

UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

SITUATION

Founded in 1906, the University of West Georgia (UWG) began as a district agricultural and mechanical school and grew into a four-year college. Located one hour west of Atlanta, the University of West Georgia is the state's sixth largest public university and enrolls nearly 13,500 students.

In alignment with the University's focus on a "caring, student-centered community", the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management provides student-focused services across the following program areas: Admissions, Advising Center, Career Services, the Center for Academic Success, the Center for Adult Learners and Veterans, the Center for Student Involvement, the Counseling Center, Enrollment Services Center, Financial Aid, New Student Programs, Health Services, Housing and Residence Life, International Student Admissions and Programs, the Office of Community Standards, the Registrar, and University Recreation.

APPROACH

The vice president for student affairs and enrollment management engaged NASPA Advisory Services in a guided self-assessment using P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. and an external review. The goal of the project was to engage staff across the division in a process of critical self-reflection, to get feedback on areas where the division was excelling, and to identify areas for improvement. A further goal was to understand how staff could better communicate across student life and enrollment management. Due to the University undergoing a separate, institution-wide administrative review, NASPA and the vice president mutually agreed to sequence the campus visit before the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. self-assessment.

NASPA identified two current vice presidents for student affairs and enrollment management from the NASPA Advisory Services pool to serve as reviewers for the project. The NASPA Review Team conducted an introductory call with the UWG vice president for student affairs and enrollment management to formally launch the project and review the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. framework and external review process. The vice president also shared nearly 60 documents including organizational charts, strategic plans, and departmental assessments that were reviewed by the NASPA Advisory Services Review Team.

The Review Team met with over 50 student affairs and enrollment management staff and students during a 1.5-day campus visit. The vice president then identified 63 staff to participate in the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. self-assessment. NASPA administered the self-assessment to these staff; the Review Team reviewed the results as part of its overall collection and analysis of project-related data.

RESULTS

Following the campus visit and self-assessment, the NASPA Review Team compiled a report of findings, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations based on all project activities. This report, along with individual reports of each P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. element, were then shared with the vice president. The NASPA team met with the vice president and his assistant vice president during

the NASPA Annual Conference to discuss the report and to respond to questions and feedback.

The NASPA team also participated in a one-hour mini-presentation and question and answer session with approximately 100 members of the vice president's expanded leadership team. This event occurred via video conference and provided staff an opportunity to engage with NASPA about report content.

The comprehensive report and ensuing discussions provided significant validation of current practices within the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management as well as identification of important future improvements. Based on the results of the P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S. self-assessment and the external review, reviewers noted 16 recommendations touching on areas, including organizational structure improvements, student environment and safety, information and communication, student culture and engagement, and technology and data analysis. Additionally, the review highlighted many areas of excellence, validating internal beliefs about organizational health and effectiveness.

The review was highly successful, leading to new strategic directions for the Division. The review was effective in generating a tremendous amount of data and information that, along with normal strategic planning efforts, is being used to drive the Division's success for the next several years. The review served as an effective tool to identify important aspects of practice and focus on improvements to attain greater student success.