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Meaghan Lynch

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Student Involvement: A Comparative Study of Eastern Michigan University and Oxford-Brookes University

Abstract
Through a comparative analysis of Eastern Michigan University and Oxford-Brookes University, it has been determined that despite being similar in size and reputability, student organizations look significantly different. The researcher determined a strong first step in discussing why the two universities have such differing approaches to student involvement would be to investigate the value found in extra-curricular participation for students that occur in both countries. The researcher explored this difference and discusses what each institution could learn from the other and continue to grow and develop their extracurricular programs.

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Linda Foran, Ph.D.

Second Advisor
Cory Hamilton

Third Advisor
Ronald Flowers

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STUDENT INVOLVEMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY AND OXFORD-BROOKES UNIVERSITY

By

Meaghan Lynch

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the Eastern Michigan University The Honors College in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation with Honors in Leadership and Counseling

Approved at Ypsilanti, Michigan, on this date, April 2, 2018

Supervising Instructor: Linda Foran, Ph.D.

Honors Advisor:

Department Head:

Honors Director:
Student Involvement: Comparative Study of

Oxford-Brookes University & Eastern Michigan University

Through a comparative analysis of Eastern Michigan University and Oxford-Brookes University, it has been determined that despite being similar in size and reputability, student organizations look significantly different. The researcher determined a strong first step in discussing why the two universities have such differing approaches to student involvement would be to investigate the value found in extra-curricular participation for students that occur in both countries. The researcher explored this difference and discusses what each institution could learn from the other and continue to grow and develop their extracurricular programs.
Introduction

The purpose of this project was to examine extracurricular campus involvement at Eastern Michigan University and Oxford-Brookes University: comparing and contrasting the strengths and areas of growth at each school in terms of student involvement in organizations. This project was based on academic research as well as first-hand experience and observation made by the researcher.

The researcher was a full-time undergraduate student at Eastern Michigan University, located in the United States, from 2014-2018. She resided in Oxford, England, for five months between January 2017 and June 2017. The researcher attended Oxford-Brookes University as an undergraduate exchange student in International Affairs and Politics. She was involved on campus; taking a full course load, living with British students, participating in events put on by the Brookes Union and the International Student Advice Team, as well as joining the Brookes show choir, Fortune Singers.

On paper, the two institutions of higher education are comparable for a number of reasons. Both Oxford-Brookes and Eastern Michigan are considered large-scale universities, though currently both remain under 25,000 students (True Facts, 2018), (Our Students, 2018). Both schools are located in close proximity to widely regarded prestigious universities, the University of Oxford and the University of Michigan, respectively. Both universities began as small, specialized colleges in the mid 19th century: Oxford-Brookes as the Oxford School of Art in 1865 (History, 2018) and Eastern Michigan as Michigan State Normal College in 1849 (About, 2018). Both universities have average per year tuition and fees that are consistent with the national averages for a public institution in their respective country; approximately $9,970 in the United
States with Eastern Michigan's rates at approximately $9,430 and £9,250 ($12,854) in the United Kingdom with fees at Oxford-Brookes exactly matching this figure (Financial Aid - Cost of Attendance, 2018), (Undergraduate Tuition Fees, 2018), (Condition of Education, 2017), (Playdon, 2018)

With these similarities taken into consideration, the researcher witnessed observable differences between the way student involvement was organized, perceived, and engaged in. One such factor was student organizations. Eastern Michigan had 291 student clubs and organizations and Oxford-Brookes had 107. Eastern Michigan, for having only a few thousand more students than Brookes, had nearly three times the amount of student organizations as Brookes. The types of involvement available were drastically different, as well.

As with most American universities, Eastern Michigan had an active Greek Life that included chapters from the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the Multicultural Greek Council, the College Panhellenic Council, and the Inter-fraternity Council, for a total of 29 organizations (Campus Life, 2018). Another example was that Eastern Michigan was a member of the Mid-American Conference (MAC), a part of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division One conference that included 17 varsity sports (Official Website of Eastern Michigan Athletics, 2018).

