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**University Life Strategic Plan 2013-2019**

**Updated Dec 2017**

***UNIVERSITY LIFE:***

***We prepare Mason students for the demands of work, social responsibility, and life in an ever-changing global society.***

Through a range of direct services and programs, University Life supports *every student* at Mason from orientation through graduation. The University Life goals and strategic actions outlined below are informed by changing student demographics, attention to increasingly complex student needs, and the overall goal of post-graduate success and well-being in life and career. Successfully implementing these strategic actions will only be possible with a division-wide effort, one that spans every unit on every campus. These goals and actions are designed to help ALL Mason students succeed. *Please note that this plan will reflect updates as pressing student needs emerge and regional, national, and global circumstances shift and change.*

Our strategic plan focuses on the four primary goals below. The achievement of these goals will have a positive impact on overall student success measures, including **well-being**; **engagement and learning; retention and timely degree completion, and post-graduation success.**

* Engaged Students: Engage students in high impact curricular and co-curricular learning experiences.
* Strategic Support Services: Provide services that help students efficiently navigate obstacles and achieve short term and long term goals.
* Inclusive, Thriving Community: Create an environment in which all members of the Mason community can thrive.
* Efficient Operations: Innovate, collaborate, and communicate to achieve organizational excellence.

**Student Success Strategy:**   
In an effort to deliver a transformative Mason learning experience; provide the highest level of support and service to students and their families; and to facilitate a thriving, inclusive campus community, University Life will cultivate an environment that is:

* Accessible (open to all students),
* Engaging and experiential,
* Integrative (curricular and co-curricular, multicultural and global),
* Technology-rich (online delivery of programs/effective use of Campus Labs Student Success Suite), and
* Proactive and supportive (peer and staff coaches).

**Relates to University Strategic Plan Goals: 1,2,3,4,6,7, and 12**

This strategy will be realized through the following strategic actions that support each of   
the four primary strategic goals. The University Life Strategic Plan goals are mapped to one or more of the George Mason University Strategic Plan goals (http://strategicplan.gmu.edu/), as indicated beneath each goal that follows.

**Engaged Students goal: Engage students in high impact curricular and co-curricular learning experiences.**   
***Relates to University Strategic Plan Goals: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12***

**Co-Curricular Pathways Strategic Action:**

**Design and implement four co-curricular pathway programs that will engage students in experiential learning.**

*University Life is committed to preparing students for the demands of work, social responsibility, and life in an ever-changing global society. Through co-curricular pathway programs, which will engage students in experiential learning, University Life will help students develop 21st century knowledge and skills as follows:*

* Prepare for successful careers *(Path 1: Career Readiness)*
* Develop well-being practices and thrive *(Path 2: Well-Being)*
* Develop multicultural and global competencies *(Path 3: Multicultural and Global)*
* Become agents of positive community change *(Path 4: Civic Learning and Community Engagement)*

**What Success Looks Like:** Develop and implement a co-curriculum for undergraduate students in 4 pathway areas with progressive levels of competence building; increase pathway enrollment by 10% each year; collaborate and engage with Mason Impact initiative to provide students with a seamless experience.

**Student Leadership Strategic Action:**

**Develop a coordinated division-wide process to enhance and expand student leadership experiences.** *In order to produce the strong leadership talent needed over the next decade and to inspire the development, emergence, and recognition of leadership throughout the Mason community, University Life will coordinate a division-wide commitment to increasing and enhancing student leadership.*

**What Success Looks Like:** *With a shared definition of student leadership categories, develop, implement and assess* student leadership training for University Life student employees and divisional training on selected leadership topics for student leaders. Inconjunction with the Patriot Experience, 100% of University Life units will utilize Get Connected to identify students who participate in leadership experiences; Identify opportunities to increase efficiency of leadership training through the use of technology and strategic partnerships.

**Graduate Student Strategic Action:**   
**Develop a coordinated division-wide plan for promoting the success and well-being of graduate and professional students**  
*Graduate and professional students comprise roughly one-third of Mason’s student population. University Life is committed to serving this population through the provision of resources and programs catered to their unique needs.*

**What Success Looks Like:** In order to gain a better understanding of graduate student needs, develop an assessment tool and conduct an assessment of graduate student experience; develop and implement a communications strategy for graduate student outreach; increase unique attendance of graduate students by 10% at UL events; and create opportunities for enhanced professional development for University Life-sponsored Graduate Assistants.

