

Who Pays?:

International Student Services in a Public University

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Tags

Ethics, Equity, and Social Justice; International Student and Scholar Services; Leadership and Strategy; Management and Operations; University/Higher Education

Setting

This case is set at a public university in the United States. It enrolls about 15,000 students at the bachelors and masters degree levels. Among those students are 600 international students. The Office of Global Education has been leading a campus-wide internationalization initiative focused on curriculum internationalization, expanding study abroad participation, and increasing recruitment of international students. The campus strategic priorities do not explicitly address internationalization or global learning. As a statewide public university system, part of the campus' mandate is that it serve students and communities from six surrounding counties.

With several consecutive years of decreases in state funding, the university has made the decision to admit fewer in-state students. In addition to reducing the number of in-state students admitted in the fall, the campus is not admitting any new in-state students for the spring term. At the same time, out-of-state and international students continue to be admitted at the same rates they were previously, or at even higher rates. The administration's rationale is that out-of-state and international students pay full tuition instead of the subsidized fees that in-state students pay. They argue that increased recruitment of out-of-state and international students is necessary to maintain the financial sustainability of the organization in light of the budget cuts. As fewer local

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students have been admitted, there has been public backlash to this decision. Many people argue that the university is giving seats to international students that should rightfully go to in-state students since the university is supported by in-state taxpayers.

Case

While faculty on campus teach the majority of classes, a few classes are taught by student services professionals, such as service-learning courses and courses for first-year students entitled *College Success 101*. The campus career center offers an internship course in which students can complete assignments to accompany their internship experience in order to earn academic credit. This course is taught by the Director of the Career Center. In each of these cases, the student services professional is teaching the course as one of the duties of their student service position and not receiving additional compensation.

U.S. immigration regulations require that international students have work authorization for off-campus employment. International students often complete internships under Curricular Practical Training (CPT) work authorization. The Code of Federal Regulations say, among other things, that CPT is available for internships that are “integral” to the academic program. Most campuses, including the university in this case, interpret the regulation to mean that the students must be earning academic credit in order to receive CPT work authorization to engage in a paid internship. At this university, many students want to do paid internships to gain practical experience in their field. Accordingly, they enroll in the 1-credit internship course taught by the Director of the Career Center. Normally, international students pay \$1700 per credit in non-resident fees above what an in-state student pays. Thus, the international students would have to pay \$1700 in order to have the opportunity to gain work experience. In other words, they have to pay to be able to work. Meanwhile, U.S. students have the option to undertake the same summer work experience without credit, earning money to fund their education while gaining professional work experience. If the U.S. students want to earn academic credit for the experience, they can do so at a nominal rate. Wanting to encourage all interested students to undertake internships, the Director of the Career Center has waived his salary for teaching this course, and instead set it up so that all students who enroll in the internship course only have to pay a \$70 administrative fee. This solution works well for several years, allowing international students to gain internship experience, comply with immigration regulations, and not pay high fees for the right to work off-campus.

Motivated to protect the interest of their members, the faculty union observes that some campus courses are being taught by student services professionals. They assert that only faculty can be allowed to teach courses. Further, if student services personnel are hired to teach courses, they must be hired as adjunct faculty, receiving additional salary and doing the teaching related work outside of their usual work hours. Because this policy change was unexpected, most departments don't have salaries budgeted for these classes. In addition, many of the student services professionals, though they have enjoyed teaching the classes, don't want to work additional hours each week and thus do not want adjunct contracts. The university administration accedes to the demands of the faculty union and declares that classes may not be taught by staff members as part of their staff positions.

This policy change ends the ability of the Career Center director to teach the course. International students must now enroll in the internship courses offered in each academic department, paying an additional \$1700 per credit in order to access this educational and professional opportunity. The Office of Global Education must decide if or how to respond to this change in order to support international students.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- Who are the stakeholders? What are the goals/priorities of each group? What power do they have?
- In what ways are the priorities of the stakeholder groups in tension with each other?
- What are the ethical issues described in the case?
- What should the Office of Global Education do?
- How can the university administration balance the needs of stakeholders?