



# **ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies for Student Affairs Educators—2025 Revisions**

## **Introduction and Context**

- 2009 - ACPA—College Student Educators International and NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education collaborated to establish a common set of professional competency areas for student affairs educators. The Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards, which consisted of representatives from both associations, analyzed 19 core documents produced by ACPA, NASPA, and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), and then proposed a framework that included 10 competency areas.
- 2010 - The memberships of the two associations were invited to comment on preliminary drafts of the proposed document in spring 2010, and then the boards of ACPA and NASPA adopted the competency document in a joint meeting in July 2010.
- 2014 - 2015, a joint task force convened to review and update the professional competencies with input from members of both associations. The task force compiled and analyzed this feedback.
- May 2015, made final revisions to proposed changes, and presented them to the boards of ACPA and NASPA for formal adoption in July 2015. The associations then gathered a group to develop a set of rubrics for implementation that were published in 2016.

After the 2015 updates, there was feedback that a five-year review of the professional competencies was too short of a review cycle, and a longer term between updates might be more practical for continued use. With this feedback in mind, the boards of ACPA and NASPA appointed the next Joint Task Force for review in May 2023. This group began its work by hosting feedback sessions and focus groups on specific competency areas, with various professional levels, and broad feedback groups on overall implementation. A survey was also distributed to all members, and in-person feedback sessions were held at the 2025 NASPA Annual Conference and ACPA Convention.

The culmination of these efforts was an assessment of feedback by the Joint Task Force lasting two and a half days, wherein the committee reviewed the collected feedback and began the thorough review process of the competencies. Several key factors were considered during this process: the evolving nature of student affairs and higher education, the impact of technology, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the practical applicability of the competencies.

## Summary of Changes

The ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies for Student Affairs Educators have undergone significant evolution, reflecting both continuity and change to address the complexities of the modern and future landscape of the profession. The 2015 revision built upon the foundational work of the 2010 Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards by introducing key updates. This included renaming two competency areas, presenting one entirely new area, and merging two existing areas to create a more streamlined and comprehensive framework.

These changes were aimed at refining the competencies without losing their core essence. Moving to the 2025 revision, this reimagined and dynamic document expands further, introducing Guiding Values and Essential Elements to provide a multidimensional approach. Together, these updates are designed to meet the needs of professionals at every level, from graduate students entering the field to seasoned leaders shaping its future.

At the heart of the 2025 revision are the four Guiding Values, which serve as moral and philosophical cornerstones for the student affairs profession. These values- Personal/Ethical Principles; Values, Philosophy, and Contexts; Social Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Supporting Student Learning and Development- not only reflect the profession's enduring priorities but also its commitment to fostering ethical and culturally responsive practices.

Alongside these values are four Essential Elements of practice, encompassing professional areas of Assessment, Evaluation, and Research; Human, Organizational, and Technology Resources; Law, Policy, and Governance; and Leadership, which translate the values into actionable goals. This approach ensures that competencies are not static but dynamic and inclusive, addressing ongoing professional growth and lifelong learning. By distinguishing between "having competencies" and "being competent," the framework emphasizes self-awareness, adaptability, and personal development, rather than simply checking off skill sets. Collectively, the Guiding Values and Essential Elements provide an adaptable roadmap that supports the evolving needs of professionals and the communities they serve.

The Guiding Values and Essential Elements reflect the evolving nature of the field and cater to lifelong learning for all professionals. The Task Force recognizes that learning is ongoing and varies among individuals. **These Guiding Values are the fundamental beliefs or principles that shape the culture and behavior that drives the work of student affairs educators. The values act as a moral compass and influence decision-making and actions.**

- Personal/Ethical Principles
- Values, Philosophy, and Contexts
- Social Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Supporting Student Learning and Development

In addition to these Guiding Values, the committee recognized four Essential Elements of practice that are crucial for competency within the field. **These Essential Elements ensure practical application and continuous improvement within the profession. Essential Elements are the core components or building blocks and are practical aspects that support the Guiding Values.**

- Assessment, Evaluation, and Research
- Human, Organizational, and Technology Resources
- Law, Policy, and Governance
- Leadership

The Task Force also embraced several overarching principles:

- The competencies aim to distinguish between "having competencies" and "being competent."
- These competencies should complement, not replace, other functional areas' competencies.
- The journey towards professional development and self-awareness is emphasized, rather than achieving an "Advanced" level in all categories.
- Continuous growth remains possible at all competency levels, highlighting the dynamic nature of the field.

The **Guiding Values** and **Essential Elements** are presented as a non-exhaustive list of knowledge, skills, values, and other attributes, intended to complement ongoing learning at institutional, organizational, and individual levels. The aim is to support lifelong learning and professional growth in Student Affairs through a framework that values both the collective profession-wide standards and the personal growth journey of each professional.

