



## Section 2. Pedagogy

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### THE CURRENT STATE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION

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#### Abstract

This paper examines the current state of student affairs management at public universities in the North Central region, an area with distinct economic and social characteristics. The study reveals that despite considerable efforts for improvement, these universities still face significant challenges related to infrastructure, support policies, and extracurricular activities, which are not yet fully synchronized. These limitations impact the quality and effectiveness of student affairs management. The research employed a survey using a Likert scale to collect data from 153 management staff and 543 final-year students at five universities. The results provide a basis for educational administrators and public universities in the North Central region to refer to and apply in practice, contributing to the improvement of education quality and the development of high-quality human resources for the region and the country.

**Keywords:** *current state; management; student affairs; public university; North Central region*

#### I. Introduction

Student affairs are a critical component of the higher education management system, especially at public universities. The North Central region, with its unique geographical location and specific economic and social conditions, faces numerous challenges in managing and supporting students. Understanding the current state of student affairs management at public universities in this region is not only crucial for identifying exist-

ing issues but also plays a significant role in proposing improvement solutions.

In the context of international integration and the rapid development of the knowledge economy, the demand for high-quality education and effective student affairs management has become more pressing. Public universities in the North Central region must meet the increasing needs of students and society, thereby enhancing the quality of edu-

cation and providing comprehensive support to students.

However, the current state of student affairs management at public universities in the North Central region still has many limitations. Issues such as inadequate infrastructure, support policies, and extracurricular activities that are not synchronized or effective are prevalent. Additionally, the distribution of resources and access to student support services remain problematic.

Therefore, it is essential to research the current state of student affairs management at public universities in the North Central region to comprehensively evaluate the situation and propose suitable solutions. This will help improve the quality of education and student support, laying a solid foundation for the sustainable development of the region.

## II. Literature review

Ajay Shankar Bidyarthi and Abhishek Kumar (2012) argue that a well-organized and systematic office is essential for all universities to manage student affairs more effectively. All modules in university administration are interdependent and manually maintained. Therefore, they need to be automated and centralized. With this in mind, the authors developed the existing student database management system and identified necessary improvements to streamline processes. Administrators using the system will find that recording, retrieving student information, and managing their classes become easier. Essentially, this project aims to enhance efficiency and maintain the accuracy of useful information to save time and reduce paperwork.

Unnati A. Patel (2013) discusses the idea of needing tools to control student attendance during final exams by creating a system that makes student attendance checking automatic based on "RFID Technology." Accordingly, the system can be easily accessed by teachers via the web, and most importantly, reports can be generated quickly and provide accurate student information. Additionally, at universities with a history and extensive experience, the application of information technology in student affairs management is also of great interest. Along with the development of website utilities, schools

have developed mobile applications specifically for student data, academic data, and various student affairs categories so that students and related departments can download and use them anytime, anywhere.

Overall, abroad, studies on student administrative management focus on the application of information technology, also known as "informatics," to manage student information more actively and modernly, bringing convenience to students, teachers, and administrative and service departments.

Meanwhile, managing training activities and career development is a fundamental aspect of student affairs management that many universities worldwide are highly concerned with. The author group Regina M. Oliver, Joseph H. Wehby, Daniel J. Reschly (2011), studied identifying individual practices with some evidence to support classroom management, whereby monitoring student behavior allows teachers to recognize students engaging in appropriate behaviors and prevent misconduct from escalating.

In Braxton's (2000) study, the author emphasizes the importance of administrative management and financial support services in ensuring that students have the best learning conditions. These services include scholarships, tuition loans, and other financial aids, playing a crucial role in reducing the financial burden on students. Braxton argues that financial support not only helps students focus on their studies but also enhances their engagement and connection with the university. Moreover, effective administrative services help students navigate complex procedures, from course registration to managing personal records. The study indicates that when students receive comprehensive and efficient support from administrative services, they are more likely to achieve academic success and personal development. Braxton also recommends that universities should invest in improving these services to create a favorable learning environment and provide the best support for students. In summary, Braxton's (2000) research emphasizes that administrative management and financial support are key factors that help students have the best conditions for learning and comprehensive development in the higher education environment.

“Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education,” Alexander W. Astin (1999) developed a theory on student involvement as a crucial factor in higher education. Astin proposed that the level of student involvement in academic and extracurricular activities directly affects their development and success. He defined “involvement” as the investment of both mental and physical energy into academic activities. Astin indicated that the more students engage in academic, research, and social activities, the more they have opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, communication skills, and personal values. Additionally, this involvement helps students build social relationships and develop leadership skills. Astin’s research emphasizes the importance of creating a dynamic learning environment that encourages student participation to optimize the educational process.

This research has had a profound impact on the design of educational programs and student support policies, highlighting that active student involvement is key to achieving the best academic and personal development outcomes.

In Vietnam, studies on student affairs management at universities have addressed various issues and proposed specific solutions. Notable studies include “Measures to Innovate Student Affairs Management at the University of Economics – Vietnam National University, Hanoi during the Transition from Year-Based to Credit-Based Training” by Nguyễn Minh Đức (2012); Cao Xuân Tịnh (2012) studied “Student Affairs Management Measures at the University of Architecture, Da Nang”; Phạm Thị Thanh Nga (2012) with the research “Management of Student Affairs at the University of Science and Technology of Hanoi in the Current Period”; Trần Thị Thúy Ngân (2011) studied “Measures for Managing Off-Campus Students of the University of Foreign Languages – Vietnam National University, Hanoi”; and Trần Thị Kim Oanh (2011) with the research topic “Student Affairs Management Measures at the Vietnam-Korea Friendship Information Technology College in the Current Period”. These studies address the challenges in student affairs management arising from both objective and subjective factors and propose solutions such as developing management

capacity for staff, raising awareness of the importance of student affairs among all staff and faculty, improving the school’s regulatory system for student affairs management, building and enhancing the management capacity of student affairs teams, strengthening political and ideological education for students, effectively implementing commendation and discipline policies, ensuring student rights and policies, and enhancing coordination between departments and other organizations within the school. Overall, the above-mentioned studies are specific to each school and have yet to include comprehensive research on student affairs management on a broader scale of schools or regions.

Nguyễn Thị Hoàng Anh (2011) established a theoretical basis for managing moral education for students at pedagogical universities, conducted surveys on the current situation, and proposed a management model and several management measures to improve the quality of moral education for students at pedagogical universities today.

### III. Research Methodology

The study investigates the current state of student affairs (CTSV) in universities through three main content areas: education and propaganda work; student management work; and student support and service work.

Research and survey the current state of student affairs management, including the implementation of the basic functions of student affairs management in the current context.

The survey content focuses on three main issues:

1. The current perception of student affairs management in public universities in the North Central region among survey respondents;
2. The current assessment of student affairs management activities in public universities in the North Central region among survey respondents;
3. The current factors affecting student affairs management activities in public universities in the North Central region.

The study developed a questionnaire based on the Likert scale, with five levels: 1-Strongly disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly agree.

Survey subjects: – Staff, faculty, and students at several public universities in the North Central region, including: Hồng Đức

University, Vinh University, University of Economics Nghe An, Ha Tinh University, Quang Binh University.

**Table 1.** *Information about Survey Respondents*

Ha Tinh University	32	95
Hồng Đức University	28	103
University of Economics Nghe An	20	83
Vinh University	45	216
Quang Binh University	18	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>553</b>

#### **IV. Research Results**

##### **4.1. The Current State of Planning for Student Affairs**

Planning is a fundamental function that lays the groundwork for the effective management of student affairs in universities. It is the premise and foundation for the subsequent management functions and significantly determines the effectiveness of management after the operational process.

Overall, universities have performed well in planning, establishing a foundation for executing subsequent management functions. When developing a plan for student affairs, the university needs to base it on existing conditions to ensure the plan is scientific, methodical, reasonable, and feasible. This plan should be disseminated and implemented across all staff and faculty in the university so that they can understand and follow the plan. 100% of the surveyed staff and faculty agreed that the objectives of student affairs management at their units are aligned with the university's education and training goals.

##### **4.2. The Current State of Organizing Student Affairs**

The function of organizing student affairs in universities includes specific contents presented through Chart 2.3: Staff and Faculty Assessment of the Implementation of Student Affairs Organization. This function aims to utilize the role and strength of the organization to effectively implement the planned student affairs.

According to the survey of 513 students at universities in the North Central region, 487 out of 513 students (95%) rated the university's communication and guidance on student policies as "Timely" and "Very timely." Only

about 5% of the surveyed students had not accessed the university's policies regarding students. Although this percentage is small, it raises the responsibility of student affairs managers in ensuring comprehensive and timely communication of policies to guarantee student rights.

