

ОБЗОРЫ. РЕЦЕНЗИИ



ОБЗОР СИСТЕМЫ СЛУЖБ ПОДДЕРЖКИ СТУДЕНТОВ В США¹

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A REVIEW OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES IN USA

Abstract. The review deals with the issues of organization of a socio-psychological support service for students. The realization of priority projects aimed to attract foreign students to Russian higher education institutions sets the task to design socio-psychological support models for these students. In view of this, it is important to study the experience of organization of such student support abroad. This review describes the approaches to the organization of student support services in the USA. The article provides a detailed description of the TRIO programs which presuppose discretionary and competitive grants for higher education institutions. Funds are awarded to institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for academic development, assist students with basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their post-secondary education. TRIO projects include: academic tutoring, services in the field of education and counseling to improve the financial and economic literacy of participants, individual counseling for young people who are officially registered as homeless during vacation or live in a foster family.

The review emphasizes the importance of development of the student support system in Russian education institutions. The authors define the notion of “social student support” in the following way: in a broad context, as a unity of positive interventions of the closest social environment, and in a narrow context, as direct assistance in stressful situations. The following kinds of social student support have been analyzed: information support, status support, instrumental support, emotional support and diffuse support. Social support should meet the following demands: to be protected, to be recognized, to belong to a community, and to achieve self-realization. The review explores the mediating effect of support on various levels: on the physiological level (lessening of anxiety); on the level of motivation sphere (perception of other people’s attention; it increases students’ inner motivation);

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on the level of affective sphere (creation of the feeling of security and safety); on the level of cognitive sphere (acquisition of new points of view, alternative context while perceiving stressful situation); on the level of behavior (new ways of problem solving, alternative behavior models, etc.); on the level of personality (encouraging self-respect, provision of emotional support, enhancing the feelings of inner control and competence, critical for inner resources mobilization in stressful situations).

Key words: socio-psychological support; students; psychological counseling; American universities; support services.

Аннотация. Обзор посвящен рассмотрению вопросов организации службы социально-психологической поддержки студентов. Реализация приоритетных проектов по привлечению иностранных студентов в российские вузы ставит задачу разработки моделей социально-психологического сопровождения этих обучающихся. В этой связи важно изучить опыт организации такого сопровождения студентов в других странах. В обзоре представлены подходы к организации служб поддержки студентов в США. Подробно раскрывается программа TRIO, которая предоставляет дискреционные и конкурентные гранты высшим учебным заведениям для достижения студентами академических успехов, оказания им помощи в выполнении основных требований колледжа, поддержку мотивации и психического здоровья студентов для успешного завершения обучения. Проекты программы TRIO включают: академическое наставничество, услуги в области образования и консультирования для улучшения финансовой и экономической грамотности, индивидуальное консультирование для зарегистрированной молодежи, которая во время каникул имеет бездомный статус или проживает в приемной семье.

Подчеркивается важность развития системы поддержки в российских образовательных учреждениях. Раскрывается понятие «социальная поддержка студентов»: в широком контексте, как совокупность положительных влияний ближайшей социальной среды, помогающей успешной интеграции человека в систему социальных взаимоотношений, а также в узком контексте, как прямая помощь в стрессовых ситуациях. Проанализированы виды социальной поддержки студентам: информационная, статусная, инструментальная, эмоциональная, диффузная. Раскрыты потребности, которые удовлетворяет социальная поддержка: быть защищенным, признанным, принадлежать общности, иметь возможности самореализации. Проанализировано опосредующее влияние поддержки на различных уровнях: на физиологическом уровне (уменьшение тревожности); на уровне мотивационной сферы (восприятие внешнего внимания, повышает внутреннюю мотивацию студентов); на уровне аффективной сферы (создание чувства защищенности, безопасности); на уровне когнитивной сферы (усвоение новых точек зрения, альтернативный контекст при восприятии стрессовой ситуации); на уровне поведения (новые способы решения проблем, предоставление альтернативных моделей поведения и т. д.); на личностном уровне (поддержка самоуважения, предоставление эмоциональной опоры, поддержка чувств внутреннего контроля, компетентности, имеющие большое значение для мобилизации внутренних ресурсов в стрессовых ситуациях).

Ключевые слова: социально-психологическая поддержка; студенты; психологическое консультирование; американские университеты; службы поддержки.