Oxford-Brookes, with a wealth of pre-professional organizations and cultural and social organizations, did not have a Greek Life. They had 35 athletic teams where students could walk-on to participate as a team member, and scholarships could be offered (Running and Athletics, 2018), though not nearly to the degree of Eastern Michigan.
The researcher looked at past comparisons in programing to determine why there were differences in opportunities for students on each campus. Ideas included culture or economic differences, economic restraints for programing, and/or student interest in extra-curricular opportunities on campus. The researcher determined a strong first step would be to investigate the value found in extra-curricular participation for students, such as leadership development, advancement of transferable skills valuable to employers, student self-efficacy, and increased satisfaction with the collegiate experience.

Literature Review

For the purposes of this study, the researcher explored a sample of the benefits found with extracurricular involvement for both American and British students. The most notable examples of benefits from involvement in student organizations that both American and British students experienced were advancement of skills that were valuable to employers, relevance of "soft" and transferable skills, as well as increases in overall satisfaction with the college experience.

In both countries, involvement provided students with enhanced employability in a number of ways. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), involvement taught students various "soft skills" that employers were seeking in potential employees such as teamwork, interpersonal skills, and public speaking. Many of these job-relevant skills were gained in non-instructional settings where students were given the opportunity to apply their knowledge, making types of involvement such as being elected to student leadership positions, participating in activities with a sorority or fraternity, or doing volunteer work with an organization ideal for development.
These soft skills indicated a well-roundedness to a student's resume when looking to enter the job market, as well as opportunities to celebrate their talents outside of academic achievement, potentially giving them an advantage over other students (Blasko, 2002). Interestingly, not only did these skills make students more competitive applicants for jobs, but they actually made students more successful in their job performance (Stuart, 2009).

Extracurricular involvement was also an important source of information for employers in the United Kingdom as described by Stuart, Lido, Morgan, Solomon, and May in "The Impact of Engagement With Extracurricular Activities on the Student Experience and Graduate Outcomes for Widening Participation Populations" (2011). Employers surveyed said that though they have a requirement of having a degree, they conceded that there was little to no variation in the level of degree attainment reported by most applicants, meaning the grades achieved did not vary significantly. Therefore, extracurricular involvement became an integral factor when deciding which applicants to consider. Stuart et al. also noted that according to employers surveyed, being involved in organizations was particularly important to demonstrate long-term commitment, some level of responsibility or leadership, and a form of recognition or attainment; each of these factors could potentially distinguish one candidate from another (2011).

George Kuh (1995) called extracurricular involvement "the other curriculum" in his study of the same name. Employability was relevant to students searching for jobs after graduation because of certain transferable skills that one may learn in the classroom, but use the "real world laboratory" to practice. In other words, extracurricular involvement provided opportunities for "synthesizing and integrating material presented in the formal academic program" (p. 145).
According to Archer and Davison in their 2013 study, "'It's Just Like an Extra String to Your Bow: Exploring Higher Education Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Extracurricular Activity and Employability," employers found qualities such as communication skills, integrity, and confidence particularly valuable when recruiting graduates for employment (2013). They acknowledged that these skills could come from involvement in extracurricular organizations, though they emphasized that the type of involvement was important (2013). They made the argument for high-quality involvement, or activities that were perceived to be important as well as perceived as being positive and that allowed students to connect to others. Students with experience participating in high-quality involvement and more organized activities were more likely to continue to pursue their education and grow their skill set than students involved with other things (2013).

Archer and Davison also cited Tchibozo (2007) when they said that extracurricular involvement could have both positive and negative career outcomes depending on the type and level of involvement: strategic involvement was critical. Tchibozo also supported the argument that those who weren't involved in college were more likely to have lower occupational statuses than those who were (2007).

Another way that employability was increased for students involved extracurricularly due to the social and professional networks it allowed them to develop. Stuart et al., in the aforementioned 2011 study, interviewed alumni from 4-year colleges and universities in the UK and found that every participant in their sample indicated that the networks developed as a result of their involvement in student organizations helped them in their professional roles, either directly or indirectly.
Interestingly, the social support that came with these networking connections remained equally important as the access to job opportunities because having a support system of friends allowed these former students to do their job more effectively due to the feeling of social support. This concept of social support was also cited by Archer and Davison (2013) as being critical to the transition from high school to university as well as the transition from university to employment.

Though the prospect of employability and preparing oneself for the job market were both integrally important to the educational landscape in both countries, researchers suggested that the relationship between educational outcomes and economic prosperity were more deeply culturally linked for English students (Quinlan, 2011), (Watson, 2010), (Ertl and Wright, 2008). As Dr. Kathleen M. Quinlan pointed out in her report "Developing the Whole Student: Leading Higher Education Initiatives That Integrate Mind and Heart," universities in the UK were under immense pressure to demonstrate their worth to students as tuition increased (Quinlan, 2011). She made the argument that this type of justification was typically sought in the form of economic measures such as increased employability of graduates as a "return on their investment" (p. 5).

