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Student Affairs (and services) issue from the past to the future: the case of VMU

Mantas Simanavičius, Director of the Student Affairs Department



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The roots of Student affairs

- **Student affairs** draws its origins on the Oxbridge model and the **Anglo-American concept** that schools stand *in loco parentis* (in place of the parent), creating a greater legal obligation for the university **to govern student life**. In these universities were residential and the tutors lived in the halls with the students. These men were the precursor to student affairs because they typically served as **dean of discipline** and focus on control of the student.
- In the late 19th and early **20th centuries**, as the result of industrial revolution **the number of students increased**, enrollment expanded, student populations began to include women. These changes showed that additional staff members were needed to allow **to respond to the new society issues** and deal with it. That's way many of the early **student deans** came from "**teaching roles in the liberal arts**".
- In the 1990s the **Bologna Process** created a surge in **international students** with greater needs for student support and Student affairs began more important.
- The 1998 World Declaration on Higher Education (WDHE), the 2009 Communiqué and The Incheon Declaration (2015) call for major global efforts to improve the delivery of HE in every country in the world (UNESCO, 1998; UNESCO, 2009). This call was formulated for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was **the important role that HE played in the improvement of the social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental aspects of the global society**. This progress may well occur in different fashions and on different timelines depending on the region or country; however, if any area of the world wants to provide its citizens with an improved quality of life, **it must include the funding of a HE system that will help move that social group toward a better life through teaching/learning, research, advanced employment, and service**.



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Student affairs and services today

- Now Student Affairs philosophy focuses on **the development of the student as a whole**, but has always connected those interested in **the welfare of students with students needing assistance for their personal needs by providing a comprehensive set of out-of-classroom student services and programs.**
- **Student affairs** and services in other terms include student welfare services, social welfare, student development, student life, student personnel, student affairs and/or student services, student support, or student services **is the department or division of services and support for student success** at institutions of higher education to enhance student growth and development.
- **These efforts should be designed to enable and empower students to focus more intensely on their studies and personal growth, both cognitively and emotionally.** They also should **result** in enhanced student **learning outcomes** and, consequentially, **higher retention and throughput (graduation) rates.** Another important rationale for these efforts is that of economics because investments in students and Student Affairs and services provide **healthy returns to national economies**, helping to assure student' success in Higher education and subsequent **contributions to their respective societies.**



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Student affairs and services functions in higher education

- Academic advising and educational counselling
- Accommodations and residence life
- Adult, mature, returning, non-traditional and commuter students
- Alumni relations in student affairs
- Bookstore, academic materials and e-technologies
- Campus activities and student organisations
- Campus safety and security
- Career services and employment
- Chaplaincy and multi-faith services
- Child and family services
- College unions, university centres and student centres
- Communication and social media
- Community service and service learning
- Counselling services
- Dining and catering services
- Disability services
- Financial aid
- First-year experience (FYE)
- Foundational, extended and entry programme provision
- Gender and equity
- Health and wellness services
- HIV and AIDS services
- Information centres
- International student services
- Leadership and education
- LGBTI work in student affairs
- Men's centres
- Research and scholarship
- Senior student affairs practitioner
- Shipboard education
- Sports and recreation
- Student administration, registration and records
- Student affairs assessment and evaluation
- Student conduct standards
- Student employability
- Student engagement
- Student governance
- Student parent programmes
- Student welcome and orientation
- Women centres

From OSA to SAD

- Office of Student Affairs (OSA) was established in the beginning of academic year 1990-1991 to provide services for students and to solve their social problems which are not directly related to the learning process.
- On October 1st, 2015, operational activities of the Office of Student Affairs were complemented by partial functions of Career Centre.
- Student Affairs Department (SAD) started operating on September 1st, 2016, after merging Sports Centre, Arts Centre and Office of Student Affairs.



