



**Department of Counseling & Student Affairs  
Student Handbook**

**STUDENT AFFAIRS IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Gary A. Ransdell Hall 3036  
1906 College Heights Blvd #51031 Bowling Green,  
KY 42101-1031  
(270) 745-4953 office  
(270) 745-5031 fax <http://www.wku.edu/csa>

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## **THE MAE IN STUDENT AFFAIRS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

### **Master's Degree Program in [Student Affairs in Higher Education](#)**

The Master of Arts in Education degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education is designed to prepare students to obtain entry and mid-level student affairs professional positions. Through a theory-based yet applications-oriented program, students gain necessary skills and competencies to succeed in a variety of student affairs units and postsecondary settings. The Counseling and Student Affairs faculty comprised of academics and practitioners cultivate active partnerships with student affairs professionals to provide a living learning laboratory for student professional development. Program content covers three broad areas: theoretical foundations, professional practice, and administrative effectiveness. Individual students are also provided with opportunities to focus on specific content areas which may be of particular interest.

Aligned with the institutional and departmental mission the Student Affairs program is committed to:

- Foster student professional development through networking, scholarly writing, research, presentation opportunities, and the Student Affairs Graduate Association.
- Provide the university and community with in-service training, professional development, research, and consultation in the area of student affairs/student development.
- Deliver highly interactive application-based courses.
- Focus on diversity and multicultural competencies.
- Facilitate meaningful supervised practicum and internship experiences.

### **Course Offerings**

The courses within the Student Affairs in Higher Education graduate degree program are offered face-to-face, online, and/or in hybrid form. This is a deliberate decision made on behalf of the Department faculty given the value that they place on experiential, application-based, and hands-on learning. However, in order to create and maintain an international and national presence, all of the graduate certificate programs can be completed on-line.

All face-to-face courses are offered at the main campus in Bowling Green, Kentucky. See <https://www.wku.edu/csa/sa/curriculum.php> for Course Offerings. Students are responsible for registering for courses in a timely manner to assure enrollment in the course section that they prefer. For CNS-595 (Internship), you must contact the instructor or your advisor to register for that course.

- CNS 571 Introduction to Student Affairs and the College Student Experience (Online)
- CNS 574 Student Development in Higher Education
- CNS 577 Counseling Concepts and Applications for Student Affairs Professionals
- CNS 585 Leadership and Administration in Student Affairs
- CNS 589 Group Dynamics in Student Affairs and Higher Education
- CNS 594 Research Methods
- CNS 604 Resource Management in Student Affairs and Higher Education
- CNS 605 Social and Cultural Diversity in Higher Education
- CNS 610 Assessment in Student Affairs and Higher Education (Hybrid)
- CNS 670 Parameters of Law in Student Affairs and Higher Education
- CNS 595 Internship in Student Affairs\* (6 hours)

### Online Graduate Certificate Programs

A certificate program is a coherent course of study that is compatible with the stated mission and goals of WKU and appropriate to the field of higher education (SACSCOC). Certificates lead to the acquisition of a defined set of skills or expertise that will enhance employability or meet a professional development need. A certificate earned at WKU does not imply licensure or credentialing to practice.

- **International Student Services (ISS)**

College campuses have become increasingly internationalized in recent decades. International student populations have grown, study abroad has become a standard of the higher education landscape, and as a result, the student population has developed new needs. The Certificate in International Student Services offers graduate-level students preparation to manage educational exchange, lead campus internationalization, and provide international student services. Students pursuing the Certificate in International Student Services may complete the certificate program by itself or along with the MAE in Student Affairs. Successful graduates will have earned their certificate through theory-based instruction, application of material through internship, and an international experience.

- **Career Services**

The Certificate in Career Services (CCS) is designed to provide helping professionals with advanced knowledge and skills needed to better serve students and clients within the context of a volatile and ever-changing employment landscape. Graduates of this certificate program will be better prepared to assist students to be more engaged in the educational experience through appropriate academic major and career choice, which may lead to higher retention of current students and successful transition to the workforce. Moreover, the CCS program complements the master's degree programs in a wide variety of helping professions.