With this, she found that there was "relatively little discourse in the UK about the ways that higher education can support not only intellectual development, but the development of the whole student" (p. 5). This holistic development was frequently being overlooked and "economic discourse" was instead the focus of many institutions. This was disheartening for academics and for those passionate about the student experience.

What was also interesting was that much of the discourse surrounding education did not consider extracurricular involvement as the way to encourage holistic development. Ertl and
Write (2008) recommended that departments and universities promote curriculum development that fosters a democratic learning environment in addition to collaborative, discussion-based models of learning as a means of holistic development.

Rose Watson, in her article "A Rationale for the Development of an Extracurricular Employability Award at a British University," also addressed this concept (2011). To develop students and their employability skills, many universities had "moved towards models of embedding employability skills throughout the curriculum" (p. 372).

Bunce, Baird, and Jones (2016) drew attention to this fact when they cited the Dearing Report in their 2016 article, "The Student-as-Consumer Approach in Higher Education and its Effects on Academic Performance." The Dearing Report (1997) was a series of documents outlining the future of higher education in the United Kingdom. It was the document that first suggested that university education no longer be fully subsidized by the British government and thus introduced tuition and fees for British and English students (1997).

The government identified students as "customers" in the report, and the Bunce et al. article identified this as a motivation for the marketization of education and the increase in economic motivations and pressure to conform to commercial demands of higher education institutions (2016). They called this the Student As Consumer (SAC) approach. This was argued to foster a culture whereby students would seek merely to graduate with a degree rather than 'be learners' (Molesworth, Nixon, and Scullion, 2009), (Bunce et al., 2016). Additionally, students appeared to be more focused on employability and job prospects than they had in previous years and in previous studies, thus guiding the discourse on marketization and employability as a result of a college education (Bunche et al., 2016).
Bandura defined self-efficacy as a person's self-evaluation of their ability to perform a task or complete a behavior (1997). Pascarella (1970) argued that student involvement tended to increase students' self-efficacy with regard to entering the work force. In *How College Affects Students*, a groundbreaking assessment of various factors that impact American students through their college years, Pascarella reported that the data showed that a wide array of non-classroom interactions with peers had a positive impact on a sample of college students' self reported increases in preparedness for a career after college (Pascarella 1970).

In "College Student Retention: An Exploration of the Relationship Between Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Purpose in Life Among College Students," DeWitz, Woolsey, & Walsh also argued the meaning that was created with involvement provided students the ability to believe that they would transition effectively (2009).

In *College Student Self-Efficacy Research Studies* by Terence Hicks and Michael McFrazier (2014), they emphasized the importance of social self-efficacy, or an individual's belief that they would successfully develop friendships. Social self-efficacy was encouraged by a number of factors, such as social support and social investment. Social self-efficacy was particularly important because it correlated with college adjustment. Involvement with student organizations was an important source of creating social support and social investment (Stuart et. al, 2011).

"Possible selves" is a theory of psychology that refers to the cognitive sense of one's ideal self, and the idea of who one will become (Bak, 2015). Jacqueline Stevenson's study, "Students Orientating Themselves Towards the Future Through Extracurricular Activity" (2011) explored this idea through the lens of "possible selves" literature as it applied to a sample of British university students.
Students that Stevenson categorized as being highly developed in terms of possible selves (those who possessed advanced career identities and a more general orientation towards employability) participated in a wide range of extracurricular involvement and were actively using it to achieve their future goals or "next possible self," that is, a self that was employed. These students may have been predisposed to possessing career and future-oriented qualities due to factors such as belonging to the middle class and thus not needing to spend significant time working while in school or belonging to families of high achievers and having such an orientation "drilled" into them from a young age, as described by one participant of the study (p. 236).

Regardless of such a predisposition, Stevenson noted that involvement with student organizations benefited those students by allowing them to feel confident about their future orientation. Additionally, all highly developed participants of her study that were involved in extracurricular activities during their undergraduate years described themselves as feeling prepared for the future.

