Introduction

Here at UNCG, we often speak of our campus’s Culture of Care. Our commitment to fostering a supportive, inclusive, and welcoming environment for both students and staff has helped us move forward through the challenges presented by COVID-19. Our care for one another contributed to low case counts, which helped keep us on campus and therefore keep students better focused on their academic and extracurricular goals. We know the pandemic presented additional challenges for everyone, especially our most vulnerable students, and we will continue to work to remove any obstacles from our students’ graduation journey.

Our staff was flexible in creating new options to engage students in a mostly virtual format. Through their dedication, we were still able to offer opportunities for our students to participate in community service, student groups, leadership training, discourse, and career preparation. Additionally, this year we witnessed large-scale protests against racial injustice, national elections, and nationwide unrest. We hosted campus conversations about these issues and fostered an environment where students could express their opinions and differences genuinely and respectfully. It is the care and dedication exhibited by our team that led us to being named a Diverse: Issues in Education Top 30 Most Promising Places to Work in Student Affairs this year.

In our annual report, you’ll read about our goals and the culmination of our 2018–2021 strategic plan, as well as how we have supported improvements in our students’ sense of belonging and our diversity and inclusion efforts. I hope you’ll see our Culture of Care reflected in all of our undertakings and accomplishments. Thank you for your continued support of our Division.

Cathy Akens, Ed.D.
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

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STRATEGIC PLAN
PRIORITY:

The Division of Student Affairs supports the mission of the University by providing high quality student services and developmental programs that promote student learning and student success and ultimately contribute to student retention and graduation at UNCG. Our current strategic plan outlines major priorities for the Division to accomplish for the years 2018 to 2021. As we close out this plan and prepare for the next, we reflect on our targets and successes.

Student Learning and Student Success
- Partnered with Student Success to develop strategies to deepen the connection between co-curricular programming and the academic curriculum
- Began the process of adopting a co-curricular approach for the Division:
  - Updated the co-curricular learning domains
  - Finalized the learning outcomes associated with the learning domains
  - Mapped existing co-curricular programs to the learning outcomes

Student Engagement
- 1,593 student events were hosted: 960 by Student Affairs offices and 633 by student organizations
- SpartanConnect utilization reached 9,700 active users, an increase of 1,000 from 2019–2020
- 61% of fee-paying students actively used SpartanConnect

Campus Climate and Inclusion
- 16 projects funded by iBelong grants served over 400 students in book clubs, presentations, and social events
- Three surveys were implemented to understand the impact of the pandemic on students:
  - Hope4College national survey in the fall
  - Follow up locally administered survey in the spring
  - Student vaccination status survey
- Worked with UNCG Police to review when and how we utilize law enforcement support and identify opportunities for alternative approaches to supporting students, such as those experiencing mental health crises
Student Well-Being and Support

- With the onset of COVID-19, action plans were quickly developed and implemented to maintain operations and meet unique challenges associated with enhanced cleaning, student move-in, quarantine space management, COVID-19 testing, and health and safety guidelines
- UNCG Cares websites were launched to centralize support resources for students and to provide guidance for faculty and staff on how to assist students
- Ask. Listen. Refer. suicide prevention training offered to faculty, staff, and students
  ▶ 633 individuals completed the training
- Question, Persuade, Refer suicide prevention training program was launched in its pilot phase
  ▶ 1,026 students completed the online training
- Continuity of Care initiative was developed to support the 100 students who remained on campus in March 2020 and later evolved into supporting students who tested positive
  ▶ Served over 300 students through direct outreach from staff