<b>Guiding Values</b>	<b>Essential Elements</b>
<p><b>Personal/Ethical Principles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Critical assessment and self directed learning</li> <li>• Campus and civic engagement</li> <li>• Self-Assessment and Reflection</li> <li>• Digital Identity and Citizenship</li> <li>• Ethical Codes &amp; Professional Standards</li> <li>• Wellness and Healthy Living</li> <li>• Self-Awareness and Continual Reflection</li> <li>• Professional Service</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment, Evaluation, and Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing and Conducting Research</li> <li>• Using Results to Inform Practice</li> </ul>

<p><b>Values, Philosophy, and Contexts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical Foundations</li> <li>• Philosophical Foundations</li> <li>• Social/Cultural Contributions</li> <li>• Institutional and Functional Area Contexts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Human, Organizational, and Technology Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Use and Compliance</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Hiring and Staffing</li> <li>• Supervision, Communication, and Conflict Resolution</li> <li>• Resource Management, Stewardship, and Sustainability</li> <li>• Change Management and Innovation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical and Inclusive Application of Policy</li> <li>• Engaging in Socially Just Practice</li> <li>• Critical Assessment and Self Directed Learning</li> <li>• Understanding of Self and Navigating Systems of Power</li> <li>• Organizational Systemic Advocacy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law, Policy, and Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand Policy Development Practices and Application of Legal Constructs</li> <li>• Understand Governance Structures and Impact on Practice</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supporting Student Learning and Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Theory</li> <li>• Design and Application</li> <li>• Engagement and Support</li> <li>• Group Dynamics</li> </ul>	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundational and Theoretical Principles of Leadership</li> <li>• Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>• Partnering with Others</li> <li>• Crisis Management and Response</li> </ul>

## **Implications and Applications**

A critical component of any conversation regarding professional competencies is the consideration for policy, practice, and the scholarship within the field of student affairs. However, the application of the competencies must account for the distinct missions, contexts, and needs of various higher education institutions and professional organizations. Consequently, the implementation of competencies will likely reflect a range of best practices rather than standardized approaches. Additionally, these practices are expected to evolve over time reflecting the dynamic nature of the competencies.

The Task Force offers some considerations for practical application:

- Certain Essential Elements may hold varying degrees of relevance on specific functional areas and professional roles, and this variability is both anticipated and acceptable.
- A distinction exists between being competent in a particular area and the broader concept of having competencies. This emphasizes the multifaceted nature of professional competency.
- It is important to acknowledge the U.S.-centric framework of the *ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies for Student Affairs Educators*, developed and refined by professionals working in U.S. contexts. There is applicability for professionals working outside of the United States, and it is important to identify underlying assumptions and aspects to adjust to reflect local contexts.
- The *ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies for Student Affairs Educators* are complementary to - not a replacement for - other functional areas' competencies.
- Reaching "Advanced" in all categories is neither a prescribed outcome nor the ultimate objective of the competencies. Instead, this framework serves to codify core professional values and foster self-awareness and continuous development. Your individual professional growth is a journey, not a destination.
- Self-assessment at any level of proficiency is not a place of finite arrival. Even as "Advanced," there is still room for continuous growth, especially as the field of student affairs and the higher education landscape continue to evolve.
- The specific Guiding Values and Essential Elements are a non-exhaustive list of knowledge, skills, values, etc.
- We have a shared responsibility for supporting learning - as faculty members, supervisors, peers, and association leaders.

By addressing these considerations, practitioners and scholars in student affairs can more effectively integrate and adapt the competencies to enhance both individual and organizational development.

## **Guiding Value - Values, Philosophy, and Contexts**

The Values, Philosophy, and Contexts guiding value involves knowledge, skills, and dispositions that connect the history, philosophy, and values of the student affairs profession to one's current professional context and practice. This competency area embodies the foundations of the profession from which current and future research, scholarship, and practice will change and grow. The commitment to demonstrating this competency area ensures that our present and future practices are informed by an understanding of the profession's history, philosophy, and values.

<b>Core Competencies Related to Values, Philosophy, and Contexts</b>	<b>Continuing Development Related to Values, Philosophy, and Contexts</b>
<p><b>Historical Foundations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to synthesize the historical roots of the student affairs profession's history.</li> <li>• Identifies historical context of the profession from various perspectives (i.e., role of student affairs within the academy, inclusion and exclusion of diverse peoples, institutional types).</li> <li>• Articulate the historical contexts of institutional types and functional areas within higher education and student affairs.</li> <li>• Articulate the history of the inclusion and exclusion of people with a variety of identities in higher education.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Historical Foundations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain and examine how today's practice is informed by historical context.</li> <li>• Describe how various groups were denied and ultimately gained access to higher education.</li> <li>• State an understanding of the ongoing nature of history.</li> <li>• Translate historical lessons to one's current and future practice.</li> <li>• Identify enduring questions, issues, and trends from the history of higher education and discuss their relevance to current and emergent professional practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Philosophical Foundations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the foundational philosophies, disciplines, and values of the profession.</li> <li>• Supports various philosophies that define the profession.</li> <li>• Be able to model the principles of the profession and expect the same from colleagues and supervisees.</li> <li>• Explain the purpose and use of publications that incorporate the philosophy and values of the profession.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Philosophical Foundations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the principles and philosophy of the profession with students and staff.</li> <li>• Explore new philosophical contexts and approaches by critically questioning and integrating diverging philosophies.</li> <li>• Contributes to the research and scholarship and expansion of the profession.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Societal/Cultural Contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain the public role and societal benefits of student affairs and of higher education generally.</li> <li>● Explain the role and responsibilities of student affairs professional associations.</li> <li>● Describe to the public responsibilities of a student affairs professional and the resulting benefits to society</li> </ul>	<p><b>Societal/Cultural Contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe to staff and students the public responsibilities of a student affairs professional and the resulting benefits to society.</li> <li>● Engage with others to critically examine history for contemporary meaning and promote the value of the profession.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Institutional and Functional Area Contexts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop an understanding of one's specific institution, including institutional history, pivotal moments, student body, and structures.</li> <li>● Describe the roles of faculty, academic affairs, and student affairs educators in the institution.</li> <li>● Describe the evolution of the functional area(s) in which one works.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Institutional and Functional Area Contexts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recognize information about the institution may come from multiple sources, and will involve some level of personal research</li> <li>● Explain about how one's work is designed to contribute to the values of the institution</li> <li>● Learn about how one's position contributes to the betterment of their campus setting and community</li> <li>● Explain how the philosophy of one's functional area(s) contributes to the broader mission of student affairs and higher education.</li> </ul>

