

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

SITUATION

Located in the capital of New York State, University at Albany (UAlbany) is a four-year, Research 1 public institution. Originally founded as a normal school for teacher education in 1844, UAlbany joined the State University of New York System and became a broad-based public research institution.

The twenty departments within the UAlbany Division of Student Affairs provide essential programs and services to the more than 17,000 students enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The vice president for student affairs oversees the work of the following departments: Advocacy Center for Sexual Violence, Behavioral Health Promotion and Applied Research, Campus Center Management, Campus Recreation, Career and Professional Development, Center for Leadership and Service, Community Standards, Counseling and Psychological Services, Disability Resource Center, Intercultural Student Engagement, Neighborhood Life, Orientation and Transition Programs, Residential Life, Student Activities, Student Affairs Assessment and Planning, Student Affairs Communication and Marketing, Student Affairs Technology, Student Care Services, Student Health Services, and Student Involvement.

APPROACH

UAlbany had recently announced the appointment of Dr. Havidán Rodríguez as the new president. The vice president for student affairs approached NASPA to

complete a comprehensive review of the Division of Student Affairs in order to detail strengths, on which it could build upon, and opportunities for further development.

In partnership with the vice president and Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT), NASPA created a custom web portal for student affairs staff to participate in the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. self-assessment. SALT assigned a total of 22 staff members to participate in the various modules within the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. self-assessment. Upon the conclusion of the three-week period that the assessment was available, NASPA staff compiled the responses to inform the greater external review.

NASPA concurrently worked with the vice president to identify senior-level reviewers from the NASPA Advisory Services pool that had significant experience with four-year, public institutions with student affairs programs and services similar in mission and organizational composition to UAlbany. Prior to the on-campus portion of the review, the NASPA team reviewed materials provided by the vice president and conducted phone interviews with selected Student Affairs staff and campus partners.

The campus site visit coincided with the first month of UAlbany's new president, which provided a unique opportunity to involve him in the review of Student Affairs. The campus site visit consisted of 14 individual and group meetings with the president, Student Affairs leadership and staff, faculty, campus partners, and students. Following the review, NASPA compiled a comprehensive report detailing findings, analysis, and recommendations from each stage of the review.

RESULTS

After the NASPA report was delivered, the senior leadership team, comprised of the Division's associate and assistant vice presidents, reviewed the document. Twenty recommendations were reviewed and solidified by the NASPA team and senior leadership team. The full report with twenty recommendations was then sent to the SALT team for review and use in their planning efforts. The report was also shared with the president and assistant vice provost for academic and resource planning.

<https://advisoryservices.naspa.org/>

The external review process affirmed that units within Student Affairs are student-focused and work diligently towards providing all students with an enriching student experience. As is the case for many divisions, the review helped UAlbany Student Affairs understand that they can always do better in telling their story and showcasing the resources and services their units provide students and how that leads to student success on campus. The review also pointed out areas of improvement which have been helpful in planning efforts.

The comprehensive report was used to guide the new Student Affairs Action Plan for 2018-2023. Associate and assistant vice presidents also worked with units to identify action steps to address specific NASPA recommendations for unit-level planning.

Participation in the NASPA review and information provided in the final report have strengthened the planning and development of Student Affairs' strategic priorities for the next five years.