### Joint Undergraduate Master's Program (JUMP)

The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs offers a Joint Undergraduate-Master's Programs (JUMP) in in Student Affairs. Undergraduate students who have earned at least 60 credit hours in good standing (must have a GPA of 3.00 or above) can apply to either program, and after being admitted can take graduate courses towards both their undergraduate and graduate degree. See [WKU Graduate Catalog](#) and [CSA website](#) for details. JUMP students must maintain a GPA of at least 3.00 to remain enrolled in the Department's JUMP program.

Pending admittance, JUMP students complete a Statement of Intent with their CSA graduate advisor. JUMP students are responsible for completing an Application for Admission to WKU Graduate School when they have completed their undergraduate degree, only after which are they eligible for a Graduate Assistantship.

## PROGRAMMING GUIDELINES, REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES

### Digital Delivery of Programs and Courses

**Technology Requirements.** It is the responsibility of students to secure and maintain access to technology resources, including a stable internet connection when enrolled in digitally delivered courses. Students should have a working knowledge of computers, internet use and Zoom as well as consistent and reliable access to high-speed internet, a Mac or Windows desktop or laptop, microphone, camera, webcam, and audio equipment (i.e., earphones, earbuds, headphones) if necessary. Use of tablets and other smart devices

may not provide the support necessary to meet online meeting requirements and thus, should not be used to attend class. Students should also have access to administrative privileges associated with their computer in order to install and run software programs and/or updates required within the course or program.

***Virtual and Digital Class Attendance, Participation and Presence.*** When attending class virtually, students must have their videos on and have access to a microphone during the entirety of the class. They should secure a setting free of distractions (i.e., busy places or noisy spaces filled with other people in the camera's view, and/or needy pets) and attend in a professional manner (e.g., sitting at a table or desk and not lying in bed or on a couch). Throughout the class meeting, it should be clear to the instructor that the student is fully engaged (i.e., not multitasking, attending to other business or people, web browsing, texting, etc.).

***Campus Closures and Fully Digitalized Course Attendance.*** When campus is closed due to weather conditions, any scheduled live Zoom class meetings offered through fully digitized courses will still proceed. Students who do not have access to internet outside the regional campus and who have lost power due to the weather conditions should reach out to their instructor prior to the digital class meeting. They may be required to view the recorded class meeting at a later date or make up the time through relevant assignments. Internship students who selected the site experience will probably not be able to work on site during that time.

## **Related WKU Resources**

WKU offers a host of resources for both face-to-face and digital learners. Students are encouraged to review these resources prior to a problem or concern arising so that they are aware of which office to contact.

***Online Student Services.*** Students who enroll in any of the department's online programs or courses should familiarize themselves with [WKU's Online Student Services](#).

***WKU Learning Resources.*** While the WKU Libraries have land-based facilities and resources, they also are available via virtual means including email, phone and email. See <https://www.wku.edu/library/>.

***WKU Information Technology Services.*** The WKU IT Department (<https://www.wku.edu/its/>) offers a full range of services for students. See <https://www.wku.edu/its/services/students.php>. Students can seek both face to face and virtual assistance during regular office hours, <https://www.wku.edu/its/service-desk/>.

## **Cost and Tuition**

Tuition fees vary depending on the delivery of the program and courses and are outlined at the Office of Student Billing & Account Services, <https://www.wku.edu/billing>. Tuition and fees specific for any given semester can be viewed at <https://www.wku.edu/billing/coa.php>.

## **Financial Assistance**

There are a variety of ways to secure financial assistance. Funding opportunities can be reviewed at <https://www.wku.edu/csa/counseling/funding.php>. For general information regarding loans, grants, scholarships, and up-to-date information regarding financial assistance, visit [WKU Student Financial Assistance](#).

- **Graduate Assistantships.** Western Kentucky University awards graduate assistantships (GA) to select graduate students in programs across campus (JUMP students are not eligible for Graduate Assistantships.) Graduate Assistants must maintain a GPA of 3.0 to maintain employment contract. The Graduate Assistantship is a one-year contract that may extend to two years pending need, budgetary allowances, as well informal and formal evaluations of their previous work. GAs are expected to fulfill department specific expectations and responsibilities (i.e., involvement in departmental marketing and recruitment activities) and as stated in their contractual agreements with the University and the Department. Available positions can be viewed at [https://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/ga/ga\\_jobs.php](https://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/ga/ga_jobs.php)

Note that our program works with all of our students on a case-by-case basis to help them get Graduate Assistant positions that are suited to their particular needs/aspirations.

