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Graduate Interim Review Report

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Program: <u>Higher Education & Student Affairs</u>

Date: <u>October 3, 2022</u>

Person(s) completing report: <u>J.T. Snipes</u>

Please review your last Program Review Team Report, particularly the Recommendations statements.

1. Identify the recommendations from the last program review**. *Then, for each recommendation***, identify what your program has done to specifically address each issue. In what ways are you making progress in this area? If you are not making progress, tell us why you have not been able to address the issue.

Below are the recommendations issued from the 2019 CSPA Program review. We first list the recommendation (red) and underneath we provide a program response.

1. **Recommendation:** Address enrollment management and growth as a priority.

   Program Response:

   - *New Program Name and Specialization:* Over the past two years our program faculty have worked tirelessly to re-envision. It began in the summer of 2020 when we established a new program mission as well as a new vision statement, values, and annual goals. The result of this work has been two seismic shifts in the program. First, we have changed the name of the program from "College Student Personnel Administration (CSPA)" to "Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) ." The name change not only brings our program into alignment with more current nomenclature for our field, but it also broadens the scope of our teaching, inquiry, and service. Second, as a result of the broadening scope of inquiry we have established a new athletic specialization. Dr. Fine alongside other preeminent experts in the field have crafted a specialization that will bring our program into the twenty-first century. The first cohort will begin Spring 2023. The program is completely online and will provide a nice complement to our on-ground HESA program.

   - *New Enrollment Goals:* We have set enrollment goals for our program. Each year under our enrollment management plan we have the goal of bringing in 15 full-time students in the fall and 10 part-time students in the spring. We believe this combination serves both students and faculty well.

- *Graduate Assistantships:* The report also advised us to be clear on the conditions of admission to the program, particularly in relationship to graduate assistantships. While we do not require students to have an assistantship, we have made it clear to perspective students that it strongly recommended. We have been working with student affairs to fill to ensure that we have enough graduate assistantships to meet the demand of our students.

- *Rigorous Admissions Process:* The reports suggested that admissions criteria to the program be made more rigorous and selective. We have reviewed the admissions process and revised the personal statement. Our program application now requires students to articulate their interest in higher education and future goals in the field. We use this information to screen applicants and to help prepare accepted students to begin designing their final project upon entry to the program.

2. **Recommendation:** Increase the number of full-time faculty dedicated to the CSPA program by a number to meet the current numbers of students, or to plan for growth.

   Program Response: The report rightly noted that "… the number of full-time CSPA faculty is inadequate." To redress this inadequacy, our program added a new faculty line to provide additional program support as well as to launch the new Athletics specialization. We have also added a visiting assistant professor. These two additions should help meet the needs of our growing program. Also, we are grateful to the Provost, Dean, and Chair for their leadership in diversifying our faculty and meeting our program needs.

3. **Recommendation:** Hire an administrative professional to manage student advisement, communications, orientation, practicum selection, and graduate assistantship issues.

   Program Response: In Spring 2020, we were able to hire Dr. Candace Hall, a new assistant program director to help manage the needs of our growing program. Dr. Hall realigned the goal of our assistantships. To achieve that strategy, she worked with campus partners to ensure that prospective students could find graduate assistantships on campus. This strategic move streamlined the management of graduate assistantships. The move also resolved some of the pay equity gaps exacerbated by having a wide variety of sites. Dr. Hall also created an engaging orientation for new students. The orientation session now prepares students to engage in course work as well as their graduate assistantships. She has also strengthened communication with practicum and assistantship providers. Last year she created a newsletter that went out to all of our partners updating them on what is happening inside and outside of the classroom.