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Situation of Student Affairs and services at VMU in 2015

Centralised services (under a control of the OSA):

- Information, consultation, redirection
- Accommodation at VMU dormitories
- Services related to disabilities
- Financial aid
- Mentoring programs
- Student organizations (including Student's Representative Council)
- Student payments
- Student ID's and certificates
- Volunteering program on the Campus



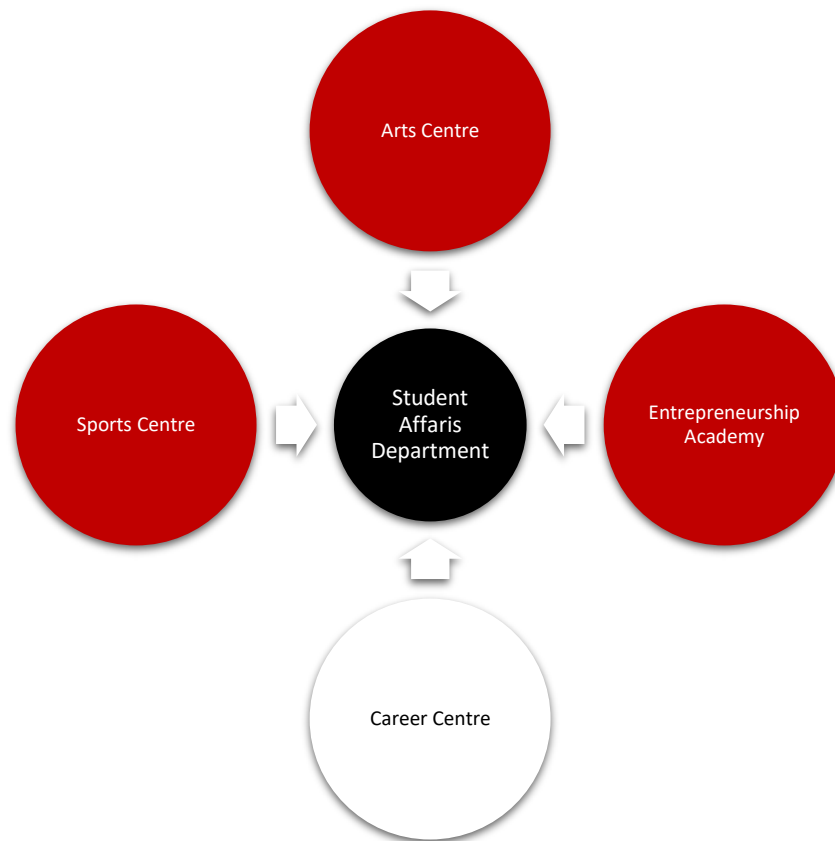
Situation of Student Affairs and services at VMU in 2015

Decentralised services:

- VMU Psychology Clinic, as a subdivision of the Faculty of Social Sciences
- Pastoral group of VMU
- Arts Centre
- Sports Centre
- Career Centre
- VMU Centre for Enterprise Practices
- International Relations Office



Student Affairs and Services: from decentralized to more centralized



Situation of Student Affairs and services at VMU in 2020



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Situation of Student Affairs and services at VMU in 2020

Decentralized services:

- VMU Psychology Clinic, as a subdivision of the Faculty of Social Sciences
- Pastoral group of VMU
- „Academia cum laude“, individual study programme for students, tutored by leading professors of VMU
- International Cooperation Department



Main unit for students' affairs and services at VMU - Student Affairs Department (SAD)

SAD consists of the following subdivisions:

- Student Centre
- Career Centre
- Sports Centre
- Arts Centre
- Entrepreneurship Academy (autonomic subdivision)
- Chamber Orchestra (autonomic subdivision)



Administration of the Student Affairs Department

- Director
- Chief Administrator
- Senior specialist responsible for communication
- Chief coordinator of Disability Affairs
 - VMU Disability specialist

Authorities of subdivisions of the SAD:

- Student Centre and Career Centre – SAD director
- Sport Centre – Head of the Centre
- Arts Centre – Head of the Centre
- Entrepreneurship Academy – Head of the Academy
- Chamber Orchestra – Head of the Orchestra



Student Affairs Department in numbers

- Student Affairs Department authority (4,25 employees, 5 persons)
- Student Centre (3 employees, 3 persons)
- Career Centre (2 employees, 2 persons)
- Sport Centre (12,65 employees, 16 persons)
- Arts Centre (12 employees, 16 persons)
- Entrepreneurship Academy (8,15 employees, 12 persons)
- Chamber orchestra (6,4 employees, 19 persons)