### **Graduate Research**

There are various opportunities to engage in research activities. Specifically, students can select the research option in one or both of their internship experience (CNS-595). In addition, students who are interested can reach out to faculty to join them in their research projects. See WKU [Graduate School](#) for additional opportunities and resources, including graduate student research grants, travel awards for conferences and research, Office of Sponsored Programs, and TopSCHOLAR.

## **ENROLLMENT AND MATRICULATION**

Students are responsible for understanding WKU's policies related to Enrollment, Matriculation, Registration, and Completion. See [CSA website](#) and [WKU's Graduate School website](#).

### **New Student Orientation**

All students are required to attend the Department of Counseling New Student Orientation prior to the completion of their first enrolled semester in the Department. The New Student Orientation includes information about the department, programs, and faculty, as well as expectations for students. Enrollment in the Blackboard New Student Orientation includes quizzes related to the content. Students who do not attend or complete the online New Student Orientation by the end of their first enrolled semester will not be able to enroll in the subsequent semester.

### **Advising and Program Planning**

Upon admission, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. Students can begin to register for courses on their own after having met with their advisor to discuss their respective Planned Program. Students should register for courses as soon as possible to secure enrollment in their preferred course section as some courses have enrollments caps. Students are responsible for following their Planned Program and notifying their advisor of any changes. Failing to follow the plan can possibly delay graduation. Finally, students should be aware of the information provided in the [WKU Registration Guide](#).

Students are expected to maintain contact with their advisors throughout their academic tenure to discuss degree progression and completion, program experiences, career preparation, as well as leaves of absences.

Students should give faculty at least two (2) business days to respond. Faculty also have a nine-month appointment with the university and thus, typically have scheduled office hours only during the fall and spring. Students should keep this information in mind when they reach out to faculty.

### **Withdrawing from Courses and/or Program**

If a student withdraws from courses or their program at any time during their enrollment, they can drop courses through Topnet and must be done so before the designated dates in the academic calendar in order to avoid prorated charges and ensuing a “W” on their transcript. Students should refer to the Registrar’s Office for details.

### **Internship**

Once a student has completed 12 hours, they can enroll in the Internship course. Note that in the Student Affairs in Higher Education graduate program, students are required to complete two internships. Students should contact the program’s Clinical Coordinator when they intend to enroll in the course as the student cannot enroll in the course (program faculty must complete the registration process for this course). For more information, refer to the Internship Manual (contact the Clinical Coordinator for the Student Affairs in Higher Education graduate program for information about the manual).

### **Comprehensive Exams, Graduation, and Credentialing**

Western Kentucky Graduate School policy stipulates that all students enrolled in master’s-level programs in the University must successfully complete a culminating experience of their master’s-level studies. In the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, the culminating experience is the Comprehensive Exam of which measures students’ mastery of knowledge in their respective sought-after profession including but not limited to social and cultural diversity, theory of practice and process, methods and techniques, research and program evaluation, ethics and legal issues. A passing score on the comprehensive examination is required to graduate.

Students are responsible for registering for the comprehensive exam by the deadline. Information regarding the comprehensive exam is sent to students by the Program Coordinator each semester. Students must apply for the exam and consult with the Program Coordinator regarding the date and time to complete the exam and are required to take it during their last semester of coursework. Students must pass the comprehensive exam in order to graduate.

The Comprehensive Exam for the Student Affairs in Higher Education program includes a multiple-choice examination and a two-question essay examination. The multiple-choice examination has been developed by the Student Affairs faculty in the department. Results of the comprehensive exams will be released when all incomplete grades (i.e., IP, X) have been resolved.

## **Academic Standing, Minimal Final Grade Requirements and Fit for the Profession**

[WKU's Graduate School](#) dictates that graduate students must maintain a 3.00 grade point average (GPA) for all courses taken at WKU and those graduate courses transferred to WKU to fulfill graduate program requirements. Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.00 in the academic program and a cumulative (overall) GPA to earn a degree or certificate. If a student's overall GPA falls below 3.00, the student will be placed on academic probation. Students placed on academic probation are not eligible for graduate assistantship (GA) appointments. The student will have one additional full-time semester or the equivalent (9 semester hours) to remove the academic probation by raising their cumulative GPA to a 3.0 or higher. If the GPA remains below a 3.00 after completing 9 hours of coursework on probation, the student will be academically dismissed from Graduate School. Those dismissed may appeal this action. For additional information and the most recent policies, please visit the latest WKU Graduate School Catalog.

