of awareness and satisfaction when grouped according to school and year level of the students.

### 3.3.4. Level of Awareness and Satisfaction when grouped according to Year Level

For both the level of awareness and satisfaction in the school and year level variables, all the computed p-values were greater than .05 indicating a no significant difference. These results implied that school and year level could not be considered as factors in the way students respond.

## 3.4. Proposed Programs to Improve the Delivery of Student Services

Based on the findings of the study, there are many things needed to be addressed but the most important aspects could be the challenge on the: 1) accessibility of students to the schools' websites or online platforms; 2) students' social, emotional and mental health; 3) academic performance of students due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. With these, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Enhancement of SMU Online Support Services through the creation of one-stop shop website for student services;
2. Re-organization of the Student Study Group Program (SSGP) virtually; and
3. Employment of more professional guidance counsellors and/or train Senior Students or those major in Psychology and Guidance to be part of the counseling team.

### 3.4.1. One-stop Shop Website for Student Services

In most of the responses of student on the services presented, they claim great challenges in accessing the website or social media account/s of the office/s they were dealing with. Some problems were on the promptness of responses from the staff of the office being consulted, others were on the mobility of students to transfer from one site to another, there were also difficulties on the access of social media accounts like Messenger and Facebook due to their limited features and lastly, the confusion they had due to myriad of sites or social media accounts that they need to keep in mind.

With these, the creation of One-Stop-Shop website for student services is highly recommended and timely to solve the problems in connectivity. This could also really be helpful since CHED pronounced that *flexible learning is here to stay and no turning back to the ole full-packed face-to-face classes*.

This proposed website will contain all links that could provide students with what they needed from orientation and information services up to the getting of clearances and diploma or transcript of records. There will also be some add-on features like links about data privacy law, dangerous drug act, cyber libel and bullying provisions and the like. Other social media platforms which are popular are also included such as Facebook, Twitter, Messenger and YouTube. The students must have to log-in first before they could access to all the links provided in the proposed website.

Another possible feature that could be included in the proposed website is a link that could serve the students anytime of the day and night, "24 hours a day and 7 days a week" condition. This could seem contradict any reminder on "rest time" but the pandemic year had shown difficulties of connectivity from both teachers and students. In some cases, internet connection comes better at night or at the very early time in the morning. Teachers and staff may take turn or volunteer in manning this 24/7 link to address the needs of students. This could also be proposed as part of the extension program or outreach activities.

### 3.4.2. Virtual Student Study Group Program (SSGP)

During the face-to-face classes, SMU had this student study group program (SSGP) particularly for technical and hard science subjects like Mathematics, Calculus,

Statistics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Sometimes English grammar, structures and phonetics are also being covered by volunteer students and teachers. In this time of pandemic, this program could also be revived virtually. Again, this program had started as an outreach activity for volunteer students as well as teachers who could spare their knowledge and time to tutor students with difficulties in their academic subjects.

This SSGP is outside the formal classroom thus it could be done during the free time of students or at scheduled virtual meetings on weekends. All volunteers may be given certificates, extension points and other incentives that could reciprocate their voluntary services to students. Academic or Curricular Organizations could be re-organized and be recognized since most of these organizations were formed to address academic concerns in their disciplines of field of interests.

### 3.4.3. Guidance and Counselling Sessions

Guidance and counseling are really critical and serious task; thus these must be handled by professionals. Based on CHED Memorandum regarding student services, the ideal ratio is 1:500, one counselor to serve five hundred students. The school had already complied in this requirement but this pandemic has brought new and unprecedented challenges and that the previous ratio may no longer be applicable. The study then proposes for the employ more professional counselors and/or train senior students or those major in Psychology and Guidance to be part of the counseling team.

Scheduled and unscheduled as well as group and individual virtual sessions are suggested focusing on mental health concerns, emotional aspects, coping strategies for virtual classes, financial problems, self-confidence/esteem and the like. This can again rekindle the spirit of volunteerism for all Marian students, faculty and staff.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were derived.

1. Generally, students were aware and satisfied on the services provided by the school except on the Student Handbook Development with mean score described as slightly satisfied. In all the services presented, students' responses vary from having totally no knowledge at all to very aware of these student services. Similarly, in terms of satisfaction, responses show that students are not satisfied to some services but are very appreciative to others.
2. Gender, School and Year Level were generally not considered as factors in the way student respond to the level of awareness and satisfaction except on the Student Handbook Development and Student Discipline. The crux of students' awareness and satisfaction rest on how the school could deliver the services faster, stress-free and at the most convenient possible way in the context of students.

3. The level of awareness and satisfaction of students vary when compared across the eleven identified student programs and services. Students were very aware and satisfied the most on multi-faith services (Christian Formation) and were slightly aware and satisfied the least on the student handbook development.
4. The Student Online Support Website can be part of the solutions to the many problems and challenges faced by students. This website shall contain all the important services and will take the concept of a "One – Stop Shop" where students can have all the necessary links and information without bothering to search for numerous links and internet sites offered by the university.

### 4.2. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. The Student Online Support Website is recommended for review and utilization.
2. The suggestions on the student study group program (SSGP) and activities of the guidance counseling team must be reviewed and acted upon as these are vital support systems for students amid the pandemic. These then should be institutionalized and must be embraced by all personnel in the university – academic and non-academic, and from the top management down to the support office staff.

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