4. **Recommendation:** Continue ongoing, regular faculty collaboration of full-time CSPA faculty and adjunct faculty to address the curricular issues described below. (For the following recommendations our response is written below in green)

   a) *What sets the program apart from others in the region, or nationally?*
      The social justice focus (or other important core values) identified in the self-study should be visible in the course content and program materials and flow from shared

faculty values. We meet annually in the summer to discuss our enrollment strategy for the upcoming academic year. An important part of the conversation is discussing the value added of having a critical social justice curriculum designed to support the development of scholar-practitioners.

b) *Students note that some adjunct faculty members do not seem to understand the overall goals of the CSPA profession and are not readily available to students.* Program outcomes should be shared with all faculty members in the CSPA program. Students and faculty members should also understand and be able to articulate how each course helps meet program outcomes. Some students express confusion about how things fit together and find it difficult to establish relationships with adjunct faculty members. A benefit of having more program faculty has been less adjunct faculty members teaching in the program. We have been able to be more selective in hiring adjuncts to teach within the program. Also, we have recruited student affairs professionals on campus to teach in the program solidifying the connection of theory to practice, which is critical for developing scholar-practitioners.

c) The *quality of student writing* was mentioned several times by adjunct faculty and students. Students note inconsistency in expectations related to written work. Some noted that the rigor of the program (mostly evident in writing assignments) is not high, which they perceived as demotivating, and as making the program less competitive, rewarding, and challenging. The quality of student writing continues to be an ongoing struggle. However, program faculty have been working together to set consistent expectations for the quality and rigor of student work. As a result, we believe that

d) *Is curriculum progression/sequencing followed consistently and with purpose?* Due to enrollment practices and part/full time student status, students sometimes take the courses offered that fit their schedules. If the curriculum is designed with progressive strands, from basic to complex for example, some core courses should be taken before others to facilitate learning. If all the courses are stand-alone content courses without relationship to other courses, that would allow for a "no preferable sequence" approach to the curriculum. The curriculum course sequence should clearly reflect the logic of the program's structure. In order to better support full-time and part-time student, we have updated our course maps in Degreeworks. During students' first semester in the program we walk them through their degree map and orient them to Degreeworks so that they are aware what courses they need to take and when. We also remind them that many of the courses are sequential and must be taken in order. This has helped to clarify the course map and cleared up some confusion.

e) *Consider the necessity of increasing the total credit hours for the program to 39 to accommodate the increase in capstone credit hours.* Determine if there is redundant course content, as noted in interviews with middle and late program students. Content

mapping may help assure that there is not overlap and that the credit hours are used to maximum student growth. We have reviewed the course sequence and the 39 hours are in line with the majority of higher education and student affairs programs at our peer and aspirational institutions.

f) *Some students offered the opinion that a portion of course content and assignments could be offered online as a possible innovation.* There was not agreement regarding the use of hybrid courses, but several students thought that there could be more creativity related to the use of online course formats. Overall students appreciate the face-to face interactions and connecting with each other in person. Some stated that they wanted the orientation session to be longer to enhance their ability to make early connections and student networks. Because of the pandemic many of our courses shifted online. As we have returned to delivering course content face-to-face, we have chosen to keep several courses online. Both required summer courses are now online, this curricular decision allows students who choose to do practicum abroad to continue to engage the coursework.

5. **Recommendation:** Evaluate student practicum experiences using comprehensive and measurable measures related to program outcomes.

   Program Response: Contrary to what was reported, we have always required practicum site supervisors to create comprehensive and measurable learning outcomes. However because we lacked the staff to properly oversee student practicum experiences, students often began work at sites before the practicum agreements were drafted. We now require sites to complete practicum paperwork a semester before the work begins. This way we can properly orient students and site supervisors to the practicum process. Since we've implemented this practice students have reported better experiences with their practicum. We've also provided greater flexibility for when students can complete their portfolio (students can now complete them during spring and fall semesters) and the duration of the experience [semester or project based (micropracticum)].

6. **Recommendation:** Implement specific methods for mentoring students in creating a high-quality graduate student portfolio.