Students may also be dismissed from programs for reasons other than failure to maintain a satisfactory grade point average. Expectations regarding student conduct are described in the *Western Kentucky University Student Handbook* and apply to students in all programs.

### **Grades for Incomplete Work**

Instructors may give students an Incomplete "X" when a relatively small amount of work is not completed because of illness or other reason satisfactory to the instructor. A grade of "X" will automatically become an "F" unless removed within twelve (12) weeks of the next full term (summer term excluded.) An incomplete must be removed within this twelve-week period regardless of whether the student is registered for additional work in the next term. A student should work with the instructor who assigned the incomplete on an independent basis in order to complete the necessary assignments. A grade of incomplete is not used under any circumstances as a substitute for "F" or "W."

An IP, "In Progress," is a designation restricted to specific courses designed to span more than one term, which is CNS-595 (Internship) in the Student Affairs in Higher Education graduate program. Unless approved otherwise, an IP designation unresolved at the end of one year after its assignment will be converted to an "F."

### **Transfer of Credit**

According to the [WKU Graduate School Catalog](#) transfer credit(s) may be accepted if earned at regionally accredited institutions of higher education. Students transferring credit from an international institution must submit an official transcript evaluation of credit from an international credential evaluation service recognized by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) before equivalencies are determined. All transfer coursework must be documented on an official transcript with a grade of "B" or better. Transfer credits must be applied toward a graduate program awarded by WKU and are subject to approval by the appropriate academic department and must comply with all other university policies. Plus, and minus grades are recorded as the letter grade only. In cooperative or joint programs with other universities, credits earned in the program at these institutions are not considered transfer credits. At least one-half of credits applied toward degree or certificate requirements must be earned at Western Kentucky University.



## Degree and Certificate Completion Checklist

All degree and certificate requirements must be completed by the student by the last day of the term. Graduate Studies begins auditing degrees and certificates for completion the week following the final day of the term. The degree audit confirms that the student has:

1. completed all coursework (earning a "C" or higher/no incomplete grades) in their program within the time limit;
2. earned a minimum cumulative and program GPA of 3.00;
3. published a thesis, specialist project, or dissertation approved by Graduate Studies (if required);
4. completed a comprehensive exam/capstone (degrees only); and,
5. applied for graduation.

Degree audits are completed within four to six weeks after the term concludes. Upon recommendation of the audit, the University Registrar confers the degree and/or certificate in May, August, or December. Students may check their transcript for completion on [TopNet](#) (Student Services/Student Records/Unofficial Academic Transcript) and review Degree Works to check progress. Degrees and certificates will be mailed within 3-6 weeks after the conclusion of the term. Graduate Studies does not confirm degree or certificate completion prior to award; however, [enrollment verification](#) may be requested.

## Student Support

Program faculty are committed to fostering the success and well-being of all graduate students. When faculty identify concerning or problematic behaviors that may hinder a student's academic progress or personal development, they will proactively engage with the student to address these challenges. Faculty will collaborate with the student to develop a tailored plan that supports their growth, aligns with program expectations, and ensures a pathway to future success. Students are encouraged to take an active role in this process, utilizing available resources and maintaining open communication with faculty and advisors.

## Institutional Information and Policies

The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs adheres to institutional policies and guidelines. Students should become familiar with these resources including [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), [due process](#), [Student Code of Conduct](#), [Title IX](#), and [Kentucky State Law](#).

### Academic Integrity

Students are held to the expectations related to Student Conduct noted in the latest [WKU Student Handbook](#) and in the [WKU's Graduate Catalog](#). Academic integrity is an essential component of an academic community. Every student is responsible for fostering and maintaining a culture of academic honesty by committing to the academic values of honesty, integrity, responsibility, trust, respect for self and others, fairness, and justice. In addition, students are expected to abide by the code of ethics for their profession and the student code of conduct for the university.

### **Academic Dishonesty Policy (also see [WKU Student Handbook](#))**

An incident of [academic dishonesty](#) will lead to a failure on the assignment and possibly the course. Academic dishonesty in the form of plagiarism, cheating, or non-participation in group work is not tolerated. Violations of academic integrity include cheating, plagiarism, or lying about academic matters.

