

GSM'S STUDENT AFFAIRS TEAM IS IN THE SERVICE BUSINESS

The Student Affairs Office within the Graduate School of Management has a pivotal role in helping students get through the M.B.A. program. Director Carla Larsson and her staff of four, Julie Sully, Denise Patrick, Victoria Lester, and Claudia Fisher, help students assess their academic needs, revamp their study methods when necessary, recommend tutors, and generally provide moral support.

"We deal with students' problems as they relate to their courses," Larsson explains. "Some people start classes with relatively poor study habits. After a short while, they realize that they are not as prepared academically for the high standards and expectations of the professors. For some students, these expectations and the volume of work can come as a rude awakening."

Larsson adds, "Having worked in the Graduate School of Management for 10 years, I'm familiar with the expectations of the professors and am usually able to assess what areas a student needs help in."

In some cases, Larsson and her staff will analyze a student's study methods and help that student improve and upgrade those methods. In other cases, they'll restructure a course load or outside work load, or they'll recommend a tutor.

The Program Director stresses that she and her staff are there to ensure that each student has a good experience while going through the M.B.A. program. "We provide moral support, but not psychological counseling. Students at this level of schooling generally know what their career goals are and why they are in this program. If a person has a personal problem, for example, is going through a divorce, a job change, or is pregnant, we may suggest a reduced course load, a temporary leave of absence, outside counseling, or a course of action appropriate to the student's particular circumstances."

In addition to counseling responsibilities, Student Affairs is involved with students from recruitment, to admissions, to graduation. The staff develops brochures for prospective students, handles requests for information about the school, and coordinates recruitment. They also review applications to the school and coordinate the admissions process.

At the start of each school year, they set up orientation programs to provide each new student with basic information about GSM, its requirements and services. Part of this orientation program is an intensive English-as-a-Second-Language course for foreign students. The department also coordinates the student registration process, International Programs and Corporate Speaker series, and works with the faculty to set up class schedules.

When students are ready to graduate, the Student Affairs staff is responsible for insuring that students have fulfilled the program requirements. Their final role with each student is to oversee the Commencement



Carla Larsson, Director of the M.B.A. Program, leads the Student Affairs Team.

ceremony. They arrange for the facility, coordinate the ceremony, prepare the programs, and hire the caterers.

For Carla Larsson, working with students is more than a job. It is a full-time career that she loves. The efforts that she and all of the Student Affairs staff put into their work are rewarded when they see students they have nurtured through difficult times graduate and go on to rewarding careers of their own.