Organizational Sustainability and Infrastructure

- PepsiCo. Student Assistance & Relief Endowed Program Fund was established in partnership with Auxiliary Services to provide $500,000 over 10 years to support food and housing insecurity initiatives and emergency use funds for students in need
- The Spartan Food Insecurity Fund was established to provide resources to students experiencing disruptions to their regular access to food. To date, over 140 donors have contributed almost $19,000 to this fund
- Thanks to individual donors and student organizations, the Student Assistance Fund for Emergencies, or SAFE Fund, was increased by $56,080. The Division awarded $67,414 to 318 students who were in need of immediate one-time emergency funds
- The University received $25,000 in grant funding through the UNC System office to expand mental health support services on campus. This funded Mental Health First Aid, a train-the-trainer suicide bystander intervention program
- The Division worked with the Center for Creative Leadership to launch a 360 evaluation process for Student Affairs senior leadership and department directors
- Over 240 professionals from across the state joined us for the annual Hot Topics conference, held in a fully-virtual format this year. Hot Topics was just one of 13 workshops that the Professional Development Committee hosted. Topics included writing professional publications, obtaining advanced degrees, assessment, and employee wellness
RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The 2020–2021 academic year began nearly five months into the COVID-19 global pandemic. While following the health and safety guidance provided by federal, state, and county officials, academic instruction was delivered in a combination of online, hybrid, and in-person classes. The Division of Student Affairs was able to adjust the delivery of offerings to continue to provide services to students. In addition, the Elliott University Center served as a county-wide vaccination distribution site in the spring, when vaccines became available for education employees and college students. Housing and Residence Life managed the on-campus quarantine and isolation spaces, which were utilized by 1,010 students. In partnership with Student Health Services and Dining Services, Housing & Residence Life also developed a process to help provide the necessary resources so that students were able to remain engaged with their classwork.

Although in-person offerings were drastically reduced, UNCG saw a record number of students engaged across online co-curricular programming. Departments strategized how to convert traditional and new programming—from career fairs to fitness classes—to a virtual format. The Division staff truly banded together to support not only our students but also fellow employees:

- Career & Professional Development created meaningful opportunities for students to engage with 3,530 organizations, only slightly below the count of 3,647 from 2019–2020
- Our knowledge rate—the percentage of graduates for which the institution has reasonable and verifiable information concerning post-graduation career activities—exceeded the 65% NACE standard for both undergraduate (66.6%) and graduate students (77.6%)
- The Fall, Education, Helping Professions, and Health Professions Career Fairs were all hosted virtually, with the Fall Fair yielding 776 interactions and the Spring fairs collectively yielding 1,661 interactions
- Campus Activities & Programs hosted over 70 virtual programs, reaching out to students both on and off campus
- The first annual Lead Academy was launched in collaboration between the Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement and Campus Activities & Programs. There were over 170 participants in this student group leader virtual learning series, with topics such as inclusion within student groups, programming, managing finances, recruitment and retention, community service, and self-care
- The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities saw a 58% increase in cases managed from 2018–2019, while the Dean of Students saw a 43% increase in cases
• Dean of Students staff reached out to 1,151 students who were in isolation or quarantine, providing academic and other support resources. DOS also led the Continuity of Care group, which made phone calls to check in with and provide support and resources for 318 students who were in quarantine due to a positive COVID-19 test.

• Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities issued 791 charges related to COVID-19, such as hosting large gatherings or not adhering to face covering mandates.

• The Elliott University Center was not only a county-wide vaccine distribution site, but also became the campus’s weekly COVID-19 testing site.

• Housing & Residence Life managed on-campus quarantine and isolation spaces, which were utilized by 1,010 students. Staff continue to facilitate programming and individual outreach to help all residential students feel at home both in the residence halls and at the University.

• A $1500 housing grant was created by Housing & Residence Life to be applied during the 2021–2022 academic year. Through a partnership with Enrollment Management, this was marketed to incoming and continuing students.

• Due to COVID-19 guidelines, the Kaplan Center could not open to patrons until September 11, 2020. A summer programming team, made up of 11 staff and graduate assistants, was able to leverage virtual options for students and members to engage in a variety of activities including fitness, wellness, outdoors, trivia, Esports, and arts and crafts.

• Military-Affiliated Services navigated changes to UNCG policy, in particular the COVID-19 Academic Relief Package, which could impact VA benefits.