## Guiding Value - Personal and Ethical Principles

The values of student affairs practitioners are deeply rooted in their dedication to meeting the needs of students. However, due to the demands of supporting students through crises, providing mental health assistance, and addressing other complex issues, many practitioners find themselves unfulfilled and experiencing a decline in their own health and well-being (Chessman, 2021). The Personal and Ethical Foundations competency aims to cultivate the necessary expertise, skills, and mindset that promote integrity in both personal and professional lives, while also encouraging a healthy work-life balance. By conscientiously developing, critically evaluating, and adhering to a comprehensive ethical standard, this competency strives to align an individual's values and ethics with the demands of the profession. Personal and ethical foundations are intertwined, as integrity is shaped by external ethical standards, an internal sense of compassion, and individual experiences. Our personal and ethical foundations expand through curiosity, introspection, and self-expression.

<b>Core Competencies Related to Personal &amp; Ethical Principles</b>	<b>Continuing Development Related to Personal &amp; Ethical Principles</b>
<p><b>Professional Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Know and comply with relevant laws, policies, and professional ethical standards when advising and assisting students.</li> <li>● Maintain confidentiality within legal and licensing requirements, recognizing when safety outweighs confidentiality</li> <li>● Assess responses to advising and supporting interventions, including traditional campus based as well as virtual interventions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Professional Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seek out opportunities to enhance one’s knowledge and skills to effectively address specific student concerns and work with diverse student populations.</li> <li>● Utilize virtual resources and technology to meet the advising and supporting needs of students.</li> <li>● Utilize communications and learning technology to address students' holistic wellness issues.</li> <li>● Develop and distribute accurate and helpful mental health information for students, faculty, and staff.</li> <li>● Provide staff training to increase advising and helping skills.</li> <li>● Develop opportunities for student involvement in mental health promotion and de-stigmatization of mental illness.</li> <li>● Develop virtual programs and initiatives to meet the needs of students with limited access to services.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Critical Assessment and Self-Directed Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utilize critical reflection to identify one’s prejudices and biases.</li> <li>● Participate in activities that assess and challenge one’s understanding of inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power.</li> <li>● Ensure there are opportunities for comprehensive and fair educational professional development with a focus on inclusion and social justice.</li> <li>● Implement strategies to evaluate the campus climate for students, staff, and faculty.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical Assessment and Self-Directed Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage staff and faculty to engage in action research projects that investigate and address specific issues of injustice or inequality within their institution, fostering a hands-on approach to learning and improvement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Campus and Civic Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Able to role model the principles from the profession to colleagues across campus.</li> <li>● Demonstrate responsible campus citizenship.</li> <li>● Actively contribute to opportunities for campus and community citizenship.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Campus and Civic Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explores options for global engagement.</li> <li>● Able to role model personal and professional opportunities of civic engagement.</li> <li>● Structure personnel to actively seek out learning environments that value global engagement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-Assessment and Reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recognize the importance of reflection in personal, professional, and ethical development.</li> <li>● Broaden perspective by participating in activities that challenge one’s beliefs.</li> <li>● Build regular reflection into one’s daily work schedule.</li> <li>● Integrate reflection into positive action.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self-Assessment and Reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Craft a realistic, summative self-appraisal with ongoing feedback.</li> <li>● Analyze personal experiences for deeper learning/growth and engage others in reflection.</li> <li>● Identify meaningfulness of personal beliefs and commitments.</li> </ul>

**Digital Identity & Citizenship**

- Demonstrate awareness of one's digital identity and engage students in learning activities related to responsible digital communications and virtual community engagement.
- Proactively cultivate a digital identity presence and reputation that models appropriate online behavior and constructive engagement with others in virtual communities.
- Engage in personal and professional digital learning communities and personal learning networks at the local, national and/or global level.

**Digital Identity & Citizenship**

- Utilize local, national, and global digital professional learning communities and personal learning networks to enhance intra- and inter-institutional collaboration and ongoing professional development
- Provide leadership and ongoing training to colleagues and students for the cultivation of an authentic digital identity, presence and reputation that models appropriate online behavior and enables access.
- Contribute to, partner with, and/or provide leadership for local, state/provincial, national, and global digital professional learning communities and personal learning networks to promote the use of technology for educational purposes

**Ethical Codes & Professional Standards**

- Describe ethical statements and principles of relevant professional associations.
- Explain alignment of practice, personal ethics, and ethical statements..
- Utilize/consult with resources to assist with ethical issues.
- Articulate personal code of ethics informed by ethical codes.
- Explain how one's behavior reflects ethics of profession and address lapses in one's behavior.
- Identify ethical issues in the course of one's job.
- Appropriately question institutional actions inconsistent with ethical standards.

**Ethical Codes & Professional Standards**

- Model adherence to ethical guidelines and mediate disparities
- Articulate cultural influences on interpretation of ethical standards
- Implement personal protocol for ethical-decision making
- Distinguish legal and moral influences on codes of ethics.
- Consult with colleagues and students; provide ethical guidance.
- Develop and support an ethical workplace culture.
- Dialogue with others concerning the ethical statements of professional associations.

**Wellness & Healthy Living**

- Recognize and articulate healthy habits for better living.
- Articulate wellness as comprised of emotional, physical, social, environmental, relational, spiritual, moral, and intellectual elements
- Identify positive and negative impacts on wellness and seek assistance from available resources.
- Recognize the impact of personal wellness on others and the duty to create mutual, positive relationships.