Development of leadership skills was another oft-cited benefit of student involvement, both from researchers and from students in self-reported interviews. Notably, in Astin's study *What Matters in College?* (1993), students who interacted most frequently with peers had a marginally increased likelihood of self-identifying as leaders. This self-perception was significant to leadership development in and of itself, but it was also supported by clear increases in acquiring a set of both task and behavior skills.

These skills, according to researchers, were acknowledged to be important for leadership, planning, organizing, decision making, and public speaking, as well as social/interpersonal competence, cultural competence, management, and conflict resolution (Kuh, 1995), (Baxter-Magol-
It should be noted that development of these skills was highly correlated with being a member of a social sorority or fraternity and being elected to a student office according to Baxter-Magolda. From this analysis emerged a consistent theme of why involvement was important to leadership development. Involvement allowed for opportunities to apply skills and knowledge that one learned in the classroom to "real-life" settings.

Kuh's "The Other Curriculum" from 1995 argued that the interpersonal competence that came with extracurricular involvement and peer-to-peer interactions led to leadership development. Skills including self-awareness, social competence, and autonomy were relevant. Additionally, the greatest number of students surveyed said that some aspect of their personal development was the direct result of leadership responsibilities. Kuh called student involvement the "other curriculum," and found that a majority of students he surveyed self-reported that reflective thought and application of knowledge (topics that Koh labeled as markers of Cognitive Complexity) were marginally enhanced by their opportunities for involvement on campus.

Baxter-Magdola, in her 1992 book, *Knowing and Reasoning in College*, also provided evidence to suggest that extracurricular involvement with organizations promoted leadership development in students. In her study, she collected student testimonials that provided insight into their experiences. Students outlined the skills that they gained as leaders in their organizations, such as talking to people, fundraising, working in groups, managing time, and thinking on one's feet. All of these skills were incredibly valuable for students, and fell within the category of "soft" skills that employers valued. These skills also contributed to student self-confidence and self-efficacy.
Baxter-Magdola also suggested that cognitive skills, not just leadership skills, developed with extracurricular involvement. These competencies, such as epistemological sophistication and reasoning skills, allowed students to become more advanced learners within the classroom due to the practice they got outside of the classroom. The study focused on students as "knowers" in their curricular and co-curricular experiences and grounding of their learning in such experiences, especially by constructing meaning with others. This was often done through peer-to-peer interaction that occurred with extracurricular involvement.

In her study, Baxter-Magdola identified four ways of "knowing" that students might experience and make meaning from: absolute knowing, transitional knowing, independent knowing, and contextual knowing. She addressed the benefits of various co-curricular options for each type of knowing, with involvement in student organizations the only option providing benefits across all categories of knowing.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) also noted that increased cognitive capacity, academic development, and the related skills were explored as factors associated with student organizations. The case was made for the cognitive and academic benefits of involvement, and went so far as to suggest "...that one's peers may be an influence that is equal to, if not greater than, one's formal classroom experience" (p. 187). The multitude of skills acquired through peer-to-peer interaction involved in student organizations, in many cases, extended and reinforced what happened in the classroom. Further, it appeared to aid in the development of knowledge acquisition and academic skills such as critical thinking, analytical skills, and problem solving (Pascarella 121, Astin 1993).
George Kuh (1995) also made the argument for enhanced academic experiences due to involvement in student organizations. Kuh suggested this development was due to psychosocial development. Students involved in student organizations on campus were able to develop in areas of establishing their purpose, planning their career, and being culturally participative. Additionally, all students involved with Kuh's longitudinal study reported personally meaningful changes in one or more areas that they considered to be important outcomes of attending college because of their out-of-the-classroom experiences.

John Foubert and Lauren Grainger's 2006 study, "Effects of Involvement in Clubs and Organizations on the Psychosocial Development of First-Year and Senior College Students," addressed these areas of growth, as well. According to the sample of students interviewed, more involved participants reported greater development in moving through autonomy toward interdependence and establishing and clarifying purpose. Additionally, holding a leadership position or accepting additional responsibilities was correlated with gains in interpersonal competence, cognitive complexity, and humanitarianism.

In "What Matters in College?" by Alexander Astin (1993), it was argued that the student-to-student interaction had a positive correlation with college satisfaction. In his study, he suggested that cultivating a social life by participating in student organizations could influence how students perceived their college experience. Astin also noted that the amount of time spent with student organizations was associated with overall satisfaction; in other words, students who spent more time in student organizations were typically more satisfied (1993).