##### **4.3. The Current State of Monitoring and Evaluating Student Affairs**

Monitoring and evaluating student affairs is an important task in student affairs management to enhance the responsibility of staff, faculty, and students; promptly identify existing issues and make necessary adjustments. Monitoring and evaluating student affairs should be conducted regularly and continuously throughout the process with the participation of student affairs managers.

Currently, universities have various forms of periodic or ad hoc student affairs inspections, such as checking the academic year's work plan, the implementation plan of an activity, or thematic inspections. However, the survey results show that the organization of student affairs inspections at universities is not conducted regularly, comprehensively, and systematically. The university needs to develop specific content, criteria, and organize a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of student affairs plans by academic year and by period to assess the performance of individuals, units, and specific departments.

In reality, many universities do not adequately emphasize the importance of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of student affairs. Meanwhile, organizing these activities is considered the foundation to promote and enhance the effectiveness of

student affairs implementation and management in universities today. Developing and implementing monitoring and evaluation have been carried out by universities, but the determination of objectives and specific evaluation criteria has not achieved the desired effectiveness. This content is crucial as it forms the basis for effective and practical monitoring and evaluation and reflects the actual state of student affairs in the university. Only by identifying specific content regarding objectives, methods, and evaluation criteria can the implementation of monitoring and evaluation of student affairs ensure an accurate reflection of the university's work, thereby providing a basis for improving the effectiveness of student affairs.

In monitoring and evaluating the implementation of student affairs, the university needs to ensure full and serious implementation of all specific contents of the monitoring and evaluation function. Each content has a certain significance, so it must be implemented synchronously and consistently to ensure the monitoring and evaluation process is effective and practical rather than merely formal. Overall, the function of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of student affairs has been given attention by universities, but its effectiveness is still lower compared to other management functions. Therefore, universities need to pay more attention to monitoring and evaluating student affairs to ensure an accurate assessment of this area in the university. This will provide suitable adjustments to promote strengths and overcome limitations in organizing and managing student affairs in the university.

#### **4.4. Current State of Student Affairs Management in Public Universities**

Based on a survey of staff and faculty, the number of personnel in the specialized student affairs department, such as the Political and Student Affairs Office, is around 10 people, depending on the scale of the student body and the organizational structure of each university. The Student Support Center has a similar number of staff, but the On-campus Housing Center has more due to the need for 24/7 coverage, including weekends.

Regarding professional qualifications, most staff in these units have at least a uni-

versity degree, with many schools having nearly 100% of their student affairs personnel holding a master's degree or higher.

The student affairs team is trained in various fields and recruited by universities to fill positions in the aforementioned units. Consequently, these staff members often have to self-learn, self-train, and self-improve their student affairs skills to meet practical requirements.

Each university has a model for specialized staff in training units with positions such as Student Affairs Assistants, Academic Advisors, and Training Assistants to directly manage and support students in their studies and personal development in their respective departments. In public universities, home-room teachers are often concurrently subject teachers or academic advisors. The roles of Student Affairs Assistants or Training Assistants are specialized in each training unit to support students in various activities, such as study registration and academic affairs management. The titles, duties, and operations of these roles vary from university to university.

For academic advisors and training assistants, universities often select experienced faculty members who are knowledgeable about regulations and training programs to undertake these roles. Student Affairs Assistants are usually assigned from the Political and Student Affairs Office or recruited specifically to handle administrative management, scholarships, policies, and disciplinary points.

The roles, responsibilities, titles, selection criteria, and policies for these positions differ among universities, depending on their views, practices, and organizational and training scales. Therefore, solutions are needed to standardize and professionalize these roles to effectively support and improve student affairs quality in universities, meeting practical needs.

In summary, the organization and personnel structure for student affairs in public universities in the North Central region are generally adequate and follow the guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Training. However, to meet the requirements of the new context, universities need to pay attention to student affairs management policies, resource investment, and promote suitable

improvement solutions to enhance the quality and effectiveness of student affairs.

### Discussion

Most surveyed universities recognize the importance of student affairs (CTSV) and its management in the administration and overall activities of the institution. The universities have adhered to higher-level regulations and guidelines on student affairs in higher education institutions, established measures to implement student affairs, and issued appropriate student affairs regulations based on actual conditions. The universities have regularly planned student affairs at the beginning of the academic year and each semester. Additionally, specific activities within student affairs are planned and organized according to these plans, ensuring clear division and assignment of responsibilities within the university's organizational structure aligned with the functions, tasks, roles, and positions of each department.