**Wellness and Healthy Living**

- Build resilience, manage stress, spiritual activities and relationships in and out of work.
- Create and implement a plan for healthy living.
- Be aware of others' wellness and support their efforts to be well.

**Self Awareness and Continual Reflection**

- Describe how personal values, beliefs, histories and views inform one's perception as an effective leader with and without authority.
- Build mutually supportive relationships with colleagues and students across similarities and differences

**Self Awareness & Continual Reflection**

- Use reflection to develop and incorporate one's authentic self into one's identity as a leader.
- Recognize the interdependence of members within organizational units and throughout the institution,
- Seek out training and feedback opportunities to enhance one's leader and leadership knowledge and skill
- Display congruence between one's identity as a leader and one's professional actions.
- Facilitate reflective learning and relationship building across campus, community, and the profession.

**Professional Service**

- Explain the role of the academy and student affairs professional associations and the importance of service to those associations.
- Articulate the principles of professional practice.
- Explain the purpose and use of professional publications that incorporate the philosophy and values of the profession.
- Actively engage in service to the academy and student affairs professional associations.

**Professional Service**

- Identifies and incorporates emerging values of the profession into one's professional practice.
- Purposefully integrates the use of professional publications into one's daily work.
- Actively engages in leadership in the academy and student affairs professional associations.
- Models, encourages, and promotes community by reinforcing long-standing values of the profession. models the responsibilities and principles of the profession and communicates the expectation of the same from colleagues and supervisees.

## Guiding Value - Social Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In the dynamic and evolving landscape of student affairs and higher education, social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion is both a guiding principle and a call to action. Rooted in current theoretical frameworks, environments are designed to foster the full participation of all groups by addressing and acknowledging the complex interplay of oppression, privilege, and power. Student affairs educators are tasked with cultivating an acute sense of agency and social responsibility that transcends individual and communal boundaries, extending to the larger global context. By equitably distributing resources, raising social consciousness, and working to repair historical and ongoing harms, educators can embed social justice and inclusion into the fabric of their practice. This competency framework outlines a progressive pathway from foundational core understanding to advanced continuing development and application, emphasizing the importance of critical self-reflection, inclusive program design, and institutional accountability. Ultimately, the goal is to embed social justice values into the core mission, goals, and programs of higher education institutions, ensuring that all members of the campus community can thrive in an environment that respects and celebrates their diverse identities and experiences.

<b>Core Competencies Related to Social Justice, Diversity, Equity, &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b>Continuing Development Related to Social Justice, Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion</b>
<p><b>Ethical and Inclusive Application of Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe the process of developing and implementing policy within one’s department and institution, as well as across all levels of external governance.</li> <li>● Review institutional policy and compliance with state and federal laws to ensure all campus community members have equitable and fair access to resources and opportunities.</li> <li>● Engage students in dialogue to include their voices in developing departmental, divisional, and institutional policies.</li> <li>● Analyze policies, compliance, and development efforts to ensure they support social justice, equity, and inclusivity in institutional values, mission, programs, practices, and services.</li> <li>● Advocate for changing unfair laws and policies and promote the creation of fair and decolonized practices.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ethical and Inclusive Application of Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implement mandatory impact assessments for new policies to evaluate their effects on various campus communities, ensuring fairness and equity.</li> <li>● Conduct regular workshops to review and update departmental and institutional policies, ensuring they align with social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and provide equitable access to all campus community members.</li> <li>● Develop and adopt policy frameworks that prioritize equity, considering the differential impact of policies on marginalized and underrepresented groups.</li> </ul>

**Engaging in Socially-Just Practice**

- Integrate knowledge of social justice, inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power into one's practice.
- Connect and build meaningful relationships with others by acknowledging their diverse and intersecting identities, viewpoints and developmental differences.
- Create programs and events that are inclusive, promote social consciousness, and challenge oppressive systems at all levels.
- Address bias incidents affecting campus communities.
- Foster an institutional culture that supports free and open expression of ideas, identities, and beliefs, and encourages negotiation of different standpoints.

**Engaging in Socially-Just Practice**

- Establish partnerships with local community organizations to create programs and initiatives that address the unique needs and challenges of the surrounding community, fostering mutual support and collaboration.
- Engage in advocacy efforts at the state level to influence policies that impact higher education and student affairs, ensuring they support social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and address systemic inequities.
- Develop and implement programs that raise awareness about global social justice issues, encouraging students and staff to think beyond local and national boundaries and understand the interconnectedness of global inequities.

**Critical Assessment and Self-Directed Learning**

- Utilize critical reflection to identify one's prejudices and biases.
- Participate in activities that assess and challenge one's understanding of inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power.
- Ensure there are opportunities for comprehensive and fair educational professional development with a focus on inclusion and social justice.
- Implement strategies to evaluate the campus climate for students, staff, and faculty.
- Assess institutional effectiveness in removing barriers to addressing social justice and inclusion issues.
- Align individual and departmental performance indicators with a clear dedication to social justice and inclusion.

**Critical Assessment and Self-Directed Learning**

- Encourage staff to create personalized professional development plans focused on enhancing their understanding of social justice, inclusion, and their roles in perpetuating or dismantling systems of oppression.
- Conduct annual campus climate surveys to gather data on perceptions of inclusion and social justice, using results to inform institutional improvements.
- Encourage staff and faculty to engage in action research projects that investigate and address specific issues of injustice or inequality within their institution, fostering a hands-on approach to learning and improvement.