**Strategic Support Services goal: Provide services that help students efficiently navigate obstacles and achieve short term and long term goals.**  ***Relates to University Strategic Plan Goals: 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12***

**Coaching Strategic Action:   
Implement a student success coaching model***Success coaches will help first year students explore their strengths and interests, integrate their learning (including experiential opportunities and internships), connect with people and resources, and create and implement action plans to achieve their personal, academic, and professional/career goals.*

**What Success Looks Like:** Develop and implement a peer-led success coaching program; enroll at least 200 new students in program each year; retain coaching participants at rates at least 5% higher than non-participants, measured by cohort.

**Access and Inclusion Strategic Action:**

**Expanding support for first-generation; low income/high ability; and undocumented students and their families.**

*In support of Mason’s commitment to access and inclusion, University Life will expand and diversify programs and services to attract, support, and graduate first-generation, low-income, high-ability, and undocumented students.*

**What Success Looks Like:**

Increase coordination of support and initiatives for first-generation students, and make intentional connections for students to appropriate campus resources. Review support structures and make structures more evident through the increased collaborative efforts of departments, staff, faculty, and input from students.

**Psychological, Health, Disability and Safety Strategic Action:**

**Facilitate earlier identification of and support for students with psychological, health, and safety needs through increased awareness and prevention-focused initiatives.**

*Rapid changes that characterize today’s society and the unprecedented access to higher education – demographic and cultural changes; local, national and global events; increased competition for resources; economic and financial concerns; demanding lifestyles and rising expectations; socio-emotional needs and rising levels of overall stress and anxiety; and increasingly complex health challenges - will require all members of the campus community – faculty, staff, students and families – to be more aware and intentional in their response to students experiencing these challenges.*

**What Success Looks Like: (Psychological)**

Assess and evaluate satisfaction and effectiveness of current prevention programming (Mason Cares) to capture whether learning outcomes and experiences serve the Mason community best; expand and tailor prevention training to meet the needs of specific populations. (i.e. Mason Korea, INTO, Athletics and others), explore a suicide awareness campaign through potential partnership with the Jed Campus Foundation and by partnering with the Student Health Advisory Board, and to explore online education or treatment programs (i.e. TAO and Welltrack) for potential use at Mason.

**What Success Looks Like: (Disability)**

Disability will be included as a diverse population by engaging with offices focused on inclusion (i.e. ODIME, CDE, LGBTQ); offer five Disability Awareness and Inclusion Workshops to faculty and staff per academic year; increase training related to disability by exploring opportunities to offer 2 online modules; expand fee-based programming to individuals with complex needs. (i.e. Autism, Learning and Psychological disabilities).

**What Success Looks Like: (Safety)**

Emergency Management will assess and revise Community Assistance Plan and provide training to all UL staff, Human Resources and Payroll, and other associated staff.

**Post Grad Success Strategic Action:**

**Develop and lead a centrally coordinated and seamless approach to preparing Mason students for post-graduate success.**

*As institutions across the country look at better ways to prepare students for post-graduate success, the most strategic universities will invest heavily in a centralized career education model that truly embeds career readiness into the learning experience for every student, maximizes campus resources and cuts redundancies. A centralized, strong, innovative career services operation at Mason will strengthen Mason’s position as a top source of talent and will lead to increased recruitment, retention, and overall student success.*

**What Success Looks Like:**Cultivate a shared understanding of, and common language across campus for what career readiness means through continuous marketing of the career readiness equation and growth of the Career Influencers Network (30 new faculty/staff trained by University Career Services each year). Maximize campus positions as meaningful career readiness competency building experiences by converting student positions into internships, as well as implementing use of the Student Employee Rubric by 100% of UL offices with student wage employees and expanding its use into non-UL units. Increase access to career education through development of additional online career courses, establishment of University Career Services staff presence in colleges one day/week, and increased student enrollment in the Patriot Experience Career Readiness Pathway. Strengthen relationship with area employers through establishment of the Patriot Pipeline Internship Program for Northern VA Chamber of Commerce organizations.

**Inclusive Thriving Community: Create an environment in which all members of the Mason community can thrive.*****Relates to University Strategic Plan Goals: 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 12***

**Sexual Violence Prevention Strategic Action:**

**Address campus sexual violence comprehensively and reduce its occurrence.**

*Ending the epidemic of sexual violence on college campuses is critical to student success and well-being. The impact of sexual violence reaches far beyond the incident of violence. Sexual violence impacts not only the survivor/victim’s physical, emotional, psychological, and social well-being*, *but the well-being of our campus community. Victimization results in increased stopout/dropout rates and limited opportunities for success. University life is committed to ending sexual violence at Mason through education, training, and enforcement.*

**What Success Looks Like:**

Complete 75% of the recommendations from the Sexual Assault and Interpersonal Violence Task Force report.