Abrahamowicz explored similar findings in his 1988 study, "College Involvement, Perceptions, and Satisfaction: A Study of Membership in Student Organizations," that students who
were involved in student organizations had more positive views of their educational institution as a whole and were more satisfied with their overall experience. When asked about how well they were enjoying college, a majority of students in the Abrhamowicz study that were involved with student organizations (65%) said that they were enthusiastic about college. This compared to about 17% of students, that weren't involved in student organizations, feeling enthusiastic.

This satisfaction and enthusiasm was important, as noted in Laurie A. Schreiner's 2009 study "Linking Satisfaction and Retention." As the title suggests, her article provided support for the argument that student satisfaction could be used to predict student retention. According to the study, high scores on a satisfaction scale increased the student's odds of persisting in college up to 80%.

It was argued in the "Developing the Whole Student: Leading Higher Education Initiatives That Integrate Mind and Heart" report that there was a slim margin of research that studied British students holistically (2011). From this statement, it could be argued that certain benefits appear to only apply to American students involved on college campuses due to a lack of research on this topic at British universities. Most of the research on British universities and cognitive or personal development revolved around behaviors that were cultivated in the classroom; further, the underlying assumption was that the answers lie in modifying curricular programs and university leadership, which was reflected in Quinlan's report (2011).

Limitations

It should be acknowledged that the discussions and observations discussed in this study were specific to Eastern Michigan University and Oxford-Brookes University, and thus cannot be
generalized to other educational institutions. The researcher realizes that the observations made, observations that inspired this project, were influenced by personal experience. The researcher had the experience of an international student at Oxford-Brookes, and thus cannot speak to the perspective of a domestic British student.

Additionally, the researcher was only in attendance at Oxford-Brookes for a four-month term. There were ample opportunities to get involved, and the researcher participated fully in orientation, activities organized by the International Student Advice Time, and joined a society during her time on campus. However, involvement was limited due to the time constraint of the exchange. Finally, a limitation on the project was the lack of research on the benefits of holistic development for British students, as supported by Quinlan’s research (2011).

Potential Design

Though culture and geography were identifiable differences between Oxford-Brookes and Eastern Michigan, addressing what aspects of culture and geography have created such a difference in student involvement was a question that was unable to be answered due to time constraints and a lack of research on the subject. Thus, the researcher modified her project to instead focus on the tangible potential areas of growth to enhance involvement opportunities to meet student needs at both universities. Not only would this benefit students, but this was a strong first step to mitigate the problem of a lack of research by providing additional data to future researchers.

Both schools produce successful students: within six months of graduation, 92.3% of Brookes students were able to find work or further study (HESA, 2017); within a year, 96% of
graduates from Eastern Michigan were employed in their field of choice (Larcom, 2016). Given that both schools retain students and produce employable graduates, the researcher could argue that each school is meeting student needs extracurricularly.

Despite similarities and despite successes, the two institutions offer drastically different opportunities for student involvement. The purpose of this study shifted to explore this difference and discuss what each institution could learn from such differences and continue to grow and develop their extracurricular programs.

As noted by researchers in the literature review, student involvement is generally a positive experience for students. With this knowledge, the researcher highly recommends the development of additional opportunities at Oxford-Brookes and at Eastern Michigan beyond the opportunities currently being provided. These additions would allow both institutions to continually increase the quality of the university experience and promote the development of students. The following two opportunities have been considered viable solutions to the concern determined by the researcher.

**Recommendation for Oxford-Brookes University**

The researcher suggests for Oxford-Brookes to develop a new program within the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs that emphasizes holistic development through involvement on campus, especially through student organizations. This program would be housed within Student Central, and the researcher proposes calling this the Holistic Student Development Team. Figure 1 represents the organizational structure for the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs. Figure 2 represents a description of the team and where the description would be placed on the Academic and Student Affairs Website.
Creating the proposed Holistic Student Development Team position and team is justified as it contributes to the work being completed by Academic and Student Affairs as outlined in their Strategic Vision. The Strategic Vision is represented in Figure 3.