In total: 48,45 - employees, 73 - persons





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Student Centre

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Student Affairs Department



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VMU Student Centre (I): Front desk



S. Daukanto str. 27, room 206 (2nd floor)
Phone no.: (+370 37) 751 175
E-mail: studentas@vdu.lt

- Be redirected to a specific VMU office regarding ones issue
- Get a consultation on Lithuanian Student ID card (LSIC)
- Receive University's certificates
- Get information about student loans, dormitories, scholarships, fees, compensations, etc.
- Get a primal consultation on international exchange programmes
- Get a consultation on studies processes
- Perform finalisation procedure
- Pay your University's fees (if it's necessary)



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Information, consultation and directions

VMU Student Centre (II): Other services



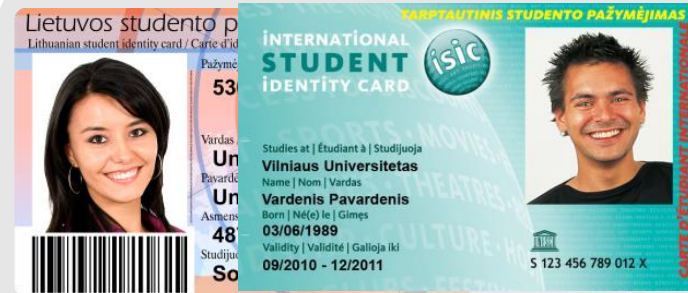
VMU STUDENT CENTRE

S. Daukanto str. 27, room 206 (2nd floor)

Phone no.: (+370 37) 751 175

E-mail: studentas@vdu.lt

- Administration of accommodation services in the dormitories for Students, their or/and University's guests
- Administration of financial support processes for students;
- Implementation of the university's integration programme for disabled students;
- Administration of the production of International Student Identity Cards (ISIC);
- Monitoring of payments, made by students and other individuals who are in debt to the university;
- Information about VMU clubs and organisations
- Mentoring and volunteering programmes



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VMU Career Centre

S. Daukanto g. 27-301 (III floor)
Phone.: (+370 37) 327 983
E-mail: career@vdu.lt
Web: <http://career.vdu.lt>

- CAREER COUNSELING AND EVENTS
- PRACTICAL TRAINING for career planning
- VOLUNTEERING AND MENTORING PROGRAMMES at the university and beyond
- INFORMATION about work, internships and volunteering opportunities
- PERFORMANCE OF RESEARCH and analysis that are related to career monitoring
- Communication with VMU ALUMNI



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Sports Centre

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VMU Sports Centre

Sport Centre organises sport, physical and fitness activities for students of Vytautas Magnus university; disseminates the knowledge of sports and fitness; organises sport competitions and events; promotes sport wins of the university in Lithuania and abroad.



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Studentų g. 11, Akademija, Kaunas dist.

Phone.: (+370 37) 752 251

E-mail: sportocentras@vdu.lt

Web: <http://sportscentre.vdu.lt>





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Sports

Leisure Sport

VMU Sports Centre offers a possibility for students to join following sports activities:

- Basketball
- Aerobics
- Football
- Table tennis
- Badminton
- Physical exercise
- Volleyball

IMPORTANT: All of the activities that are held at the Sports Centre are free of charge.

Competitive Sports

VMU Sports Centre (SAD) sports teams:

Men's:

- Basketball team
- Football team

Women's:

- Volleyball team
- Cheerleaders team

Individual sports



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Competitive Sports

VMU Sports Centre (SAD) **organises the formation of main team-sport teams** (basketball, football, volleyball), **ensures their physical preparation, provides access to competitions in Lithuania and abroad.** Students who want to become a part of University's sport team, must have at least minimal experience of sports.