**Internationalize Campus Life Strategic Action:**

*In support of Mason's commitment to internationalize our campuses, University Life will ensure that all international students are fully integrated into the Mason community and that domestic students are engaged in global and multicultural opportunities.*

**What Success Looks Like:**  
Conduct four "Working with International Students" workshops in order to raise awareness among Mason faculty and staff of the unique issues and benefits of interacting with international students. Sustain the synergy of both international and domestic students partnered in the Patriot Experience Global and Multicultural Pathway through the VIP program (current membership is 235). This integrates their varied interests into engagement opportunities to develop a global vision in both our international and domestic students. Seek opportunities to expand participation across UL. Use online and social media resources to raise Mason and community awareness of global engagement and learning opportunities in order to increase student participation.

**Well-Being Strategic Action:**

*Relates to University Strategic Plan Goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8*

*Staying consistent with Mason’s Strategic goal #7, to become a Well-Being University, University Life will continue to use partnerships and creative approaches, such as the Gallup StrengthsFinder, to enhance education and awareness. Engagement in Well-Being will be integrated with opportunities for staff and students to pursue lives of vitality, purpose, resilience, and engagement, which are enriched by diversity and inclusion.*

**What Success Looks Like:**

An increase in student participation in the Patriot Experience Well-Being pathway by 10% annually, and campus-wide access to 4 to 6 Gallup StrengthsFinder events each month to increase education and awareness as we move toward achieving greater Well-Being.

**University Life Operational Strategy:**

In an effort to serve our stakeholders and deliver a best-in-class return-on-investment for students and their families, University Life will increase transparency and accountability of our operations by using data to inform decision-making, identifying opportunities for increased efficiencies, and determining the effectiveness of our programs and services.

**Efficient Operations: Innovate, collaborate, and communicate to achieve organizational excellence.   
  
*Relates to University Strategic Plan Goals: 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, and 12***

**Division-level Support Structures Strategic Action:**

**Develop division-level support structures and consolidate/integrate processes to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.**

*In order to improve service delivery and organizational efficiency throughout University Life, administrative processes will be reviewed, and process and infrastructure developed, in the following areas: assessment, data management, technology, marketing and communication, finance, human resources, and performance management.*

**What Success Looks Like:**

Develop and implement support models for each UL administrative area, resulting in clearly defined processes for accessing administrative resources throughout the division; implement shared services model to broaden resource access to all units and improved cross training for administrative process to reduce single-person dependencies. Increase utilization of MicroStrategy to enable enhanced direct access to student and administrative data; implement initial University Life data mart infrastructure to enable an enhanced understanding of the Mason student experience.

**Employee Development Strategic Action:**

**Attract, engage, retain and promote a diverse and talented staff.**

*In order to support our University Life faculty and staff professional experience and practice, University Life will create processes and protocol to improve and increase diverse recruitment practices, offer training and development opportunities to align organizational needs, strive for professional excellence in the region and nationally, and to support staff leadership in various arenas at Mason and beyond.*

**What Success Looks Like:**

Coordinate and implement enhanced staff recruitment practices in order to increase diversity and talent of applicant pools. Increase efficiencies in search processes; report staffing numbers and demographics as well as retention of staff categorized by demographic areas. Develop and/or promote emerging training and development opportunities for staff development with emphasis in well-being, global and multicultural competence, emerging issues in higher education, and support for key student populations; develop and implement large-scale professional development inventory and plan.

**Program Review Strategic Action:**

**Design and implement a cyclical review program.**

*Create process to align goals, outcomes, and resources; benchmark with peers; identify and prioritize strategies to increase effectiveness.*

**What Success Looks Like:**

Develop a division wide program review process to facilitate ongoing program improvement for University Life units. Conduct and assess an initial pilot with two program reviews and begin full cycle process.

**Leveraging Funding Sources Strategic Action:**

**Leverage current funds and generate new funds to achieve University Life mission and goals.**

*Generate additional funds for use on key strategic priorities through annual giving campaigns targeted at Mason families, Mason students, and corporate sponsorships. Create an integrated budget planning model that connects resource allocation and assessment practice.*

**What Success Looks Like:** Develop and implement a fundraising/sponsorships action plan for 2016-2019, including the identification of division-level fundraising priorities; create and implement at least one new giving strategy each year; increase donors and giving/value actualization by 5% each year. Develop a division budget process that incorporates resource planning, assessment and strategic prioritization.