

Foundations of Student Affairs Practice at the University of Alaska

- There is no standard structure that fits all campuses equally well. Factors such as size of enrollment, student characteristics, mix of services offered, location, culture and history influence how the structure of student affairs should be best organized.
- Student learning, development of students, and service to students are organizing themes of the student affairs practice. Student affairs compliment the academic mission of the university. Helping our students reach their full potential academically, socially and personally.
- Student engagement is an important precursor to student success. Vibrant student affairs programs/services create student engagement and community, which leads to persistence and completion. Organizational structures should be intentionally designed to maximize the relationship that exists between academic and student affairs so as to help students reach their full potential.
- When managed at the campus level: (1) student learning and engagement is the focus of student affairs practice, and (2) out-of-class experiences of students contributes substantially to their learning and growth.
- Student affairs administrators view the organizational structure as a vehicle for carrying out their educational, leadership, management and service goals. The integrated network of student affairs professionals is what collectively ensures we optimize access, retention, engagement, persistence and engagement.
- Student affairs student outcomes provide a common language and assessment framework to support the holistic learning and development of students and they ensure functions, programs and services align in meaningful ways with the institution's learning outcomes.
- Student affairs leaders are more successful at integrating student learning and student development in functions and programs when they have frequent and direct interaction with students at the campus level.
- Ensuring student safety and the security of facilities and managing institutional risk and limiting liability are foundational elements of our work. As such, student affairs programs must be staff adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish mission and goals.
- Managing risk is at the forefront of what we do in student affairs and our organizations are structured to prevent and manage risks. Students who do not feel safe or secure do not persist.
- Student affairs programs and services are designed to maximize the quality of the relationship or bond that is established between the student and the campus. A student's degree of commitment and attachment to their chosen campus (e.g. affinity) are key student retention and persistence factors.

Considerations for the re-organization of student affairs at the University of Alaska

- There is a temporal dimension to this effort - timing matters: we must be deliberate and measured in our approach – consequences are significant.
- This is just one option based on unknowns.
- Campus affinity matters – particularly for student activities, residence life, diversity programs, and student organizations.