

STONEHILL COLLEGE

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

SITUATION

Founded as a Catholic institution of higher learning in 1948, Stonehill College is a small, private, not-for-profit institution located in suburban Massachusetts. Aligned with the College's mission, Stonehill's Student Affairs Division challenges its students to deepen their curiosity and think critically to become lifelong learners and ethical leaders within a diverse and global society

Under the leadership of the vice president for student affairs, Stonehill Student Affairs develops students through the following program and service areas: athletics and recreational sports, community standards, counseling services, health services, intercultural affairs, residence life, and student engagement. Over ninety percent of Stonehill's nearly 2,500 undergraduate, enrolled students reside on campus.

APPROACH

The vice president for student affairs engaged NASPA Advisory Services in a guided self-assessment using P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. Stonehill was approximately three years out from its reaccreditation visit by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The vice president sought to involve her direct reports in a thorough exercise to energize their preparation for NEASC—a “pre-pre-accreditation activity.” The goal of using P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. for this purpose was to identify perceived strengths and areas for additional emphasis across

Student Affairs and encourage staff to think more critically about division-level assessment.

NASPA met via video conference with the vice president and associate vice president to introduce the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. self-assessment and orient them to NASPA's customized web portal for Stonehill leaders to access the self-assessment. The vice president and associate vice president reviewed each P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. element and determined that 14 staff would be assigned to multiple elements across all nine areas of P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. NASPA administered the self-assessment over a three-week period, organized and reviewed responses, and produced nine individual reports corresponding to each of the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. elements. NASPA then delivered a video conference presentation of key findings of responses for each element to the vice president and her direct reports.

RESULTS

The vice president used the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S reports during divisional leadership team meetings to comprehensively review each element and develop action items. P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. affirmed areas in which the Division was excelling and serving students well. It also confirmed, in concrete ways, specific areas that needed increased attention. Emphasis was placed on finalizing divisional learning outcomes and developing assessment measures for each department that align with the overarching learning outcomes.

P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. motivated Student Affairs leaders to conduct their own internal review, assess their work based upon an objective, external framework, and develop a thoughtful and evidence-based plan to move the work of the Division forward. Completing the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. self-assessment illuminated the need for a comprehensive assessment strategy, and provided direction to focus on learning outcomes and assessment measures. The vice president referenced this work within broader senior leadership settings, including with the president and Institutional Research, which was highly regarded. The results and insights provided by the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. framework have also been used to inform the beginning stages of the accreditation process for the Division.