Athletes of **individual sports** (athletics, swimming, badminton, table tennis, fencing, shooting, etc.) have a possibility to participate and represent the University in sport competitions, organised by Lithuanian Student's Sports association. For the preparation process, **students may use all sport facilities of the University, university may mediate (if needed) to find sport club or coach.**

Athletes of the University, who have reached substantial sport wins, may be **provided a possibility for a free of charge studies, discount for a studies, accommodation of other fees.**



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Arts Centre

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VMU Arts Centre

VMU Arts Centre
V. Čepinskio g. 5, room 404
Tel.no: (8 37) 295 586
E-mail: artscentre@vdu.lt

The university encourages and allows students to realise their artistic and creative potential through the activities that are coordinated by Arts Centre. It unifies initiatives of visual and performing arts together with musical abilities of our students.



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Artistic groups of the Arts Centre (I)

In Kaunas:

- **VMU Solo latino dance group**, is dedicated for advanced girls and girls who want to create shows for contests
- **VMU Entertainment Dance Studio**, is dedicated for pairs and individuals who are interested in taking Salsa, Bachata or Lindyhop lessons or solo latino course for beginners
- **VMU folklore ensemble „Linago“**, which carries on artistic activities through the ethno songs, music and dances
- **VMU Akademic mixed-gender Choir „Vivere Cantus“**, which carries on musical activities



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Artistic groups of the Arts Centre (II)

In Academia, Kaunas district:

- **VMU folk-dance ensemble „Žilvitis“**, which carries on artistic activities through ethnic songs, music and dances
- **VMU theatre „Jovaras“**, which carries on activities related with the acting performances
- **VMU Agricultural Academy folk music chapel „Ūkininkas“**, which carries on activities through the ethno music
- **VMU Agricultural Academy Akademic mixed-gender Choir „Daina“**, which carries on musical activities
- **VMU Agricultural Academy folk-dance ensemble „Sėja“**, which carries on artistic activities through ethnic songs, music and dances

In Vilnius:

- **VMU Education Academy folk-dance ensemble „Šviesa“**, which carries on artistic activities through ethnic songs, music and dances



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Entrepreneurship Academy

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VMU Center for Business Practices
S. Daukanto g. 28 – 206
+370 37 207166
info@verslopraktikos.lt

Entrepreneurship Academy is a special training programme, which is designed to enhance the competences of VMU students in entrepreneurship.

In this programme students will:

- Acquire entrepreneurship competencies
- make solutions for real-life cases
- will develop personal know-how with the help of mentors



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Chamber orchestra

VMU Chamber orchestra
V. Čepinskio g. 5, room 404
Tel.no: (8 37) 295 586

VMU Chamber orchestra was established in 2011 at the Music Academy of Vytautas Magnus University. Since 2017 it is a part of SAD

Now our chamber orchestra is the only one such an orchestra in the Provisional Capital of Lithuania, Kaunas.

Orchestra constantly organises and presents new shows not only in its home city of Kaunas but also represents Lithuania at various well known international festivals.



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Initiatives of Student Affairs Department



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Give your Idea to VMU

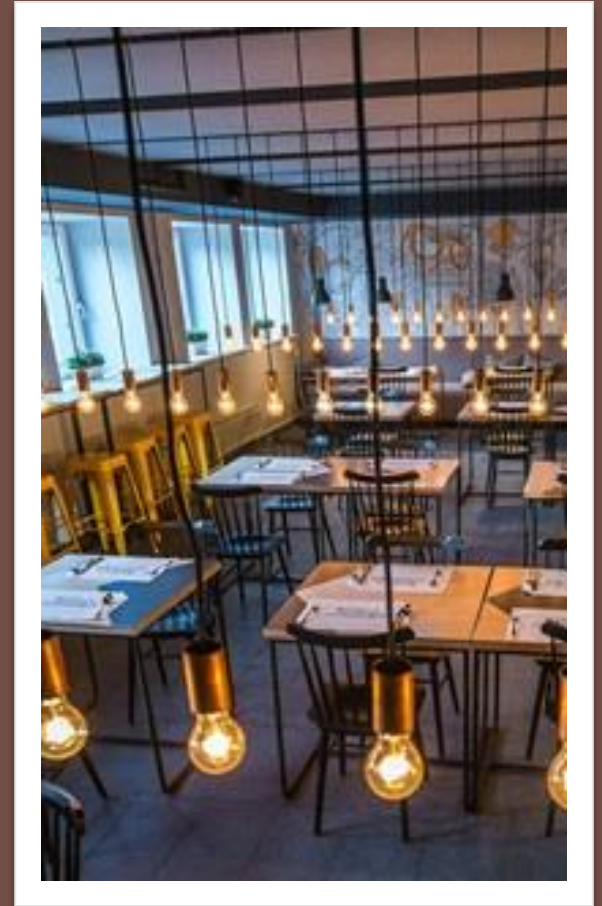
Vytautas Magnus University is proud of its creative and enthusiastic community, whose members – students and academics – are free to offer their own ideas and suggestions. Anyone who cares about the university's mission and has fresh ideas for cultural, scientific, business or other projects is welcome to contribute to the development of the university of their dreams.

