UNK Student & Family Transitions alignment with the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education

(2023 CAS Standards & Guidelines for New Student Orientation Programs)

1. MISSION

1.1 Functional Area Mission

- SFT facilitates the transition of new students into the institution by preparing them for the academic, social, and personal aspects of college life through Blue Gold Welcome and other transition programs (CAS 1.1).
- SFT ensures alignment with the university's mission, values, and strategic goals by fostering student success and retention while maintaining professional orientation and transition standards (CAS 1.1).
- SFT's mission is tailored to its specific institutional context, ensuring that programs are relevant and meet the needs of UNK students (CAS 1.1).
- SFT creates and supports programs that welcome new students and their supporters, emphasizing inclusion and engagement with the university community (CAS 1.1).
- SFT engages students in shared learning and development opportunities, introducing them to resources and helping them navigate their transition to college (CAS 1.1).
- SFT actively contributes to institutional retention efforts by fostering early connections between students, academic services, and campus involvement opportunities (CAS 1.1).

1.2 Mission Statements

- SFT regularly reviews and updates its mission statement to reflect evolving student needs, university goals, and professional best practices (CAS 1.2).

2. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

2.1 Functional Area Goals

- SFT maintains clear, written goals that align with UNK's institutional vision, mission, and core values, ensuring that all programs contribute to student success (CAS 2.1).
- SFT aligns orientation goals with institutional retention and student engagement efforts, ensuring that new students receive support in their transition (CAS 2.1).
- SFT determines participation expectations for students and families, ensuring orientation programs meet institutional requirements and student needs (CAS 2.1).
- SFT's orientation goals include access, diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion, ensuring all students receive equitable and inclusive support (CAS 2.1).
- SFT annually reviews and assesses its goals to ensure alignment with institutional priorities and student needs (CAS 2.1).
- SFT defines its target audience and continuously refines its programs to address the evolving needs of first-year and transfer students (CAS 2.1).

2.2 Achieve and Communicate Functional Area Goals

- SFT aligns its programs with institutional goals and ensures program offerings are mission-driven and student-centered (CAS 2.2).
- SFT provides programs and services that address the diverse needs of its students, including those from underrepresented and first-generation backgrounds (CAS 2.2).
- SFT ensures new students understand institutional policies, allowing them to make informed academic and social decisions (CAS 2.2).
- SFT introduces students to institutional values, fostering a strong sense of identity and purpose within the university (CAS 2.2).
- SFT provides students with essential academic, financial, and social resources, ensuring they have the tools needed for success (CAS 2.2).
- SFT ensures students receive guidance on navigating campus technology, including course registration, financial aid, and advising tools (CAS 2.2).

2.3 Program Structure

- SFT designs orientation programs using research-informed and theory-based models, ensuring a strong foundation for student learning and engagement (CAS 2.3).

- SFT maintains a structured organizational framework, ensuring clarity in program implementation and student support (CAS 2.3).
- SFT aligns program components with student learning and success outcomes, ensuring each activity contributes to student development (CAS 2.3).
- SFT provides transition programs beyond initial orientation, supporting students from pre-enrollment through their first semester and beyond (CAS 2.3).
- SFT ensures programming is adaptable to different student needs, including commuter and transfer students (CAS 2.3).
- SFT collaborates with other departments to maximize orientation program effectiveness and reach (CAS 2.3).

3. STUDENT LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUCCESS

3.1 Student Learning, Development, and Success

- SFT designs programs that contribute to students' academic and social development, ensuring alignment with institutional learning outcomes (CAS 3.1).
- SFT provides intentional learning experiences that promote student self-efficacy and autonomy, encouraging personal responsibility and academic success (CAS 3.1).
- SFT ensures students gain knowledge of curricular and co-curricular opportunities, providing a holistic view of student engagement (CAS 3.1).
- SFT develops partnerships with key academic and student support services, ensuring students receive ongoing support beyond orientation (CAS 3.1).
- SFT selects relevant student learning and development domains to create learning outcomes, ensuring alignment with national standards (CAS 3.1).
- SFT evaluates orientation outcomes based on institutional retention, academic progress, and student engagement metrics to ensure program effectiveness (CAS 3.1).