• Student Health Services’ entire workflow processes were altered to incorporate telemental services in the Counseling Center. Primary medical care services were also accessible both remotely and in person. Student Health also managed COVID-19 testing of symptomatic students.
The University and the Division of Student Affairs strive to promote a climate where everyone feels supported and welcomed. Since our iBelong Project was launched in the Spring 2019 semester, the Division has led efforts—even in the midst of challenges created by the pandemic—to better understand student experiences at UNCG. Conversations with students and programs around a sense of belonging help us in learning how we can best help all students succeed at the G. We know that a sense of belonging and a feeling of community are crucial to student retention and ultimate success. Achievements in this area were marked by the following efforts from our departments:

**Campus Activities & Programs**

CAP developed and hosted over 70 online programs for students through Rawkin’ Welcome Week, Activities & Campus Events (ACE), Fraternity & Sorority Life, the Student Government Association, and student group development programming. There was a 28.1% increase in unique students involved in at least one student organization.

The Order of Omega is an honor society for members of Greek organizations, recognizing juniors and seniors who have exemplified high standards in the areas of leadership, scholarship, and involvement within their organization, the campus, and local community. In 2020–2021, the Order was reinstated at UNCG, and 22 students were initiated into the honor society.

**Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities**

The Office of Rights and Responsibilities continued to help students critically examine their own learning and growth. Members of the conduct team attested to an increase in interpersonal, decision making, and critical thinking skills as a result of their participation. Nearly all students who submitted student reflection papers as part of the conduct process demonstrated how their actions were in conflict with community standards.

The conduct process saw a 149% increase in charges. This allowed University staff to engage students in educational conversations, often during a time period where students were less engaged than in previous years, due to in-person limitations. This intervention allowed for students to practice reflection skills and be introduced to additional staff and support systems at UNCG.

**Dean of Students**

The Dean of Students continued its positive work with students in the Crisis Management program. In collaboration and consultation with the Counseling Center, DOS staff support students who experienced a crisis. Students served through this program experienced an average increase in their overall GPA of .3. Compared to students who were referred but did not participate in the program, these students were 3% less likely to withdraw from the university. They also showed a higher cumulative end-of-year GPA when compared to those who did not participate. This continues to show that the Crisis Management process has a positive impact on students.
Housing & Residence Life

Resident Advisors completed 5,627 intentional one-on-one interactions, both in person and virtually, with residential students in the Spring semester. 3,344 referrals were made for students: 191 were made to faculty office hours, 517 made to tutoring resources, and 1,503 made to offices such as Financial Aid, Student Support Services, the Library, Housing & Residence Life, the Academic Achievement Center, and International Programs.

Residence Life also received an iBelong Grant which focused on connecting first-year residents without roommates. Using targeted and specific marketing, Residence Life reached out to student populations that had been identified as potentially having barriers to creating social connections with other students. A total of 75 students participated in a series of programs. 97% of students who participated reported meeting someone new, and 80% reported planning to connect with one or more of the people they met in the future.

Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement

Nearly 300 students participated in the Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels of the Leadership Challenge during the 2020-2021 academic year. For the Bronze and Silver levels, in-person service was shifted to an alternative assignment of researching and writing about a community organization. Gold students were able to engage in both virtual and in-person service, while following COVID-19 protocols. 11 community partners finished the Gold level with our students this year.

Recreation & Wellness

Student staff self-reported positive benefits of their employment in the year-end survey. Respondents reported developing skills in goal setting, creating interpersonal relationships, teamwork, communication, leadership, embracing diversity and creating inclusive environments, time management, understanding healthy behaviors, professionalism, and work ethic.

The garden at Piney Lake produced 80 pounds of food to donate to the Spartan Open Pantry, including carrots, lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, watermelon, rosemary, pumpkins, and broccoli. The Club Sports team held their canned food drive to benefit the Pantry once again and collected 168 cans in the fall semester, and over 300 items in the spring.