   Program Response: Over the past three years, we have made several significant alterations to the structure of the portfolio. First, we made it the central assignment in the two practicum courses (HESA 554 & HESA 554B). In the first practicum course students will create a draft of their portfolio in HESA 554. Then in HESA 554 B students will complete their and present their portfolio alongside their final project. Second, this past summer we mapped out the courses where students would be expected to submit artifacts to add to their portfolio. Finally, since students won't create the portfolio until the summer of their first year. We require students in Introduction to Student Affairs (HESA 574) to create professional development goals that will be revised and expanded in the portfolio course (HESA 554).

7. **Recommendation:** Address student program completion and retention rates.

Program Response: Student completion and retention rates continue to be an issue that we are monitoring closely. Because our students were often the first line of institutional defense in their assistantship, many of our students faced compassion fatigue and burnout. Many of their positions required extensive support and mentoring of students. Prior to COVID, we saw the occasional student grapple with compassion fatigue and burnout. However, since the pandemic students have been trying to manage their own stress and anxiety as well as that of the students they supervise and support. Our completion and retention rates have remained the same. However, given the external circumstances maintaining completion and retention rates should be seen as a major accomplishment. Also, we have been working diligently to reach out to students who stopped out of the program. Many of our students face significant hardships in trying to complete their final project. This summer we sent out a call to all students who have yet to complete their degree, and this fall Dr. Snipes has been working with a small group of students to help them finish their degree. We hope this and other initiatives will help retain more of our students and help them get matriculate to graduation.

2. Discuss the graduate program assessment plan and how it is used in your department.

(a) How do you evaluate student learning of program objectives/goals?

Currently the graduate program assessment plan is a legacy document for our department. However, this summer we had an in-depth discussion about program assessment. In order to catch up to the myriad of changes we have made in the HESA program, we are in the process of revising our program outcomes / goals. Over the past two years we have created a new program mission statement, values, and goals. The new assessment plan we are creating seeks to align program objectives/goals with the goals of graduate student learning. Our goal is to complete the update process this fall. Below we have included our program outcomes:

SIUE Goals of Graduate Learning	Benchmark/Out comes	Performance Indicator or Assessment	Criteria for Passing	Where are the Outcomes/ Benchmar ks Assessed?
Demonstrat e Breadth and Depth of Knowledge in the Discipline	Knowledge of history, philosophy and foundations of the student affairs profession	Research Proposal Assignment; Practicum Portfolio or Comprehensive Exam; Exit	90% of students meet or exceed	Midpoint, End, Post

SIUE Goals of Graduate Learning	Benchmark/Out comes	Performance Indicator or Assessment	Criteria for Passing	Where are the Outcomes/ Benchmar ks Assessed?
		Survey; & Follow-up Survey		
	Knowledge of foundational level assessment, evaluation, and research methodologies in higher education	Research Proposal Assignment; Final Project; Exit Survey; & Follow-up Survey	90% of students meet or exceed	Midpoint, End, Post
Demonstrat e Breadth and Depth of Knowledge in the Discipline	Knowledge of legal, compliance, and policy issues in higher education student affairs	Research Proposal Assignment; Practicum Portfolio or Comprehensive Exam; Final Project; Exit Survey; & Follow-up Survey	90% of students meet or exceed	Midpoint, End, Post
	Knowledge of basic organizational management and structural administrative models	Practicum Portfolio or Comprehensive Exam; Exit Survey; & Follow-up Survey	90% of students meet or exceed	End, Post
	Knowledge of leadership theory and models of organizational change	Practicum Portfolio or Comprehensive Exam; Exit Survey; & Follow-up Survey	90% of students meet or exceed	End, Post
	Knowledge of social justice and issues of oppression, privilege, and	Research Proposal Assignment; Practicum Portfolio or	90% of students meet or exceed	Midpoint, End, Post