4. ASSESSMENT

4.1 Assessment Culture, Plans, and Processes

- SFT fosters a culture of assessment and data-driven decision-making, ensuring continuous program improvement (CAS 4.1).

- SFT regularly updates orientation content based on formal and informal assessment, adapting to campus trends and student needs (CAS 4.1).
- SFT collaborates with institutional assessment teams to ensure alignment with broader university data collection efforts (CAS 4.1).
- SFT uses multiple assessment methods, including surveys, focus groups, and data analytics, to evaluate program impact (CAS 4.1).
- SFT incorporates equity-centered assessment practices, ensuring all student populations are represented in data collection (CAS 4.1).
- SFT uses assessment results to refine programming, inform policy decisions, and enhance student outcomes (CAS 4.1).

4.2 Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

- SFT clearly defines goals, objectives, and outcomes for all orientation and transition programs, ensuring program effectiveness (CAS 4.2).
- SFT collects student feedback to refine and improve orientation offerings, ensuring alignment with student expectations (CAS 4.2).
- SFT evaluates the effectiveness of faculty and staff involvement in orientation and transition programs, ensuring continuous improvement (CAS 4.2).
- SFT assesses student engagement, retention, and academic progress to measure the long-term impact of orientation (CAS 4.2).
- SFT benchmarks orientation success using national standards, ensuring alignment with best practices (CAS 4.2).
- SFT reviews and updates goals annually, integrating emerging research and assessment data (CAS 4.2).

5. ACCESS, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE

5.1 Inclusive and Equitable Educational and Work Environments

- SFT establishes clear goals for access, diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, ensuring all students receive equitable opportunities for success (CAS 5.1).
- SFT creates accessible and inclusive orientation programs by considering student demographics, backgrounds, and unique transition needs (CAS 5.1).
- SFT does not discriminate against students based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, or any other identity factors, in accordance with university policies (CAS 5.1).

- SFT ensures its programs acknowledge diverse identities and experiences, fostering a welcoming and supportive environment (CAS 5.1).

5.2 Organizational Aspects of Access, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

- SFT provides equitable access to facilities, resources, and digital platforms for all new students and their supporters (CAS 5.2).
- SFT ensures its programming hours and methods of delivery accommodate the needs of all students, including non-traditional learners (CAS 5.2).
- SFT collaborates with institutional offices focused on student diversity and inclusion to support historically underrepresented students (CAS 5.2).

5.3 Advocating for Access, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

- SFT actively promotes inclusion, cultural humility, and social justice in all transition programs (CAS 5.3).
- SFT provides ongoing professional development on cultural competency and inclusive practices for orientation staff (CAS 5.3).
- SFT continuously evaluates its approach to diversity and inclusion, staying informed on best practices and emerging trends (CAS 5.3).

5.4 Implementing Access, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

- SFT ensures its programs are accessible to diverse populations by collaborating with cultural, identity-based, and first-generation student initiatives (CAS 5.4).
- SFT collects and analyzes data on student engagement and perceptions of belonging, using findings to improve future programs (CAS 5.4).
- SFT trains its staff and student leaders on equitable practices and inclusive programming, ensuring a welcoming environment for all students (CAS 5.4).

6. LEADERSHIP

6.1 Create and Advance Vision, Mission, Goals, and Core Values

- SFT leadership ensures its mission aligns with the institution's strategic goals, advocating for student success and retention (CAS 6.1).
- SFT regularly revisits its vision and goals to align with institutional priorities and evolving student needs (CAS 6.1).

- SFT leadership promotes the value of orientation, transition, and retention efforts across campus through strategic partnerships and communication (CAS 6.1).