The Center for Student Well-Being staff chaired the campus-wide Suicide Prevention Grant Implementation Team following the acceptance of our proposal for a UNC System Behavioral Health grant in the amount of $23,730. 1,034 participants completed Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training online. Of those participants, 98.6% of participants believe QPR will help them help someone experiencing thoughts of suicide. 22% of participants reported that based on the training, they know someone who may need help, and that they intend to reach out to them now. Participants also greatly increased their rate of understanding about suicide and prevention and confidence in their ability to help a suicidal person.
The social reckoning of racial injustice that erupted in late May 2020 continued to impact the country and our community through the fall and into spring 2021. Student Affairs continued to provide leadership to campus in creating a welcoming environment and examining systems that negatively impact historically marginalized communities.

One of the most important efforts led by Student Affairs was the creation of our Bias Education & Support Team. Led by the Dean of Students Office, a multidisciplinary, cross-divisional working group was formed to research and create such a team. Over the course of the year, the group was able to identify best practices for team creation, develop methods for reporting incidents of bias, create strategies for educational outreach, develop protocols for reported incidents, and create an informational website. The implementation team was launched in Fall 2021.

The Office of Intercultural Engagement provided support to students involved with the Neo-Black Society and with the UNCG Athletics Department for two awareness marches which took place in September 2020 and April 2021. Each of these events had starting points on campus and ended at the courthouse in downtown Greensboro. OIE also provided timely responses, messages of support, and spaces for debriefing and processing trauma connected to violence against historically excluded groups including Black Americans and Asian American & Pacific Islander populations.

In order to address the underutilization of counseling services for Hispanic students, the Counseling Center collaborated with OIE and the SALSA student group, for the purpose of networking and increasing marketing and support of students. The Counseling Center also successfully recruited three Spanish-speaking mental health providers.

The Office of Accessibility Resources & Services removed barriers for returning students with established accommodation needs by allowing them to opt-in to having their accommodation letters automatically sent at the beginning of each semester. OARS also provided or co-presented more than 20 presentations about accommodations, awareness, safety, etc.

A total of 68 faculty and staff completed Green Zone training, which teaches members of the UNCG community about the issues and concerns faced by our military-affiliated students.

Finally, the Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement executed an effective campus-wide voter engagement plan during a tumultuous national election season. Despite most things being virtual, OLCE staff and student leaders facilitated 65 “Voting 101 for Engaged Citizens” workshops to over 750 students. GiveEfforts resulted in a continuing NASPA/Campus Vote Project designation of UNCG as a “Voter Friendly Campus” and inclusion in Washington Monthly’s 2020 Best Colleges for Student Voting Honor Roll. OLCE also led the Spartan Service Day and MLK Day of Service, in which 381 students participated with 12 community partners. They also raised $12,466 for the Spartan Open Pantry through their Empty Bowls event during Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and grant writing.
STAFF RECOGNITION FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

This year, our staff continued to excel professionally, earning multiple awards and accolades while leading campus-wide committees, task forces, and partnerships.

Gus Peña, director of the Office of Intercultural Engagement, was named a 2021 Leader in Diversity by Triad Business Journal. The inaugural Leaders in Diversity awards recognize individuals who successfully incorporate authentic diversity and inclusion practices in the workplace. Gus is one of three Top Diversity and Inclusion Officers recognized in 2021’s class of award winners.

As part of his work in OIE, Gus leads his team in diversity, equity, and inclusion work in addition to multicultural leadership development, cultural programming, policy development, and student support and mentoring. He was the recipient of the 2019 Outstanding Student Group Advisor Award and was recognized as a Notable Latino in 2017 by the Latino Community Coalition of Guilford County.

“Gus Pena is a talented educator and a tireless leader, and he is passionate about improving conditions for others. He is a true advocate who lives the call to action, and his service is integral to the inclusion and equity efforts here at UNCG. The work that Gus leads through the Office of Intercultural Engagement helps ensure more equitable experiences for our students, in turn making it more possible for them to achieve their goals—which is also reflected by our achievement in social mobility rankings. We are so proud of the work that he does not only on campus, but also in the Greensboro community, and we are thrilled that he is being recognized as a Leader in Diversity.”