This project is an invitation to generate **new ideas at VMU or about VMU** and to employ critical **thinking in order to solve problems and provide rational solutions**.

All ideas and suggestions will never go unnoticed: each of them will be taken into the consideration and student will be properly informed about their future prospects. Student will be able to accomplish his or her goals and even become a coordinator of the implementation process of his or her idea.

VMU appreciates new ideas, so we invite our students to be bold and create the university of their dreams!

Give your Idea for VMU here: <http://www.vdu.lt/idea>





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Equal opportunities and social inclusion

- **Equal access for all members** of University's community to the full range of opportunities offered by the University.
- **VMU** see potentially emerging issues of intercultural and globalised Lithuania as well as University's community itself, therefore **VMU takes actions to create diverse and, in the meantime, community-led and tolerant academic community**. Our aim is:
 - To adapt studying process and environment
 - To develop social and cultural integration
 - To raise awareness and promote commonalities

IMPORTANT: If student became a witness of aggressive behavior, violations of University rules or legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania, we are asking, to not remain indifferent and inform us by an e-mail **anonimas@vdu.lt** (anonymity guaranteed)

VMU Student Affairs and services: future goals



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Future goals of student affairs and services at VMU

- **Ensure equal opportunities and diversity** on the grounds of gender, age, race, religion, language, culture, disability and socio-economic basis
- **Strengthen the emotional and physical well-being** of our students
- **Wider inclusion of disabled students**
- More **engaged foreign students** to participate in **VMU community life**
- **Strengthening student self-government** and their corporate structures
- **Promoting student leadership**
- **Increase students' participation in research**
- **Managing student dropouts** through academic mentoring
- **Promoting student entrepreneurship** through incubation start ups and spin offs etc.
- Create **more comfortable accommodation, catering and mobility** conditions
- **Develop communication** tools to communicate with students more closely
- **Simplify administrative procedures** by virtualizing them and eliminating excessive bureaucracy
- Promote **career mentoring** programs with VMU ALUMNI
- **Increase internship and work or volunteering on campus** possibilities

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What student affairs needs to achieve, and how work can best be organised to do that?

1. **Understanding students' changing demographics and their needs**
2. **Use of integrative and adaptive technologies to the advantage of students and student development**
3. **Preparing students for a changing world of work and diversity**
4. **Providing a high value student experience**
5. **Operationalising students' search for meaning and purpose**



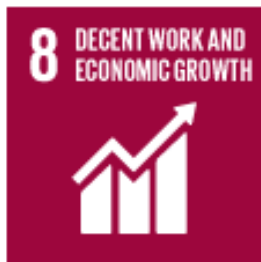
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Student Affairs and Services: long-term tendencies

- **Student-related:** value shifts, decline in traditional student populations, generational differences, decline of student attendance in lecture halls
- **Financial pressure:** recessions, legacy costs for retirement, hiring competition from corporations
- **Workforce-related:** succession planning, gender and promotion, developing future leaders
- **Curriculum-related:** being flexible, competency-based and use of life experience, meeting industry needs
- **Competition for students**
- **Technology**
- **Adapting to financial challenges**
- **Demographic changes**
- **Preparing students for a changing world**



Thank you



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