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Introduction

The implementation of priority projects to attract foreign students to Russian universities sets the task of developing models of social and psychological support for these students. In this regard, it is important to study the experience of organization of such support for students in other countries. This article provides an overview of student support services in the United States.

Materials and Methods

Background of Student Support Services in Higher Education: Although news headlines in the United States have most recently focused on support systems in place for students who experience trauma from the political divide or campus violence, the statistics show that across the USA, the sharpest focus remains on retention and student success. Depending upon the size, available resources, and the backgrounds of enrolling stu-

dents, there are varied approaches across the nation. What may be shifting is additional emphases on mental health and wellness.

Today, accrediting agencies are requiring higher levels of accountability around outcomes, as are policy makers and citizens who want to understand and demand greater transparency over the value that education delivers. One major change in an institution's response is the historically former attitude of 'weeding out students'. An example of this attitude for readers of a certain age is the memory in one's first year of college when a professor said, "Look to your right. Now look to your left. Next year one of you will not be sitting here." Thanks to the research and influence of Gardner [Gardner, Jewler 1995], Kuh and others [Kuh 2006; 2001], universities in the early nineties began the shift to supporting student success. This is often measured in time-line of graduation, persistence, improved learning outcomes, and even transfer success.

Changing Emphases: As a result of this change, there is now some form of student support services provided by every college and university. The shift, of course, prompts new challenges for collaboration, measurement and sharing results of innovative research. Retention issues have spurred the development of public and private movements like the VSA, (Voluntary System of Accountability) and U-CAN (University and College Accountability Network). States are also moving to develop funding formulas (for their state funded colleges and universities) that are performance based. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 25 states currently have such a formula in place. Other states are watching the results. In addition, student success initiatives are being supported by companies like Ellucian [Ellucian [http](http://www.ellucian.com)], an international provider of software services, located in Fairfax, Virginia, and marketing globally.

Underpinning higher education's focus on student success, of course, are the changing high school graduation rates and population demographics across the United States. Southeast and Western states are seeing significant growth in the number of high school graduates that represent first-generation and under represented college students. This group requires additional academic, financial and social supports in order to graduate. Demographic changes are requir-

ing colleges and universities to make necessary changes to retain both their traditionally enrolled students and the new groups.

What are the core components of most student success and support programs? It depends on size and resources available to a college or university. The US Department of Education's Student Support Services program is known as TRIO [United States Department of Education [http](http://www.ed.gov)]. This program provides discretionary and competitive grants to institutions of higher education. From these grants, institutions can provide opportunities for academic development, assistance with basic college requirements, motivational and mental health support for successful completion.

Historically, TRIO programs evolved from the Upward Bound programs of President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1964 'War on Poverty'. Today, over 790,000 low-income, first generation and students with disabilities are served by over 2,000 programs nationally.

US Department of Education (TRIO) projects include:

- Academic mentoring.
- Education and counseling services to improve financial and economic literacy.
- Individualized counseling for enrolled youth who, on college breaks, return to homeless status or foster care.

A specific institution being served by such grants is Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), Chicago [Northeastern Illinois University [http](http://www.neiu.edu)]. NEIU received in 2010 three TRIO awards. 'Access' for support beginning in high school to prepare for college; 'Achieve' for support to first generation, low-income students; and 'Teach' for those planning a teaching career. NEIU's Student Success Office collaborates with off-campus initiatives such as El Centro, serving the Hispanic population.

Although not heavily endowed as some of the nation's larger, private universities, NEIU is representative of many state universities. The focus is on retention and degree completion with a growing concentration on wellness and mental health. Many of these universities have developed Centers for Student Success to provide additional support for families, help train university faculty to work with adult students on learning strategies, develop peer mentoring and student leadership programs.

The importance of these initiatives is demonstrated through an increase in the number of positions available in Student Affairs departments. This is observable, even with a decrease in higher education funding. There is a need for more support for students who are working adults, balancing work, family and school. Adding to this mix of first generation students are the numbers of 'unprepared' and the not for credit courses they must take that, in turn, lengthens the time to graduation. This has a negative impact on funding that is of major concern for state supported colleges and universities as well as many of the smaller private institutions.

Larger, prestigious, and heavily endowed universities have extensive programs as well. Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts [Harvard University [http](http://www.harvard.edu)] provides extensive student support services that include:

- Support for students experiencing difficulties.
- Ensuring well-being of student body, e. g., disabilities, learning challenges, health and wellness.

