

The Development of Academic Counseling to MPA Student, Stamford International University

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Abstract - This research aims to study: 1) attributes of academic counseling to MPA students, 2) problems in academic counseling to MPA students, and 3) the problem solving process in academic counseling to MPA students by such a qualitative method, the data that have been collected by in depth interviews with key informants, purposively selected from faculties, academic staff and stakeholders of Stamford International University (Phetchaburi Campus).

The research found that: 1) attributes of academic counseling lacked concrete policy, services were still below standard, counselors were understaffed and not specialists and there was a lack of proper management. In addition, counsees did not understand the problem and asked for advice only when problems occurred. Problem defining would rely on discussion and experience while talking together to point out counselee's problems, and providing advice and following up problems, 2) Major problems in academic counseling were counselors having no quality, lack of knowledge and experience, lack of communication skills, and not following on problem solving. Moreover, counsees did not understand problems and often consulted only when problems occurred. Moreover, University's policies were not concrete, and counseling requires the cooperation of many parties, and 3) Problem solving in academic counseling are

concrete policies, counselors need to come from a relevant education background and have competency on counseling, have educational guidance, and develop problem solving skills for students for example providing a Standard Guide for what students need to know and practice, and developing active communication via several channels. It has to create good interactions between counselors and students, including having technical training in counseling to learn and solve problems step by step for both teachers and students. All parties involved have to coordinate and cooperate, and end counseling when problems have been solved.

Keywords - Academic Counseling, Counselor, Counselee, Counseling Process, Counseling Ending

I. INTRODUCTION

College students are mostly 17-25 years old, from late adolescence to early adulthood. They are more engaged with their environment compared to childhood, and undergo long life transitions because of environmental influences from not only parents, friends, and teachers but also mass media. Especially in a global society without borders which give priority to the subject rather than the state of mind, it is likely that students will behave according to social currents rather than deliberate carefully, which causes a variety of problems in learning, life in institutions of

education, society, adaptation, activities, spending, dating, friends, leisure time, and so on. [1]. Problems of students in higher education such as Stamford International University are similar in that students need to have multiple approaches to solve problems such as family and financial and respond to their needs. The resolution of these issues need to be managed [2]. Counseling will help counsees be responsible for themselves, rely on themselves, and use their potential to fully solve their problems [3].

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the attributes of academic counseling to MPA student of Stamford International University.

2. To study the problems of academic counseling to MPA student of Stamford International University.

3. To study the problem solving approach for academic counseling to MPA student of Stamford International University.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

Attributes of academic counseling to MPA students were the lack of a concrete policy for each agency which defined the necessary number of counselors, services still below standard, counselors not being specialists and understaffed, and a lack of proper management. In addition, counsees did not understand problems, or did not attempt to explain which made it difficult to solve problems. Particularly, they often consulted when problems occurred with a lack of precaution. Problem defining relied on discussion and experience while talking together to capture a counselee's problem by observing, acknowledging, counseling, and following up. Questioning should be used to determine the level of understanding in order to ensure that students could eventually solve their own problems.

Major problems were: 1) Counselors had insufficient experience, lacked knowledge and expertise in counseling, including lack of

service mind, 2) Counsees did not understand the problem, or did not dare to explain, and often sought consultation only when problems occurred, 3) Counselors could not communicate with students effectively to see the advantages and disadvantages of what they should and should not do, and lacked continuous communication, 4) Counselors and counsees lacked good relationships, 5) Counselors truly could not define problems, and counsees relayed irrelevant issues, 6) Counselors did not follow up on the implementation of solutions, and the termination of counseling required the cooperation of many parties, and 7) University's policy was not clear in both defining the responsibilities of each agency and the number of counselors needed.

Solutions include: 1) Develop counselors to be knowledgeable and experts in line with the necessary solutions, who have a relevant educational background, 2) Provide educational counseling and develop problem-solving skills for students, 3) Develop counselors' active communication skills and use several channels so that students can see the advantage of using academic counseling services, 4) Create better interaction between counselors and counsees as student and teacher while providing activities in order to build a good relationship, 5) Technical training for both teachers and students in counseling to learn and solve problems step by step, 6) Requiring coordination and cooperation - counseling will end when it can be ensured that students could understand and solve their problems, and 7) University has to make policies clear for academic counseling and provide the necessary resources to carry out the job, especially in regards to personnel and budget.

IV. RESULT DISCUSSION

Regarding the attributes of academic counseling to MPA students, the process depends on University policy and the conditions of problems that arise. The objectives are to mainly solve issues for students who seek consultation with learning,

life in University, society, adaptation, activities, spending, dating, friends, spending leisure time, and other factors affecting education. It focuses on counsees to be responsible for themselves, rely on themselves, and use their potential to fully solve their problems. This corresponds with Somjai Tantiwat's research [4], including concepts from Morrill, and Jean Barry [2, 3].