SIUE Goals of Graduate Learning	Benchmark/Outcomes	Performance Indicator or Assessment	Criteria for Passing	Where are the Outcomes/ Benchmarks Assessed?
	power	Comprehensive Exam; & Final Project		
	Knowledge of concepts and principles of college student development and learning theory	Case Study Assignment; Research Proposal Assignment; Practicum Portfolio or Comprehensive Exam; Final Project; Exit Survey & Follow-up Survey	90% of students meet or exceed	Early, Midpoint, End, Post
	Knowledge of advising and supporting strategies	Case Study Assignment; Exit Survey; & Follow-up Survey	90% of students meet or exceed	Early, End, Post
Effectively Communicate Knowledge in the Discipline	Ability to express knowledge and ideas in the field of student affairs in clear and precise written and oral English	Case Study Assignment; Research Proposal Assignment; Practicum Portfolio or Comprehensive Exam; Final Project; Exit Survey; & Follow-up Survey	90% of students meet or exceed	Early, Midpoint, End, Post
Demonstrate an Ability for Analytical Thinking in the	Ability to analyze assessment and research data in higher education	Research Proposal Assignment & Final Project	90% of students meet or exceed	Midpoint, End
	Ability to express and apply a	Research Proposal	90% of students meet	Midpoint, End, Post

SIUE Goals of Graduate Learning	Benchmark/Outcomes	Performance Indicator or Assessment	Criteria for Passing	Where are the Outcomes/ Benchmarks Assessed?
Discipline	critical lens to the student affairs profession	Assignment; Practicum Portfolio or Comprehensive Exam; & Final Project	or exceed	
Exhibit the Best Practices, Values, and Ethics of the Profession	Awareness and understanding of professional codes of ethics	Practicum Portfolio	90% of students meet or exceed	End
	Knowledge and application of values of the student affairs professions	Practicum Portfolio	90% of students meet or exceed	End
	Ability to ethically conduct research and assessment in higher education	Research Proposal Assignment & Final Project	90% of students meet or exceed	Midpoint, End
Apply Knowledge of the Discipline	Ability to use theory and knowledge to effectively and ethically practice the student affairs profession in the areas of advising and supporting students, management, legal issues, research	Case Study Assignment; Practicum Portfolio; Exit Survey; & Follow-up Survey	90% of students meet or exceed	Early, End, Post
	Ability to apply knowledge and understanding of social justice issues in the student affairs profession	Practicum Portfolio	90% of students meet or exceed	End

SIUE Goals of Graduate Learning	Benchmark/Out comes	Performance Indicator or Assessment	Criteria for Passing	Where are the Outcomes/ Benchmarks Assessed?
	Ability to facilitate student engagement and involvement programming to promote student learning and development that are based on current research on student learning and development theories	Case Study Assignment; Practicum Portfolio; Exit Survey; & Follow-up Survey	90% of students meet or exceed	Early, End, Post

(b) How are these results over the past 3-4 years used to inform curricular changes.

Over the past three years we have been evaluating our student success data in the form of retention and graduation rates. We have made several curricular changes as a result of our inquiry. I will share the most important changes.

1. **Early Warning System:** In the fall of 2021, we began to develop. EDAD 574 now includes a writing assessment, given how many of our students struggle writing at a graduate level. The results of this writing assessment is shared and discussed with program faculty. At the end of their first semester students set writing goals, so all students (strong and weak writers) are encouraged to refine their skills as a writer. This connected approach we hope will help improve student retention and eventual graduation. We have not collected data on this curricular change yet. We hope to do so this fall.

2. **Increased Research Support:** Beginning in fall 2020, we extended the final project research sequence. Prior to that time students had a single semester to design and execute a research project. Now students have a semester to design the project, then an additional semester to execute the project. With the additional time students have designed and executed more elegant projects. As we continue to refine the research sequence our hope is that we will see student graduation rates increase.

3. **Focusing on Belonging & Community Building:** Another critical aspect to student retention and graduation is sense of belonging. For the past three years we have been working to build a more cohesive, caring, and supportive community. We began by

revising our program orientation giving students space to get to know program faculty and supporters as well as their cohort members. We have also worked diligently with campus partners to make sure students have a variety of experiences and leadership opportunities both on and off campus.

Our hope moving forward is to collect assessment data that will help propel our program and build future scholar practitioners who are change agents in our community and the larger society.