The Strategic Vision has four parts. The first part outlines the need to ensure the upholding of professional standards and maintaining a level of connectedness between national international communities of practice. The Holistic Student Development Team would facilitate the continued usage of the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Quality Assurance Agency Assessment (QAA) as well as create a new in-house process to track student satisfaction and student involvement specifically at Oxford-Brookes. Additionally, the current delegation of student representatives that Oxford-Brookes sends to the NUS National Conference each year to collaborate and discuss with other Student Unions from around the United Kingdom provides ample opportunities for students and the Brookes Union to feel connected in Higher Education. The Holistic Student Development team would oversee and expand the current delegation.
### What we do

**Student Central Advice Team**
The front-desk team who will deal with the majority of enquiries face to face, via the telephone and email.

**International Student Advice Team**
Support for international students on a range of issues including pastoral issues and immigration requirements; ensuring that the University is compliant with immigration legislation.

**Research Degrees Team**
Support for all matters related to the University’s research degree programmes and students from enrolment to conferment of the degree; support for supervisors and staff associated with the programmes, training, policy, regulations, student data and statutory returns, Research Degree Sub-Committee including both HESS and S&T committees and support for the Graduate College.

**Taught Programmes Team**
Rules, regulations and main examination committees for the UMP; the management of UMP data by the Student Records Team; Programme Support, also comprising Financial Aid and Federal Loans; and Student Disputes - appeals, complaints and conduct.

**Course and Student Administration Team**
Responsible for managing and maintaining all University course information, PIP support and development, managing non UMP student information and information for students with 'registered' status.

**Statutory Returns**
Responsible for the compilation and provision of statutory student and statistical returns to a range of external agencies, including but not limited to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE).

**Holistic Student Development Team**
Responsible for all matters pertaining to co-curricular educational experiences; collaboration with and support of the Brookes Union; growth of student societies; enhance personal and professional growth of students through leadership development, social, cultural, recreational programming, and other matters pertaining to extracurricular activities.

("Student Central - Oxford Brookes University", 2018)
ASA strategic vision

The strategic vision of Academic and Student Affairs (ASA) is to further the academic mission of the University through the efficient delivery of creative and sector-leading services to students and staff.

To achieve this we will:

- ensure our own professional expertise through holding relevant qualifications where required, undertaking CPD, and engaging with our national and international communities of practice as relevant to our areas of expertise; connectedness
- maintain an accessible approach to service delivery that enhances the student experience by supporting students directly through the services we offer and indirectly through enabling other staff throughout the University to do their job; confidence
- build and nurture strong partnerships with staff in Faculties and Directorates, develop and grow robust channels of communication with all groups that have a stake in the Directorate's work including as examples staff within ASA, enquirers, applicants, students, and alumni, employers and statutory and professional bodies; generosity of spirit
- adapt and develop our approach to the delivery of the services for which we are responsible and the stewardship of the processes we manage while also ensuring the University remains compliant with all external and internal requirements and obligations; enterprising creativity.

("ASA strategic vision - Oxford Brookes University", 2018)

The second bullet point of the Strategic Vision suggests that Academic and Student Affairs "...maintain an accessible approach to service delivery that enhances the student experience by supporting students directly through the services we offer and indirectly through enabling other staff throughout the University to do their job;..." This is clearly within the purview of the Holistic Student Development Team as well as the Team Lead's.

The proposed Team Lead would be the point person for the Holistic Student Development Team. A description of the Team Lead is provided in Figure 4. At the core of the team, his/her purpose is to enhance the student experience through intentional programming and development of student leaders that are involved in societies on campus. Examples of the direct and indi-
rect services the team would provide include ongoing training for both society leaders and their advisors throughout the term, further development of the Student Representative program, and implementation of a strategic plan for continued improvements to services and programs.

The third section of the Strategic Vision addresses the importance for Academic and Student Affairs professionals to collaborate and communicate with groups that have a stake in the Directorate's work. The extracurricular involvement that falls within the purview of the Holistic Student Development Team seeks to supplement the curricular experiences of students to ultimately create a more well-rounded student experience. It follows that the willingness of the Team to collaborate with academic departments, faculty, and other stakeholders, is integral to that mission. One objective of the Team Lead is to exclusively to act as a point person for co-curricular programing (Figure 4).