**Understanding of Self and Navigating Systems of Power**

- Assess and understand intersectionality and how one's identities are affected by systems of oppression, privilege, and power.
- Articulate a foundational understanding of social justice and inclusion within higher education.
- Identify the social systems that shape multiple identities and sociopolitical perspectives and how they influence lived experiences.
- Identify the systemic barriers to social justice and inclusion, as well as outline the role one's department plays in addressing these challenges.

**Understanding of Self and Navigating Systems of Power**

- Organize sessions to help departments and individuals clarify their roles in addressing systemic challenges, promoting a collective effort towards social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
- Develop mentorship programs that connect individuals from diverse backgrounds, promoting mutual learning and support in navigating systems of power.
- Facilitate power mapping exercises that help individuals identify and analyze the power structures within their institutions, promoting strategies to challenge and reshape these dynamics.

**Organizational Systemic Advocacy**

- Engage in fair and just hiring and promotional practices rooted in equity for all.
- Advocate for creating a more inclusive and socially conscious department, institution, and profession.
- Work to ensure that institutional policies, practices, facilities, structures, systems, and technologies are designed to appreciate the diverse needs of all individuals.

**Organizational Systemic Advocacy**

- Perform regular equity audits to identify and address inequities in hiring, promotion, and retention practices and dismantle colonized processes.
- Ensure equitable distribution of resources, such as funding and support services, to departments and initiatives that promote social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles.
- Ensure all communications, including websites, documents, and presentations, are accessible by using inclusive language and formats such as closed captioning, alternative text for images, and easy-to-read fonts.

## Guiding Value - Supporting Student Learning and Development

The heart of student affairs work is helping college students navigate higher education as they grow and change. Across functional areas, student affairs professionals encourage and support student learning. Learning is “a comprehensive, holistic, and transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development” (Keeling et al., 2004, p. 2). Rather than understanding learning and development as separate entities, student affairs practitioners know that they shape one another, particularly in educational contexts. The college context prompts students’ learning in various instructional contexts, including and beyond classroom settings. To learn, individuals must feel supported through direction, guidance, feedback, and referrals (Burke et al., 2016; Reynolds, 2008; Wagner & Catalano, 2021). Practitioners must help students have a sense of material, psychological, and social security to engage fully in learning (Broton, 2021; Broton & Cady, 2020; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011; Strayhorn, 2019); once students’ basic needs are met, they are more able to participate in the immersive learning experience being in college facilitates (Patton et al., 2016). To encourage and promote student learning, practitioners must have knowledge of the concepts and theories related to advising, development, learning, support, teaching, and well-being in individual and group situations. Student affairs practitioners design support strategies that account for individual differences, institutional resources, individual and group needs, and structural forces.

<b>Core Competencies Related to Student Learning and Support</b>	<b>Continuing Development Related to Student Learning and Support</b>
<p><b>Understanding Theory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Articulate theories and models that describe the learning and development of college students</li> <li>● Describe conditions and practices that facilitate holistic learning across multiple domains</li> <li>● Explain the role of various personal and social identities on student development during college</li> <li>● Identify the strengths and limitations of applying existing theories and models to various student groups and communities</li> <li>● Articulate one’s own developmental journey in relation to formal theories</li> <li>● Identify one’s own informal theories of student learning and how they can be further enhanced by formal theories when working with students</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understanding Theory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify and take advantage of opportunities for curriculum and program development to encourage continual growth</li> <li>● Critique dominant perspectives present in some models of student learning and development to modify for use in practice</li> <li>● Contribute to the development of new theories of learning and development</li> <li>● Provide alternative models that explore student learning and development from an inclusive paradigm</li> </ul>

<p><b>Design and Application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Integrate research into the design and implementation of programs and services that promote learning and development based on current research</li> <li>● Utilize theory-to-practice models to inform individual or unit practice</li> <li>● Construct learning outcomes for learning, teaching, and training activities</li> <li>● Design, implement, and assess technologically-rich learning experiences that model effective use of visual and interactive media</li> <li>● Utilize virtual resources and technology to meet the advising and support</li> </ul>	<p><b>Design and Application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utilize theory to inform divisional and institutional policy and practice</li> <li>● Translate theory to diverse audiences to enhance understandings of student affairs work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement and Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Exhibit culturally-inclusive active listening skills, such as paraphrasing, perception checking, summarizing, questioning, encouraging, and clarifying</li> <li>● Recognize the strengths and limitations of one's worldview on communication with others</li> <li>● Use appropriate nonverbal communication</li> <li>● Facilitate problem-solving</li> <li>● Facilitate individual decision-making and goal-setting</li> <li>● Know and use referral sources to help address student needs and concerns</li> <li>● Utilize digital technologies and collaboration tools to engage students in programs and activities</li> <li>● Demonstrate how one's work with and service to students is inclusive of students participating in online and hybrid learning environments and programs</li> <li>● Maintain an appropriate degree of privacy and confidentiality from applicable legal and licensing requirements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Engagement and Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strategically pursue multiple objectives in conversations with students</li> <li>● Identify patterns of behavior that may signal concerns related to students' well-being</li> <li>● Mentor students</li> <li>● Consult with mental health professionals, as appropriate</li> <li>● Assess face-to-face and virtual responses to advising and supporting interventions</li> </ul>

**Group Dynamics**

- Establish rapport with students, groups, colleagues, and others that acknowledges differences in lived experience
- Facilitate reflection to make meaning from experiences with students, groups, and colleagues
- Facilitate or coach group decision-making, goal-setting, and process

**Group Dynamics**

- Assess the developmental and organizational needs of student groups
- Manage interpersonal conflict between and among individuals and/or groups
- Mediate differences between and among individuals and/or groups

## Essential Element - Assessment, Evaluation, and Research

The Assessment, Evaluation, and Research essential element focuses on the ability to design, conduct, critique, and use various AER methodologies and the results obtained from them, to utilize AER processes and their results to inform practice, strategic planning, and institutional effectiveness, and to shape the political and ethical climate surrounding AER processes and uses in higher education.