- Dr. Cathy Akens, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Megan Karbley, Assistant Dean of Students, was recognized as the Division’s Diversity and Inclusion Award recipient. This award recognizes a staff member who has excelled and provided distinguished service in the areas of diversity and inclusion. Whether maximizing or creating an opportunity, this staff person prioritizes diversity and inclusion when supporting and engaging with students from various backgrounds and identities, when collaborating with colleagues and departments within the Division, and/or when engaging in their own ongoing professional development.

Megan has been instrumental in the development of the Bias Education and Support Team. 2021–2022 will be the inaugural academic year of this initiative, which serves the campus community by offering a reporting process that invites students to document and proactively address the impacts of bias-related incidents, behaviors, and actions.

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**DSA STAFF AWARDS**

**WINNERS FOR '20–'21**

**Emily Wiersma**
New Student Transitions & First Year Experience

This award is presented to a person or department outside of Student Affairs for their collaborative efforts with our Division.

**Carol Bell**
Unsung Hero Award

The Unsung Hero Award is given to an individual who works quietly behind the scenes for the good of Student Affairs and UNCG and, while not being publicly celebrated, demonstrates leadership through dedication and service.

**Jolie Helton**
Team Player Award

The Team Player Award recognizes a Student Affairs employee who treats other team members with respect. They consider the ideas and opinions of others, share information, are willing to accept responsibility and work beyond their office and/or department. They utilize strong interpersonal skills, work towards maintaining harmonious relationships while enhancing team productivity and broader University collaboration.

**Amberlina Alston**
Graduate Assistants of the Year Award

This award recognizes a student serving in a graduate assistantship who has displayed exemplary performance in both their own position as well as in service to the Division, University, and/or community beyond their assigned duties.

**Katelyn Bodwell**
Rookie of the Year

The Rookie of the Year Award recognizes an employee who is in their first year of employment and has displayed exemplary performance both in their own position as well as in service to the Division, University, and/or community beyond their assigned duties.

**Colleen Burford**
Culture of Care Award

This award recognizes an employee who has made a significant difference in the life of one or more students by being an example of providing a Culture of Care and going above and beyond to impact.

**Michelle Parson**
Legacy of Excellence Award

This award is presented to an employee who has created a legacy of excellence, supported student success, and provided outstanding contributions to the Division and the University for a minimum of seven years.

**Caroline Forrest**
Graduate Assistants of the Year Award

**Paul Lentz & the Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement**
Excellence in Assessment Award

These awards recognize an individual and a department who have made a significant accomplishment in assessment or contribution to the culture of assessment for Student Affairs.
More than ever, Student Affairs donors provide essential support to emerging areas of need. Whether funding iBelong grants to increase students’ sense of belonging, establishing five Spartan Open Pantry To Go locations across campus supported by the Spartan Food Insecurity Fund, or furthering campus initiatives through the Spartan Families Fund, donors are key partners in the co-curricular enterprise.

Your gift impacts students’ lives, helps them to go farther, and leaves an impact on our campus.

The alumnae-sisters of the Nu Rho Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha accomplished an important goal in 2021. After fully endowing the Pearls of Promise—Nu Rho Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Scholarship in just two years, these trailblazing women were the first UNCG National Pan-Hellenic Council sorority to award a student scholarship. In 2021, the fund’s donors selected their first two scholarship recipients.

One of the recipients acknowledged how the scholarship impacted her college experience and her appreciation for the alumnae members of the Nu Rho Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Inc.:

“This scholarship is special to me because it is from the alumni from our Sweet Nu Rho Chapter of the Illustrious Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. I have worked diligently through and through each semester to uphold the standards of my organization. This scholarship specifically will help me aid my total cost of attendance for school. Previous semesters I have paid out of pocket to continue school and it can be a challenge as a student employee. I am forever grateful for this scholarship and will continue to strive for greatness.”

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