6.2 Cultivate Access, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Well-Being

- SFT leadership prioritizes an inclusive and welcoming environment in program design and staffing decisions (CAS 6.2).
- SFT promotes a workplace culture that values well-being, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring a positive experience for staff and students (CAS 6.2).

6.3 Create Collaborative Communities

- SFT fosters strong collaborations with academic and student affairs departments to ensure a holistic student transition experience (CAS 6.3).
- SFT engages campus partners and community stakeholders in orientation and transition initiatives, maximizing resources and support (CAS 6.3).

6.4 Operate with Integrity, Transparency, and Accountability

- SFT leadership practices transparency in decision-making and assessment, ensuring program improvements align with student needs (CAS 6.4).
- SFT operates within ethical guidelines, ensuring fiscal and operational integrity (CAS 6.4).

6.5 Act Strategically to Bring About Positive Change

- SFT leadership uses strategic planning and data-driven decision-making to enhance orientation and transition programs (CAS 6.5).
- SFT engages students in the planning and evaluation of orientation programs, ensuring their voices inform improvements (CAS 6.5).

7. HUMAN RESOURCES

7.1 Staffing and Support

- SFT employs qualified staff with expertise in student transition, retention, and engagement, ensuring effective program delivery (CAS 7.1).
- SFT provides technical and operational support for orientation programs, ensuring efficiency and accessibility (CAS 7.1).

7.2 Employment Practices

- SFT has clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff and student employees, ensuring consistency and accountability (CAS 7.2).
- SFT aligns its hiring and training processes with institutional policies, ensuring equitable and effective staffing practices (CAS 7.2).

7.3 Recruitment

- SFT actively recruits a diverse staff, ensuring representation of various identities and student experiences (CAS 7.3).

7.4 Selection Process

- SFT utilizes a transparent, fair hiring process, ensuring best-fit candidates are selected for orientation leadership roles (CAS 7.4).

7.5 Onboarding, Training, and Development

- SFT provides comprehensive training for staff and student leaders, ensuring consistency in program delivery and expectations (CAS 7.5).

8. COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

8.1 Collaboration

- SFT collaborates with campus stakeholders, including academic affairs, student affairs, and community partners, to enhance orientation (CAS 8.1).

8.2 Communication

- SFT maintains consistent, clear communication with students, families, and campus partners about orientation and transition resources (CAS 8.2).

8.3 Effective Approaches

- SFT leverages multiple communication channels (e.g., email, social media, newsletters) to ensure students receive timely information (CAS 8.3).

9. ETHICS, LAW, AND POLICY

9.1 Ethical Statements, Policies, and Procedures

- SFT follows ethical guidelines in all programming and decision-making, aligning with institutional and professional standards (CAS 9.1).

9.2 Ethical Practice

- SFT staff members engage in ethical decision-making and prioritize student well-being (CAS 9.2).

9.3 Legal Obligations and Responsibilities

- SFT ensures compliance with FERPA, Title IX, and other legal obligations, protecting student rights and privacy (CAS 9.3).

10. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

10.1 Financial Planning

- SFT aligns its budget with institutional priorities and seeks funding for innovative transition initiatives (CAS 10.1).

10.2 Funding

- SFT secures financial resources to ensure sustainable and effective orientation programs (CAS 10.2).

10.3 Financial Management

- SFT practices responsible fiscal stewardship, ensuring efficient use of resources (CAS 10.3).

11. TECHNOLOGY

11.1 Systems Management

- SFT utilizes university-supported technology platforms to enhance program accessibility (CAS 11.1).

11.2 User Engagement

- SFT ensures students can easily access and engage with transition resources through digital platforms (CAS 11.2).

12. FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

12.1 Space and Facility Design

- SFT ensures orientation spaces are welcoming, accessible, and conducive to learning and engagement (CAS 12.1).