<b>Core Competencies Related to Assessment, Evaluation, and Research</b>	<b>Continuing Development Related to Personal &amp; Ethical Principles</b>
<p><b>Designing and Conducting Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Differentiate among assessment, program review, evaluation, planning, and research as well as the methods appropriate to each.</li> <li>● Select AER methods, methodologies, designs, and tools that fit with research and evaluation questions and with assessment and review purposes.</li> <li>● Facilitate appropriate data collection for program- and role-based assessment and evaluation efforts using current technology and methods.</li> <li>● Effectively articulate, interpret, and apply results of AER reports and studies, including professional literature.</li> <li>● Assess the legitimacy, trustworthiness, and/ or validity of studies of various methods and methodological designs (e.g. qualitative vs. quantitative, theoretical perspective, epistemological approach).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Designing and Conducting Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lead and teaching others assessment, program, review, evaluation, planning, and research.</li> <li>● Lead, supervise, and/or collaborate with others to design and analyze assessment, program review, evaluation, and research activities that span multiple methodological approaches.</li> <li>● Demonstrate working knowledge of alternative methodological AER approaches and strategies for ensuring quality results.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Utilize Results to Inform Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider strengths and limitations of various methodological AER approaches in the application of findings to practice in diverse institutional settings and with diverse student populations.</li> <li>● Explain the necessity to follow institutional and divisional procedures and policies (e.g., IRB approval, informed consent) with regard to inclusive, equitable, and ethical assessment, evaluation, and other research activities.</li> <li>● Ensure all communications of AER results are accurate, responsible, and effective.</li> <li>● Identify the political and educational sensitivity of raw and partially processed data and AER results,</li> </ul>	<p><b>Using Results to Inform Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Write and disseminate results in a manner that considers the strengths and limitations of implications for policy, theory, and/or future study.</li> <li>● Effectively align assessment, evaluation, and research findings with the unit's mission/goals, re-allocation of and advocacy for resources.</li> </ul>

handling them with appropriate confidentiality and deference to organizational hierarchies.

- Design program and learning outcomes that are appropriately clear, specific, and measurable, that are informed by theoretical frameworks and that align with organizational outcomes, goals, and values.
- Explain the relationship of AER processes to learning outcomes and goals
- Articulate the connection between AER efforts and strategic planning and institutional effectiveness.
- Apply assessment and evaluation processes to teaching and learning.
- Adhere to the implementation of institutional and professional standards for ethical AER activities.
- Discern appropriate design(s) based on critical questions, available data, and intended audiences.

## Essential Elements - Human, Organizational, and Technology Resources

To accomplish unit, divisional, and institution-wide goals, student affairs educators must wisely and strategically deploy human, organizational, and technological resources to engage in their work in promoting student learning and support. The Human, Organizational, and Technological Resources competency area focuses on the tools and innovations to accomplish work. Additionally, this competency includes the management of human capital, financial, and physical resources (e.g., Barr & McClellan, 2018). Student affairs educators grow as managers by challenging themselves to build new skills in staff selection, supervision, motivation, and evaluation (Pina et al., 2024). These resources should support and enhance the work of student affairs professionals. Managers should utilize tools and resources to emphasize the importance of well-being, belonging, and psychological safety in workplace culture (King, 2021). Workplace values, policies, and cultural norms should be clearly identified (Bensimon et al., 2019).

<b>Core Competencies Related to Human, Organizational, and Technological Resources</b>	<b>Continuing Development Related to Human, Organizational, and Technological Resources</b>
<p><b>Data Use and Compliance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess the accuracy and quality of information gathered.</li> <li>● Model and promote the legal, ethical, and transparent collection, use, and securing of electronic data.</li> <li>● Ensure all participants in education endeavors can access and use the necessary tools for success.</li> <li>● Use universal design principles to model and promote accessibility.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Data Use and Compliance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrate a willingness and capacity to critically examine and change technology-related policies and practices that privilege one group over another.</li> <li>● Support, promote, and/or lead efforts to create a culture where information is valued and systematically scrutinized before its use or interpretation.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use technological resources to maximize the efficiency, creativity, and effectiveness of one's work.</li> <li>● Identify the technological needs of one's unit.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain a level of technological knowledge that allows one to use existing technologies effectively.</li> <li>● Incorporate emerging technologies into one's work as appropriate, legally and contextually.</li> <li>● Discern where technological advances should appropriately be incorporated into one's unit or broader organization.</li> <li>● Provide ongoing education to build capacity for both individual and staff members.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hiring and Staffing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advocate for equitable hiring practices.</li> <li>● Describe ethical hiring techniques and institutional hiring policies and procedures.</li> <li>● Explain how job descriptions are designed and support overall staffing patterns in one's work setting.</li> <li>● Engaged in hiring and promotion practices that are nondiscriminatory and work toward building inclusive teams.</li> <li>● Focus recruitment and retention efforts to diversify areas.</li> <li>● Seek out or create ongoing professional development opportunities for all levels of staff to encourage growth.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hiring and Staffing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify the pros and cons of various staffing patterns, current job descriptions, and work process configurations of one's work setting.</li> <li>● Evaluate the effectiveness of current staffing patterns and job descriptions regarding a unit's ability to effectively meet unit, divisional, and institutional missions and goals.</li> <li>● Ensure equity and inclusion as core values for all employment levels and across divisions in the unit or organization.</li> <li>● Utilize institutional resources to support and assess the effectiveness of initiatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supervision, Communication, and Conflict Resolution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrate familiarity with basic tenets of supervision and possible application of related techniques.</li> <li>● Describe the basic premises that underlie conflict and conflict resolution facilitation.</li> <li>● Communicate using effective verbal, non-verbal, and asynchronous strategies appropriate to the situation in ways that person(s) with whom you are engaged prefer.</li> <li>● Effectively manage and lead meetings through the use of agenda management strategies.</li> <li>● Invest in one's development as a supervisor</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supervision, Communication, and Conflict Resolution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use appropriate techniques for supervising a range of staff performance levels.</li> <li>● Effectively resolve conflict within the unit and among unit members and others promptly.</li> <li>● Determine if verbal and written messages are congruent with desired outcomes and intended recipients or audiences.</li> </ul>