Furthermore, university staff and faculty have acknowledged the central role of student affairs, accurately assessing its impact on the quality and effectiveness of the university's education and training. The universities have also emphasized coordination with government authorities, organizations, businesses, and external stakeholders to effectively implement and manage student affairs. This includes fostering relationships and promoting cooperation with businesses in various areas such as scientific research, technology application and transfer, and several collaborative programs that bring practical benefits to students, such as scholarship sponsorship; internships; sharing professional experiences; contributing to and developing training programs and university governance; hiring graduates; and supporting student entrepreneurship.

The universities have also organized activities to build strong relationships with local government authorities to manage students effectively and perform student affairs generally. They have fully executed the management functions, from planning, organizing, directing, to monitoring and evaluating the implementation of student affairs. Efforts to educate students on revolutionary ideals, ethics, and lifestyle have been strengthened with diverse and rich content and forms. Stu-

dents are increasingly cared for, supported, and provided with favorable conditions for their studies and personal development, allowing them to maximize their potential and be well-prepared for their careers post-graduation.

Public universities have invested in human resources, finance, and facilities, enabling units responsible for student affairs to execute their tasks effectively. They have directed the innovation of content, methods, and implementation of student affairs to align with practical demands, promoting initiative, creativity, and implementing many effective solutions, especially the application of IT and digital transformation in student affairs.

Managing and evaluating students' performance, classifying and rewarding students, as well as granting study encouragement and sponsorship scholarships, and supporting student entrepreneurship, have motivated students to strive not only academically but also in participating in university and social activities, and community service. There has been a focus on developing and improving students' soft skills, foreign languages, and IT skills. Cultural, artistic, sports, and recreational activities have been emphasized and enhanced, positively contributing to the improvement of students' spiritual lives, aesthetic education, physical health, and wellness. Furthermore, school security and order are generally well-maintained. Students' sense of responsibility in adhering to the Party's policies and State laws is increasingly strengthened.

However, despite these achievements, there are still some limitations and shortcomings in student affairs and its management in public universities in the North Central region:

The organization of training and professional development for staff involved in student affairs within universities is still limited. In practice, faculty and staff at some universities are not regularly trained or developed to enhance their skills and capacities.

Task assignments to individuals and departments remain unclear and overlapping.

Universities are still confused and passive in establishing and implementing operation-

al mechanisms and coordination among departments in carrying out student affairs.

The monitoring and evaluation of student affairs and its management are still limited in effectiveness, with no specific content and criteria for regular inspections.

Universities have not adequately addressed feedback from students, and communication mechanisms and dialogue between the university and students have not achieved the desired effectiveness.

Extracurricular activities aimed at skill development are not given adequate attention.

The connection and engagement between the university, families, and society are weak and ineffective.

Student affairs staff lack sufficient theoretical, professional, and operational training. There is no systematic plan for training and developing standards for leaders, managers, academic advisors, and homeroom teachers.

Students' autonomy, responsibility, initiative, and creativity are still limited.

The scope of student affairs activities in some universities is narrow, focusing mainly on administrative management.

Although political, ethical, and lifestyle education and propaganda have been enhanced, they have not been renewed or diversified to fit the current context.

Student support services have been considered but are still limited in effectiveness and do not meet practical needs. The service-oriented approach that views students as "customers" of the educational process is not well-established.

Planning for student affairs is not consistently prioritized by universities, especially strategic planning and forecasting student-related issues, leading to passivity and confusion when dealing with arising student issues.

Inadequate and insufficient facilities and equipment affect the organization of student services activities, such as lack of dormitory accommodation; canteens, playgrounds, and recreational areas; and cultural and sports facilities.

## V. Conclusion

The study on the current state of student affairs management at public universities in the North Central region reveals that despite significant efforts and progress in supporting and managing students, several limitations and challenges still need to be addressed. Issues such as inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent and ineffective support policies, and lack of uniformity in the implementation of extracurricular activities have impacted the quality and effectiveness of student affairs management. This research provides a crucial foundation for educational managers and public universities in the North Central region to refer to and apply in practice. Improving the quality of student affairs management not only enhances educational quality but also plays an important role in developing high-quality human resources for the region and the country.

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