The final section of the strategic vision was to "adapt and develop our approach to the delivery of the services for which we are responsible." This is an area of growth that the Holistic Student Development Team would surely contribute to. There is a need to be met in the United Kingdom with regard to developing students as whole people, and the creation of this team indicates a sense of responsibility on an institutional level to provide services that are up-to-date with best practices in Higher Education.
Team Lead in Holistic Student Development, Academic and Student Affairs

Academic and Student Affairs at Oxford-Brookes is seeking to fill a professional position to head a new Holistic Student Development Team with Student Central. The purpose of the new team serves to enhance the personal and professional growth and holistic development of all Brookes students by providing engaging extracurricular social, cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities to supplement the academic experience. This exciting opportunity will allow for the creation of new programs or program development through collaboration and supervision with Brookes' brightest and most engaged students.

£24,021.00 - £29,084.00 Per Annum

PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

• Identify needs and develop strategic plans for services, improvements, equipment and program that contribute to providing extracurricular social, cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities.
• Assist in the management of fiscal resources.
• Provide support to Union Officers and student leaders with relevant, necessary resources regarding budget planning and expenditure control as needed.
• Provide supervision and support to Vice President of Societies Development in implementation of student organization policies and processes including recognition and update, office occupancy, fund allocations, marketing, and web portal.
• Act as the point person for collaborative and co-curricular programming and service learning initiatives that supplement classroom experiences with other departments, faculty members, societies, etc.
• Assist Brookes Union Officers with the onboarding of NUS Delegates and Union Representatives.
• Provide feedback and assistance to the Union Officers in the planning of the Teaching Awards and Union Awards.
• Ensure that a culturally inclusive environment is integral with programs and services, marketing materials, student staffing.
• Serve as advisor on appropriate meetings and decisions of Brookes Union Officers.
• Develop a comprehensive strategic plan to increase number of students involved with student societies and other campus-based engagements
• Oversee the electoral processes of Brookes Union representatives.
• Facilitate the coordination of the Union Conference for Union Representatives.
• Act as liaison between Student Central, Academic and Student Affairs, and Brookes Union.
• Coordinate the hiring and supervision of Student Representatives who bring issues about their department or student experience to University staff to develop and enhance their experience.
• Provide ongoing training for student leaders and society officers in the form of workshops, speaker series, regular meetings, and other necessary programming.
• Support the success of societies through appropriate resources and services, guidance, advisor training, and programmatic/developmental experiences, reflecting current best practices.
• Develop an ongoing assessment tool to supplement the NSS in order to monitor the success of extracurricular programs, including but not limited to satisfaction with the Brookes Union, student organization experience, and growth of number of students involved.
• Assist the Vice President of Student Experience to facilitate NSS (National Student Survey).
• Perform other duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED
Functional supervision is exercised over Brookes Union Officers, Student Representatives, and professional and student staff of Student Central as determined.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED.
Supervision received from Head of Student Central.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS
• Management experience in student activities, programs or services
• A broad knowledge of the student activities area (student rights, student government and organization, student societies, school policies and state laws pertaining to a student population)
• University degree in a relevant subject (e.g. education, communication, business)
• Ability to demonstrate leadership
• Excellent oral and written communication skills
• An understanding of the mission, culture, climate of a metropolitan university.
• An awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Contact Student Central with queries:
Tel: +44 (0)1865 483455
Fax: +44 (0)1865 483846
studentcentral@brookes.ac.uk
The purpose of establishing the Holistic Student Development Team with a professional Team Lead is to provide students with a department of professional staff members who serve to create and develop programs for extracurricular involvement. They would serve to integrate the purpose of student organizations, contribute to student development, and intentionally integrate organizations into the culture of the university. Finally, it would seek to indicate for students that the same level of institutional commitment is being given to extracurricular activities as a part of student life as other teams that fall under the umbrella of Student Central and Academic and Student Affairs.

**Recommendations for Eastern Michigan University**

The researcher suggests that Eastern Michigan University develop an institutional employability award as a collaborative effort between the department of Campus Life and the University Advising and Career Development Center (UACDC). The award, the Student Employability Medallion, would seek to reward students for exemplary involvement activities that prepare them for professional life after the college. The application-based Medallion would seek to facilitate reflection on the development of transferable skills in addition to the individual and community impact as a result of student involvement. Figure 5 represents the three categories or levels of Medallions that are available for students. Figure 6 represents the application students are required to complete for consideration of the Medallions.
Figure 5