**Resource Management, Stewardship, and Sustainability**

- Demonstrate effective stewardship and use of resources.
- Describe environmentally sensitive issues and explain how one's work can incorporate elements of sustainability.
- Articulate basic institutional accounting techniques for budgeting, as well as monitoring and processing revenue and expenditures.
- Use appropriate facilities management procedures to operate a facility or program in a facility.
- Articulate basic concept of facilities management policies related to energy use and environmental sustainability.
- Articulate how the physical environment impacts the institution's educational mission.
- Conduct equity assessments regarding resource allocation.

**Resource Management, Stewardship, and Sustainability**

- Implement advanced accounting techniques.
- Assess the use of spaces to guide space-planning processes.
- Effectively implement fundraising initiatives that support divisional and institutional goals.
- Champions sustainability efforts within the unit and across the organization.
- Develop a long-range budget that creatively and ethically allocates resources to the needs and priorities of the organization.

**Change Management and Innovation**

- Identify and consult with key stakeholders and individuals with differing perspectives to make informed decisions.
- Articulate the logic and impact of decisions on groups of people, institutional structures, and implications for practice.
- Within the scope of one's position and expertise, lead others to contribute to the organization's effectiveness and success.
- Advocate for change that would remove barriers to student and staff success.
- Share data to inform decisions in transparent, accessible ways.
- Assess the impact of change management on teams (i.e., backfilling positions).

**Change Management and Innovation**

- Convene appropriate personnel to identify and act on the solutions to potential issues.
- Willingly engage in campus governance in a manner that exemplifies responsible campus citizenship.
- Promote a shared vision that drives unit, divisional, and institutional short-term and long-term plans and the ongoing organization of work.
- Implement strategies to account for ongoing changes in cultural, political, and global spheres.
- Demonstrate institutional effectiveness and address critical incidents of discrimination and bias that impact the institution and its members.

## Essential Elements - Law, Policy, and Governance

The Law, Policy, and Governance essential element is a critical competency for student affairs professionals, ensuring they operate within the complex legal and regulatory landscape of higher education. This area encompasses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to apply legal constructs, develop and implement policies, and understand governance structures effectively. By maintaining compliance with laws and institutional policies, professionals safeguard the rights and responsibilities of students, faculty, and staff, fostering an environment grounded in equity and ethical practices.

Understanding and navigating the nuanced frameworks of institutional governance and governmental systems is essential for effective decision-making and advocacy. Professionals in this field must consider how policies and judicial rulings influence their practice, while also addressing emerging legal and policy trends. Additionally, this competency emphasizes risk management and the ethical implications of institutional policies.

<b>Core Competencies Related to Law, Policy, and Governance</b>	<b>Continuing Development for Law, Policy, and Governance</b>
<p><b>Understanding Policy Development Processes and the Application of Legal Constructs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand differences between public, private, and for-profit higher education with respect to the legal system and what they mean to students, faculty, and staff in higher education.</li> <li>• Describe how laws, policies, and judicial rulings influence the rights of students, faculty, and staff in higher education, the student-institutional relationship, and professional practice.</li> <li>• Know and follow applicable laws and policies relevant to functional area and role.</li> <li>• Understand the definitions and applicability of privacy versus confidentiality, and the appropriate instances in which to protect and share information (e.g., under FERPA/FIPPA, HIPAA, and licensure requirements).</li> <li>• Act in accordance with laws and institutional policies regarding non-discrimination (e.g., Title VI, VII, and IX).</li> <li>• Understand the implications and requirements under consumer protection and mandatory reporting laws for one’s work including the Clery Act, state hazing laws, and child abuse reporting laws.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understanding Policy Development Processes and the Application of Legal Constructs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify major internal and external policymakers, as well as stakeholders and special interest groups who influence policy at the institutional and governmental levels.</li> <li>• Describe the governance systems at one’s institution, including governance structures for faculty, staff, and students.</li> <li>• Describe how policy is developed and implemented in one’s department and institution, as well as the local, state/province, and national levels of government.</li> <li>• Implement policies developed by one’s department and institution, as well as the local, state/provincial, and national levels of government.</li> <li>• Enact liability reduction strategies.</li> </ul>

**Understand Governance Structures and Impact on Practice**

- Explain the ways in which the legal system and laws have and are used to ensure and limit rights and access for various groups.
- Know when and how to consult with one's immediate supervisor and institutional legal counsel regarding matters that may have legal ramifications.
- Understand and apply concepts of risk management and reasonable accommodations.
- Understand institutional grievance resolution processes (e.g., student conduct, non-discrimination, and academic grievances).
- Ensure that policies, procedures, programs, and services meet legal, compliance, and policy mandates for the institution.
- Appropriately consult with students and/or represent the student voice in departmental, divisional, and institutional policy development efforts.
- Utilize resources from institutions and professional organizations to be aware of pending legislation which may impact higher education and one's own functional area.
- Understand laws governing employment, including hiring, compensation, and termination.
- Apply principles of risk management to identify and mitigate risks, including related to operational risks and liabilities, compliance risks, and intellectual property.

