NACA®
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

COMPETENCIES
for Campus Activities Professionals

Competencies for Campus Activities Professionals

Introduction

The National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) is a nationally recognized leader in the field of campus activities. In 2007, to best serve members and facilitate quality professional development for advisors, NACA created a competency guide for campus activities professionals titled *Steps to Individual Excellence as a Campus Activities Professional*. The guide listed 46 competencies grouped into three broad categories: General Knowledge and Skills, Interactive Competencies, and Self Mastery. These competencies pre–dated the NASPA/ACPA competencies, which serve as a guide for student affairs professionals across functional areas.

In 2017, the Association revised the original document, given that the field of campus activities has evolved over the course of the last decade and the original guide has been under–utilized.

Process

The vision for developing these competencies was to publish a document that would provide guidance to new, mid–level and experienced professionals seeking to assess and improve their own skills. In order to do so, the Association through the assistance of its Education Advisory Group (EAG) focused on the knowledge, skills and abilities that are unique to campus activities professionals. After a review of competencies previously identified by the Association and of other student affairs associations, such as ACUI, NIRSA, AFA and NACE, themes emerged that were able to be condensed together into specific domains and related competencies. A group of professionals reviewed the draft domains and related competencies at the NACA® National Convention in February 2018. After this review, the finalized domains and competencies and descriptions for the levels of mastery of each competency were codified into these Competencies for Campus Activities Professionals. The final product was also modeled after the Association's Competencies for Diversity and Inclusion.

Intended Audience and Implementation

This guide is meant to be used in conjunction with the NASPA/ACPA competencies as well as the NACA® Competencies for Diversity and Inclusion. The NACA® competencies are organized by domains of application (Organization Development & Advising, Program & Event Management, Human Resource Management, and Campus Culture & Community Building) and have additional tags depicting learning level (knowledge, comprehension, application, and analysis). These learning levels mirror those in the NACA® Competencies for Diversity and Inclusion.

The Association believes some themes that could be considered competencies—such as equity and inclusion, leadership, and learning—were so pervasive that they span all domains and competencies and thus do not need to be included separately.

As stated in the NACA® Competencies for Diversity and Inclusion and echoed here, "the NACA® competencies are not meant to be a checklist of professional attributes, but rather a guide to use in developing one's professional and personal growth. NACA encourages individuals to challenge themselves to be honest in their self–reflection regarding the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to obtain, and to seek opportunities to learn and advance themselves within a particular domain or competency."

Competencies

Organization Development & Advising

Campus activities professionals engage deeply in supporting and advising a wide range of student organizations, ensuring students learn and implement strategies for effective organization management. Additionally, campus activities professionals apply principles of organization development in their own departments, organizations and institutions. Campus activities professionals should be able to both effectively teach as well as personally demonstrate mastery of the competencies in this domain.

Relationship Development
- Understand team/group dynamics and use strategies for building effective teams within an organization (Comprehension/Application).
- Develop and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships between organizations (Application).

Training
- Design and implement effective training events and resources for student organization leaders (Application).
- Design and Implement effective training events and resources for student organization advisors (Application).

Fiscal Management
- Identify organization priorities and prepare budget proposal(s) in alignment with said priorities (Knowledge/Application).
- Be knowledgeable of institutional fiscal policies and procedures (as well as variations in policies/procedures relative to funding sources) and ensure department spending is in alignment with said policies and procedures(Knowledge/Application).
- Manage and ensure accuracy of organization income and expense reports (Application).
- Grow and maintain personal integrity as a steward of organization's financial resources; make ethical and prudent decisions about the use of organization's resources (Analysis/Application).
- Seek external sources of funding, such as soliciting corporate sponsorships and cultivating financial gifts to the organization (Application).

Marketing and Branding
- Generate marketing strategies that effectively communicate information and relevant stories to target audiences (Application).
- Identify appropriate social media platforms for various marketing efforts (Comprehension).
- Analyze effectiveness of marketing strategies and make appropriate adjustments in future efforts to improve message reach (Analysis).

Experiential Leadership Learning
- Understand and employ methods for effectively coaching and/or mentoring students (Knowledge/Application).
- Facilitate student reflection to advance student learning and development through campus involvement (Application).
- Provide appropriate advice and support to students that also promotes student autonomy and decision-making (Application).

Strategic Planning
- Formulate organization mission, vision and values (Analysis).
- Set individual and organization goals, and employ long-term planning strategies (Application).
- Establish effective and reliable operating procedures (Application).

Recruitment and Retention
- Develop marketing strategies to promote involvement opportunities (Comprehension).
- Generate strategies for identifying and successfully recruiting new organization members (Application).
- Evaluate organization success in retaining members and devise strategies to ensure members are appropriately involved in organization operations (Analysis/Application).

Campus activities professionals are vital to the recruitment and retention of students.

Human Resource Management

Campus activities professionals assume responsibility for numerous human resource functions, including identifying and hiring student and professional staff, as well as the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Beyond identifying volunteers and staff, campus activities professionals are responsible for training, supervision of the different constituent groups, and are tasked with developing the individuals they supervise. Additionally, campus activities professionals are charged with cultivating a productive, safe and engaging work environment or volunteer experience.