**Start It**
- Ideal for first year students or students looking to become more involved
- $100-200 Award

Requirements:
- 2.8 GPA
- Must provide evidence of 20 to 60 hours of involvement that must be completed through at least one of the following:
  - Student Organization
  - Sports Team
  - Employment on Campus
  - Volunteering with the VISION Volunteer Center
  - Attending a Lecture Series or related event sponsored by a department on campus
  - Other pre-approved campus activity

**Try It**
- Ideal for students who are involved already and are looking to increase the quality of their involvement
- $200-500 Award

Requirements:
- 3.0 GPA
- Must provide evidence of 60 to 120 hours of involvement that must be completed through at least one of the following:
  - Student Organization
  - Sports Team
  - Employment on Campus
  - Volunteering with the VISION Volunteer Center
  - Other pre-approved campus activity

**Do It**
- Ideal for final year students or highly involved students who are looking to increase their employability as they transition out of their extracurricular activities
- $500 - $1,000 Award

Requirements:
- 3.0 GPA
- Letter of recommendation from a mentor in chosen field
- Must provide evidence of 120 to 160 hours of involvement that is completed through at least one of the following:
  - Student Organization
  - Sports Team
Student Employability Medallion Application

Thank you for your interest in the Student Employability Medallion! Please read this application in its entirety prior to submission.

1. Name

2. E-Number

3. Email

4. Class Standing
   Mark only one oval.
   - Freshman
   - Sophomore
   - Junior
   - Senior
   - Other: ____________________________

5. Which level Medallion are you applying for?
   Mark only one oval.
   - Start It  Skip to question 6
   - Try It  Skip to question 15.
   - Do It  Skip to question 25.

Start It

Please answer the following short answer questions.

6. Please provide a description of your 20 - 60 hours of involvement.

   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
Please provide the name, phone number, and email address of a contact to confirm your participation.

7. Name of Contact

8. Email

9. Phone Number

Skip to question 10.

Start It, continued
Please answer each question in 200 words or less.

10. Why did you get involved with your chosen activity?

11. How has your involvement impacted you?

12. Do you think you have developed new skills because of your involvement? If so, please describe them and how your involvement played a role in your development.
Try It, continued
Please answer each question in 300 words or less.

19. Why did you get involved with your chosen activity?


20. How has your experience impacted you as your involvement increases?


21. How has your involvement impacted your organization?


22. What skills have you developed since achieving the level of involvement you have?


23. How do you think this involvement is preparing you for professional excellence?

24. Please describe how you would use the Student Employability Medalion Try It Scholarship to benefit your personal and professional development.

25. Please provide the email address of a mentor who will submit a letter of recommendation for your application.

26. Please provide a description of your 120-180 hours of involvement.

Please provide the name, phone number, and email address of a contact to confirm your participation.

27. Name of Contact:
28. Email

29. Phone Number

Skip to question 30.

Do it, continued
Please answer each question in 500 words or less.

30. How does your involvement impact you now differently than it did when you first started with your activity?

31. How has your involvement impacted your organization throughout the time that you have been involved?

32. How has your involvement impacted your community?
33. How has your involvement prepared you for professional excellence?


34. How can you translate your experience on campus into your next step [continuing education or employment]?


35. Please describe how you would use the Student Employability Medallion Do It Scholarship to benefit your personal and professional development.


Skip to "Thank you for applying to the Student Employability Medallion" 

Thank you for applying to the Student Employability Medallion!

Please review your answers and then press submit.
We are continuously looking for ways to recognize students at Eastern Michigan University for their dedication and hard work with their involvement on campus. We look forward to collaboration with your organization as we honor our students.

Thank you in advance for your contribution. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

[Signed name]
[Typed name]

Figure 10
Conclusion

In conclusion, Oxford-Brookes and Eastern Michigan are similar institutions with very different cultures and orientations towards student involvement. Despite different levels of student involvement, both universities produce successful employable students. Higher education professionals should continue expanding opportunities for student involvement to promote the holistic development of students. Benefits of student involvement transcend cultural differences, and thus an identified need exists for additional research on this area in the United Kingdom.

The culminating goal for higher education is to create well-rounded student graduates prepared for success in future endeavors, both academically and professionally. The researcher supports the work of Dr. Quinlin (2011) who was correct when reporting, "Our students, as people in transition making their way in the world, deserve to be treated as whole people. The world that they will make needs us to do so" (p. 19).
References


Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. (2011). Developing the whole student: leading higher education initiatives that integrate mind and heart (pp. 1-19). London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.