**Understand Governance Structures and Impact on Practice**

- Identify emerging law and policy trends and discuss how they affect current case precedent.
- Explain parameters established by relevant external and internal governing systems as related to one's professional practice.
- Explain legal theories related to tort liability, negligence, the exercise and limits of free speech, discrimination, and contract law and how these theories affect professional practice.
- Develop and implement institutional policies and practices consistent with laws related to institutional and personal tort liability; contracts; the exercise and limits of expression by faculty, staff, and students; and civil rights, desegregation, and affirmative action.
- Participate appropriately and ethically in governing bodies.
- Utilize appropriate methods to share feedback and comments on policy at the institutional and governmental levels when impacting higher education.
- Critically examine policy development and compliance to ensure that they are equitable and inclusive.

## Essential Elements - Leadership

As an essential element the Leadership competency area in student affairs and higher education is a dynamic and evolving concept, encompassing the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to lead effectively with or without formal authority. This essential element competency area emphasizes the individual and collective processes involved in envisioning, planning, and implementing change. By integrating current research and practice, leadership in student affairs addresses the needs of diverse constituencies, including students, colleagues, faculty, and community members. This approach ensures that leadership remains actionable, timely, and relevant while fostering sustainable and equitable organizational improvement.

<b>Core Competencies Related to Leadership</b>	<b>Continuing Development for Leadership</b>
<p><b>Foundational and Theoretical Principles of Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly communicate the vision and mission of your work unit, division, and institution, ensuring alignment with organizational goals.</li> <li>• Identify and understand individual-level constructs of "leader" and "leadership" to cultivate personal leadership identity.</li> <li>• Explain the values and processes that drive organizational improvement, utilizing relevant leadership theories.</li> <li>• Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of different decision-making processes (e.g., consensus, majority vote) to enhance decision quality.</li> <li>• Understand institutional policies, practices, protocols, and organizational structures to drive positive change and enhance organizational effectiveness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Foundational and Theoretical Principles of Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepen understanding of systemic and organizational constructs of "leader" and "leadership" to address complex challenges.</li> <li>• Integrate new and emerging constructs of "leader" and "leadership" to stay ahead of evolving organizational needs.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast leadership models to identify the most effective approaches for organizational improvement.</li> <li>• Identify potential obstacles and resistance points when designing and implementing change processes.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and implement basic principles of teamwork and teambuilding in diverse work settings.</li> <li>• Describe and apply foundational principles of community building to foster inclusive and cohesive environments.</li> <li>• Provide constructive feedback to colleagues and students, promoting continuous leadership skill development.</li> <li>• Build and sustain mutually supportive relationships across similarities and differences to strengthen team dynamics.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish systems to provide leadership development opportunities, such as committees, task forces, and cross-functional teams.</li> <li>• Create a culture that advocates for the effective use of feedback systems (e.g., 360 feedback) to enhance leadership performance.</li> <li>• Develop and sustain mentoring systems to support ongoing leadership development for students and staff.</li> <li>• Facilitate reflective learning and relationship building across campus, community, and professional settings to promote continuous growth.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnering with Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know and use referral resources and exhibit referral skills in seeking expert assistance</li> <li>• Know how and when to utilize transactional and transformational strategies when leading and engaging others</li> <li>• Consult with mental health professionals as appropriate.</li> <li>• Exhibit culturally inclusive listening skills (e.g., establishing rapport, paraphrasing, perception checking, summarizing, questioning, encouraging, avoiding interrupting, clarifying).</li> <li>• Use appropriate nonverbal communication.</li> <li>• Recognize the strengths of one's own worldview on communication with others.</li> <li>• Facilitate individual decision making and goal setting</li> <li>• Assess the developmental needs of students</li> <li>• Facilitate Problem solving.</li> <li>• Manage interpersonal conflict between and among individuals and groups.</li> <li>• Mediate differences between and among individuals or groups.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partnering with Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with campus departments and organizations, community agencies and other institutions to address students' wellness in a comprehensive, collaborative way.</li> <li>• Develop liaisons with community providers to ensure seamless and coordinated holistic care.</li> <li>• Strategically and simultaneously pursue multiple objectives in conversations with students.</li> <li>• Develop and implement successful prevention and outreach programs on campus, including effective mental health publicity and marketing</li> <li>• Demonstrate culturally inclusive advising, supporting, coaching, and counseling strategies.</li> <li>• Ensure others are trained to deliver programs and services at the lowest level of risk possible.</li> </ul>

**Crisis Management and Response**

- Explain campus crisis intervention systems and structures
- Initiate and exercise appropriate institutional crisis intervention responses and processes. Describe and follow campus protocols for responding to critical incidents and campus crises.
- Identify when and with whom to implement appropriate crisis management and intervention responses.
- Explain the basic tenets of personal or organizational risk and liability as they relate to one's work.
- Identify patterns of behavior that may signal mental health or other wellness concerns.
- Provide advocacy services to survivors of violence

**Crisis Management and Response**

- Engage in the development of policy, procedure and decision-making minimizing risk to self, students, constituents and institution.
- Participate in developing, implementing and assessing the effectiveness of the campus crisis management program.
- Coordinate and lead response processes as they relate to crisis interventions
- Provide effective post-traumatic response to events/solutions collaborating with other appropriate campus departments.
- Provide mental health consultation to faculty, staff, and campus behavioral assessment teams

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