Volunteer & Staff Management
- Select, onboard and train volunteers and staff (Application/Analysis).
- Understand the differences between managing volunteers and staff (Knowledge).
- Recognize volunteers and staff (Application).
- Cultivate a healthy and productive working relationship with your supervisor and other campus leadership (Application).
- Create a culture of trust through communication, agreement and accountability for shared expectations (Application).

Supervising
- Align with laws and institutional human resource policies (Knowledge/Application).
- Manage job creation, including writing job descriptions, advocating for resources, and managing workspace (Application/Analysis).
- Evaluate performance, including promotion and termination (Knowledge/Analysis/Application).
- Manage different types of supervisees: professional staff, administrative staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students (Analysis/Application).

Professional Development
- Advocate for personal and professional development opportunities, including involvement with professional associations and community (Application).
- Cultivate self-efficacy and create opportunities for mastering capacity to succeed in multiple settings and in relationship with others (Analysis).
- Encourage self-care and work-life integration (Application).

Campus Culture & Community Building

Campus activities professionals are vital to the recruitment and retention of students. In order to create and cultivate affinity with the institution, campus activities professionals need to understand, work within, and when applicable, challenge and preserve institutional culture, expectations and traditions. This will require the professional to be able to navigate campus politics and assist students in doing the same.

Institutional Culture and Expectations
- Understand institutional culture (Knowledge).
- Explain institutional culture to internal and external constituents (Comprehension/Application).
- Explain institutional expectations for programs and services to internal constituents (Comprehension/Application).
- Affect change within campus culture (Application).
- Continually review and adapt programs and services to meet institutional expectations and culture (Analysis/Comprehension/Application).

Institutional History
- Know relevant institutional history, including broader institutional history and focused office/programs/services history (Knowledge/Comprehension).
- Work with campus archives to research programs and services (Analysis).
- Organize and preserve records for the future in various formats, both within the office and through campus archives (Application).
- Understand history and role of office/program/service within campus traditions (Knowledge/Comprehension).
- Support, celebrate and affect change with campus traditions (Application).

Campus Politics
- Understand one's own scope of decision-making authority (Knowledge).
- Understand chain of command at the institution and how to navigate the institution as both a staff member and student (Knowledge/Comprehension).
- Identify campus influencers and utilize to support, celebrate and affect change with campus culture, traditions and expectations (Analysis/Application).
- Cultivate relationships with administration, faculty, staff and alumni (Application).

Cultivating a Sense of Belonging
- Provide and promote a wide range of involvement opportunities (Application).
- Build community on campus through programs and services (Application).
- Assess needs of students from multiple perspectives, identities and populations and ensure campus involvement opportunities are relevant and inclusive (Analysis).
- Cultivate relationships with students (Application).
- Create and promote a sense of connection to the institution (Application).
- Utilize NACA® Competencies for Diversity and Inclusion, as well as other resources, to develop, provide, and advocate for programs and services that cultivate a sense of belonging for all students (Application).

Program & Event Management

Campus activities professionals oversee a vast array of ongoing programs and individual events. Various skills are required to effectively manage both continuing programs and distinct events, including administrative, relational, and student development.

Policy Knowledge, Development & Management
· Develop, implement and enforce policies for managing student groups, in alignment with institutional and external policies and laws (Application).
· Implement policies equitably, with consistency and reasonable accommodations when appropriate (Comprehension/Application).
· Review and benchmark policies, particularly with a culturally competent lens (Analysis).

Assessment & Data Management
· Assess both operational and learning outcomes (Application).
· Use data effectively to make data-based decisions (Analysis).
· Manage data collection processes (Comprehension).
· Grow and maintain personal integrity as a steward of data; make ethical and prudent decisions about the use of data (Analysis/Application).
· Employ technology to manage data (Comprehension).

Technology
· Select and utilize appropriate technology to assist with tasks (Comprehension).
· Develop familiarity with common technologies and their relation to campus activities (Knowledge).
· Build partnerships with Information Technology staff to accomplish goals (Comprehension).

Legal Issues & Risk Management
· Understand and utilize protocols outlined by institution (Knowledge).
· Identify and mitigate risk in programs and events (Application).
· Read, amend and process contracts and other legal documents in accordance with institutional policies and procedures (Comprehension).
· Understand relevant federal, state and local laws and their impact on campus activities (Comprehension).

Crisis Management
· Create emergency plans for anticipated crises (Application).
· Train volunteers and staff on responding to and managing crises (Application).
· Follow venue protocols in crises (Knowledge/Comprehension).

Networking & Business Relationships
· Identify key partners for programs and events, including campus partners and external vendors (Comprehension).
· Maintain a professional demeanor and act with competence, courtesy and ethics (Application).
· Communicate effectively with partners, including exchanging information with timeliness and understanding (Comprehension)

Event Support
· Understand event production, including audio-visual needs, performer hospitality, atmosphere, and creation of an experience for attendees (Comprehension).
· Communicate effectively with vendors and business partners using business terminology (Comprehension).

Intentionality in Student Learning
· Facilitate student learning through campus activities programs (Application).
· Develop outcomes and design programs and events to accomplish outcomes (Analysis).
· Guide students to articulate their learning through involvement in campus activities (Analysis).