

PERSONNEL SERVICES AND THE MARRIED STUDENT
by Daniel M. Newland

Married students constitute a significant percentage of those enrolled in higher education today; approximately 30 per cent of the total college population. This paper will attempt to analyze the problems that face these married college students on the campus and to synthesize and add to those recommendations for remedying this problem that appear in the literature. Three areas of student personnel work will be considered here as they relate to married students: activities, counseling, and financial aids.

Extent of participation by married students in college activities has been the focus of considerable attention by investigators. Studies indicate that married students participate in activities to a lesser extent than do unmarried students.

Three reasons may be given for the rejection of campus activities by married students: (1) the irrelevance of most campus activities (2) finances, and (3) lack of time. Most campus activities are irrelevant to the needs of married students as they seem to revolve around the important factor of seeing, meeting, or accompanying someone of the opposite sex (Dressel, 1963). Although this may be important for single students who are, perhaps, searching for a marriage partner, it is a meaningless endeavor for students who have already met and married their life partner.

It must not be assumed, however, that because the married student rejects college-sponsored activities that he is left without a need to engage in recreational activities. Research reveals that married students' recreational participation centers upon activities with couples of similar status and is of an informal, inexpensive nature.

Dressel (1965) suggests that it is the responsibility of the student personnel staff to attack this problem by surveying the situation on the campus, allocating funds and staff for a separate activity program for married students, initiating the program at the grassroots level, and identifying the most likely sources of participants and workers.

The importance of accurately surveying the married students on the personnel worker's particular campus in order to ascertain their interests can not be overemphasized. The married student and his needs differ considerably from campus to campus, and the determination of what these needs are must be the starting point of any effective program.

The appointment of a professional personnel worker to direct a separate activity program assures that the married students' activity program will not "get lost in the shuffle" or be a second-class program. It would be hoped that this professional personnel worker would have a strong background in family and child development.

OF NOTE

The Indiana University School of Education has published a relatively complete bibliography for research in Higher Education. Compiled by Kent D. Beeler, the bibliography includes topic, title, publishing date, hardcover and paperback price, how to obtain copies, brief description, and major content areas. (Dr. Beeler earned his doctorate from I.U. and is presently assistant professor of Education at Eastern Michigan University.) References for all the student services are included. The bibliography is contained in Vol. 47 No. 1, January, 1971 edition of VIEWPOINTS, the Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University. VIEWPOINTS is available from the Publications Office, Room 248 School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47401. Make checks for \$1.50 payable to: School of Education
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Initiating social activities at the grassroots level - for instance in housing units - would provide the informal and inexpensive activities most married students desire and for some, could provide a setting adaptable to cooperative child care.

The most likely participants and workers, are the non-working spouses who have the time and energy to make such programs work.

Non-working student wives, often tied to the living unit by lack of money and/or small children, should also be the focus of some kind of activity program. Seminar/conversation sessions dealing with topics of interest to those who participate could be scheduled in married housing units to provide daily person-to-person contacts. Ancillary child care would not only free mothers who could not participate otherwise but would provide the first step toward pre-school educational experiences for their children. The student personnel worker would be responsible for securing space, arranging for a staff (probably consisting of graduate assistants majoring in family and child development), and providing the initial organization and impetus for the program.

Wives' auxiliaries, providing social outlets for married students' wives and orienting them toward their husbands' future professions, could also be developed by the personnel worker. His task would be to identify leaders and work with them in the initial stages of planning.

Counseling provides another area in which the needs of the married student are not fully met. Given the unique situation of the married student, and the problems that arise from it, a special counseling program should be initiated to meet the needs of married students. Only a professional personnel worker trained in marital and family problems should counsel in such a program. He must be in tune with the needs of both the married student and his spouse.

Many married students, being detached from the campus and its facilities, are not aware of where they may obtain counseling services. It should be the responsibility of the personnel worker to develop an effective means of explaining the counseling services offered to the married students.

Proximity should be of major importance in any counseling program, as many individuals tend to "live with" a problem if the source of help is not readily available. In an attempt to provide this proximity, counseling should be established, when possible, in married student housing.

As many of the problems which concern married students arise "after hours", a counselor should be "on call" for emergency situations which can not wait until morning.

Printed materials containing some of the common problems of married students on the campus and relating possible solutions to

these problems could be assembled and distributed by the personnel worker as another possible solution to the married students' special counseling needs.

The last area of concern, financial aids, merits special attention as the need for financial aid is felt by most married students. Research supports the conclusion that finances are the major source of problems for married students.

Three conditions should be kept in mind when considering the financial plight of the married student: (1) Some wives of married students are sacrificing their own education in order that their husbands can earn a degree (2) Many married male students must also work a substantial number of hours a week in order to remain in school, and (3) Many male students lose parental financing of their education when they marry.

Provisions should be made for both husband and wife to continue their education together. A novel solution to this problem was described by King and Fess (1969) and was in operation at Kansas State University. Sponsored by local merchants and initiated by the Associated Married Students, this program provides money for tuition, fees, and child care services for student wives who wish to continue their education.

Reduced rates for husband-wife teams on tuition and other expenses offers another possible solution to this problem. Surely an emergency loan program, along with more scholarships, fellowships and low interest loans would also help meet the needs of married students. Basic to these programs would be the development and dissemination of materials concerning financial aid services which are available to married students.

Guided by these recommendations and others, the skilled personnel worker can prove an effective force in the total development of married students.

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THE OMBUDSMAN: WHO IS HE?
by Charlie Nelms

Monroe K. Rowland, quoted in the April 1970 issue of the NASPA Journal, views the ombudsman on the college campus as "the complaint taker who cuts red tape and hopefully gets results, or at least finds answers for unhappy citizens. His tools are prestige, publicity, persuasion and criticism in addition to his investigative powers. However. . . the very fact that the ombudsman is hired, because of problems in the system and to change the system, he is a threat." Rowland presents a relatively accurate picture of the ombudsman. There are, however, several other factors involved.

The ombudsman is sometimes expected to be too many things to too many people. He is incorrectly conceived by most people. Students see him as the administration's "spy" or "agent"; college officials who disagree with his appointment often view him as being student oriented or a "yes man" for the students; college alumni view him as one more person on the already too large college staff. In times of campus disruptions all these perceptions are common among the members of the college community.

The ombudsman in my personal view is an individual working for the benefit of the total university community even if it means taking a "student stand" at one point and the "administration's stand" at another. He is a facilitator helping students to gain the most from the university and its offerings. He aids the university by becoming aware of the students concerns and opinions in order that the services of the university can be constantly improved and updated to meet the needs and desires of an ever-changing heterogeneous student population.

Communication and open-mindedness are by far two of the most valuable tools for success. The ombudsman is very much like a salesman--his products are his ideas. If he cannot sell his ideas to people who are willing to develop and implement them then he fails. Since the ombudsman does not possess any "real power" and since he does not have charge of a staff whereby he can implement his own ideas, he must rely heavily upon those responsible for his appointment for support. Since rapport is important to his work a constant respect for his colleagues and the students must be maintained at all times even though ideologies may differ.

The ombudsman has to be a person who meets the approval of all segments of the college community - students, faculty and administration--because much of his effectiveness depends on how others see him. After serving as an ombudsman for a year and a half I have come to the conclusion that "valid communication" with students and with colleagues is the most effective tool for bringing about the desired change. The ombudsman must be versatile, he must be able to speak, interpret and understand the students' and administrators' language. The ombudsman cannot afford to stay glued to his desk