These services are further divided and available in Business, Law and Medical areas of the campus. Harvard also provides global support services by providing operational guidance and resources to students, faculty and staff traveling or managing projects abroad.

Northwestern University, Evanston (NU), Illinois [Northwestern University [http](http://www.northwestern.edu)], is another university, well-endowed financially. NU has an umbrella service, SASS (Student Assistance & Support Services). It is considered a starting place in helping students and families navigate the many available resources. The SASS team assists students by coordinating campus and community resources to promote student well-being when dealing with complex issues.

SASS does not provide direct counseling and information shared is not confidential and not protected by HIPPA laws (Health Insurance Portability and Accounting Act) that protect confidentiality. It does, however, direct students to those services where confidentiality is protected by HIPPA laws.

1. Predictors of Success: The ACT (American College Test) [ACT [http](http://www.act.org)] and SAT (Student Aptitude Test) [SAT [http](http://www.collegeboard.org)] are the two most common measures used for college admission in the USA. In many universities, these two measures are used

to identify 'at risk' students and to make families and college counseling programs aware of the opportunities available to help students navigate difficulties through mentoring, confidential psychological counseling, and other resources.

Why do some colleges and universities do better in defining and supporting student success? This is a current challenge for the United States that is prompting further study as 1. Gardner, J. N. and Jewler, A. J. (1995) *Your College Experience: Strategies of Success*, (2nd ed.) Boston: Wadsworth-Thompson Publishing Company.

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We work to bridge the gap between theory and execution. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, students who complete a degree can expect to earn up to 70 per cent more than those who have only a high school diploma. Economic recovery depends in large part on how well universities succeed at delivering education, and finally, the need to build human capital to drive innovation is critical to any nation's global standing.

Summary. Collaboration, pilot programs, and well-defined avenues of communication among departments must be created in all colleges and universities. There must be constant attention to measuring results, building bridges on campus and within the community, and a willingness to change when certain approaches are not working effectively.

An initial review of the most successful approaches current in many USA colleges and universities, both state supported and private, incorporate some version of the following components:

- In order to succeed, resources must be available to support students both academically and socially. Early academic achievement is a predictor of future success. A campus-wide student success initiative that involves inter-department collaboration is an essential component for success.
- Students who engage fully in the life of the college and are more likely to take advantage of advising, peer, and faculty mentoring. Bridge programs that help identify these and community resources are of critical importance in a student's first year. Mental health and wellness services require additional support.
- More research is needed to evaluate current practice and as a foundation to developing a strategic approach to student support services.

Discussion and Conclusions

Considering the above experience of organization of student support services, we believe it possible to be guided by the concept of "social support" when developing a model for accompanying foreign students in Russian universities.

In a broad sense, this concept is considered as a set of positive influences of the nearest social environment that helps the successful integration of a person into the system of social relationships [Raudsepp 1989]. The needs that social support satisfies are as follows: to be protected, recognized, belong to the community, to have opportunities for self-realization. In a narrower sense, social support is called direct assistance in stressful situations. Since in real life stressful and not stressful situations are intertwined with each other, both support models are taken into account. There are various types of social support

based on different classifications of interpersonal needs and social resources. We believe that in the case of support for foreign students the following types are most effective:

- information support – providing information to help solve problems; assistance in analyzing the situation, feedback;
- status support – an expression of approval, acceptance, support for self-esteem; providing information necessary for self-assessment;
- instrumental support – providing practical assistance in achieving the goal or solving problems, overcoming the crisis;
- emotional support – an expression of intimacy, empathy, caring, understanding, confidential style of personal communication;
- immersion support – friendly communication, joint creative activities, as well as creating a sense of solidarity with others; in a stressful situation – distraction from the stressor, etc.

Support is said to be aimed at meeting various needs of students, for example, to be protected, to be recognized, to be part of a community, to have opportunities for self-realization. The mediating influence of support operates at various levels:

- at the physiological level (reduction of anxiety);
- at the level of the motivational sphere (the perception of external attention, care increases the internal motivation of students);
- at the level of the affective sphere (creating a sense of protection, security);
- at the level of the cognitive sphere (the assimilation of new points of view, an alternative context in the perception of a stressful situation);
- at the level of behavior (new ways of solving problems, providing alternative behaviors, etc.);
- on a personal level (supporting self-esteem, providing emotional support, supporting feelings of internal control, competence, which are of great importance for mobilizing domestic resources in stressful situations).

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