On the issue of problems in developing academic counseling to MPA students, the results showed that significant problems were the following: 1) Lack of quality counselors, problems with counselors and expertise in counseling, and inability to define problems, including lack of good relationships, and lack of a service mind of good service. This made the practice inefficient and ineffective; corresponding with Somjai Tantiwat [4] who stated that counselors must have basic knowledge about issues such as meaning, objectives, and theory including process etc. Thus, relationship building should cover all processes of counseling from the first meeting until the last, 2) Problems with counsees - students who came to seek consultation did not understand the problem, or did not dare to explain their problem. They often consulted once problems occurred without deliberating carefully which made it difficult to solve problems. This corresponds with Editor's talk [5] which stated that counselee had to understand what was the problem. If there was any confusion caused by emotions and feelings at the time, it would be difficult to determine the exact cause of the problem, and it could not be solved, 3) Problems with Communication Skills - counselors could not communicate with students clearly to see the advantage and disadvantages of what they should and should not do, including lack of continuous communication. This corresponds with Tindall and Gray's statements that counselors need to use communication skills so that counsees could understand their own feelings and themselves more, and willful communication would create a good relationship with both the counselor and counselee [7], 4) Problem on Counseling Process - Counselors did not follow-up on the

implementation of solutions, and the termination of counseling required the cooperation of many parties. Due to lack of cooperation from counselee by not coming by appointment, or counselee's dependencies on conditions, it was difficult to solve problems. [5]. This corresponds with Hackney and Cormier [8] who stated that the stage of monitoring and ending of counseling was difficult. If there was no continuous tracking, the end of counseling was also far away, and 5) Problem on University's Policy - there was no clear policy defining the responsibility of each agency and number of counselors needed. This created a barrier to implementation. This corresponds with Edwards' statements that policy would be practiced to achieve the objective having been defined. It depended on clarity of the policy's objectives [9].

On the issue of solutions to problems on academic counseling to MPA students, the result showed the significant solutions to be the following: 1) Developing counselors to be knowledgeable and experts in line with the needed subjects. The recruitment and selection of personnel has to come from those who have the educational background; corresponding with Egan [10] who stated that personnel who will serve as counselors need to have the information, knowledge, and skills in order to provide counseling, 2) Providing educational counseling and developing problem-solving skills for students, including providing a Standard Guide for what students need to know and practice. This corresponds with Cowie and Wallace's statements that guidance and education is part of the academic counseling model, being an educational assistance by providing knowledge, tutoring and guidance [11], 3) Developing counselors' skills on active communication and using several channels in order for students to see the advantages of using academic counseling services; corresponding with Runjuan Kamphitak [7] who stated that counselors had to be sensitive to get an effective response from the counselee and communicate with willingness in order to create a good relationship, 4) Creating a good interaction between counselors and counsees as student

and teacher, including providing activities in order to build a good relationship. This corresponds with Runjuan Kamphitak [7] who stated that the first phase of counseling was to create a good relationship between counselor and counselee in order to create the basis for counseling by understanding and recognizing feelings via empathy which would help counselor solve problems on the spot, 5) Technical training for both teachers and students in counseling to learn and solve problems step by step, and having coordination and cooperation from all parties involved. This corresponds with Kittawan Khamsom [1] who stated in regards to technical training for counseling that for developing trainees' competencies in counseling skills it composed of feeling reflection, iteration, and conclusion. Therefore, in training personnel to be competent in counseling it requires the important procedure of personnel development [6], and 6) Having to make policy clear in both academic counseling and resources required to carry out the job, especially personnel and budget. This corresponds with Edwards [9] who stated that for policy implementation to be more or less successful according to objectives, it depended on the clarity of the policy objectives that corresponded with Supachai Yavaprabhas [12] who stated that for policy to be accomplished, the agencies had to be ready to perform, or supported by full resources for both personnel and budget.

V. SUGGESTIONS

University has to establish distinct policies in academic counseling for which agencies have to be prepared for in terms of resources to carry out the job, proficient staff, sufficient budget, technology, facilities, and leadership who understand the significance of academic counseling to students.

University should create a model of values by demonstrating positive behaviors that will have an impact on academic counseling service to students and create a culture of coordination with agencies' cooperation. Also organizational culture concerning facilitating

cooperation must be formed by taking co-established policies into consideration.

There should be research on development of academic counseling to students of other universities which are of different contexts to compare results. Otherwise, studies should be done on a specific aspect such as cooperation between teachers and students in counseling process development in order to use the research results as fundamental information to allow academic counseling to be more efficient and effective.

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(Arranged in the order of citation in the same fashion as the case of Footnotes.)

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