Specifically, plagiarism includes not only direct quotations of another writer's words, but also paraphrases or summaries of another writer's concepts or ideas without acknowledging the writer properly (i.e., citing them). Cheating includes behaviors such as giving or receiving data or information under any circumstances not permitted by the instructor. Lying about academic matters includes falsification of data or information as part of an academic exercise, or knowingly providing false information to a faculty member.

Plagiarism is not tolerated and will result in a grade of "F" for the specific assignment or the entire course. Plagiarism includes representing ideas and interpretations that are taken from another source as one's own work. Ideas paraphrased from another author must be attributed to that author and cited in any written presentation of such information. Refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7<sup>th</sup> edition) for direction on proper citation formatting.

WKU defines *plagiarism* as the following:

*To represent written work taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his/her own. One must give any author credit for source material borrowed from him/her. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage without reference to the source after having changed a few words is also plagiarism.*

Cheating is not tolerated and will result in the grade of "F" in the course. No student shall receive or give assistance NOT authorized by the instructor. WKU's stance on cheating is that *no student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment or other project which is submitted for purposes of grade determination.*

Academic dishonesty is a profoundly serious offense because it involves an act of fraud, jeopardizing genuine efforts by faculty and students to teach and learn together. Students who are determined to have plagiarized an assignment or otherwise cheated in their academic work or examination may expect an "F" for the assignment in question or an "F" for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. All incidents of cheating or plagiarism, reported by the instructor, will follow the Student Remediation Process as described in the departmental handbook. Please note: The University does use web-based products to detect plagiarism.

### **Title IX/Discrimination and Harassment**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (#0.070) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators or Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429. Please note that while you may report an incident of

sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159. See [Sexual Assault Resources](#).

### **ADA Accommodation Statement**

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

### **Pregnant and Parenting Students**

Western Kentucky University does not discriminate against any student or exclude any student from its educational programs or activities, including classes or extracurricular activities, on the basis of pregnancy and/or pregnancy-related conditions such as, but not limited to, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom. Students who seek pregnancy or pregnancy-related accommodations should make their requests as soon as possible via WKU’s Title IX Website at [www.wku.edu/titleix/](http://www.wku.edu/titleix/) under the heading, “Pregnancy or Pregnancy-Related Conditions.” Students can also contact the Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, via email at [ena.demir@wku.edu](mailto:ena.demir@wku.edu) or by phone at (270) 745-6867 to request accommodations or seek assistance. We encourage students and faculty to work together to establish a plan that allows the student to complete the class and coursework without jeopardizing academic integrity and course standards. The Title IX Coordinator can help facilitate conversations between students and faculty regarding appropriate and reasonable accommodations.

If you are a WKU student and believe that you have experienced an incident(s) of discrimination or harassment based on pregnancy (or pregnancy related conditions or issues), please report it to the Title IX Coordinator via email at [ena.demir@wku.edu](mailto:ena.demir@wku.edu) or by phone at (270) 745-6867.

Additional resources for pregnant and parenting students can be found on WKU’s Title IX Website at [www.wku.edu/titleix/](http://www.wku.edu/titleix/).

## **Equal Opportunity and Grievances**

Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action/University ADA Services (EEO) is housed within the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) and is responsible for ensuring WKU’s compliance with Title IX, Title VI, Title VII, ADA, and other state and federal anti-discrimination/harassment laws.

Western Kentucky University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, marital status, age, uniformed services, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, or physical or mental disability in admission to career and technical education programs and/or activities, or employment practices in accordance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of

1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Revised 1992, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Individuals with disabilities who have experienced discrimination or harassment by students, employees, or third parties, or who have been denied an accommodation after complying with the process provided in WKU Student Disability Accommodations/ Section 504 and ADA Compliance Policy (#6.1010), can file a written grievance with the Section 504 Coordinator. [A grievance can also be made by complete an online form, the Student Grievance Form.] The grievance should contain the name and contact information of the person filing the grievance, a summary of the alleged action/violation of Section 504 and Title II, and the proposed remedy or relief sought. [Click here to access the Student Grievance Form.](#)

The Section 504 Coordinator will conduct an investigation of the allegations contained within the grievance. This investigation may be informal, but it will be thorough, affording all interested persons an opportunity to present witnesses and submit other evidence relevant to the grievance. The Section 504 Coordinator will maintain documentation submitted in support of the grievance. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Section 504 Coordinator will issue a written decision, in an accessible format, to the involved parties along with the basis for the decision; if appropriate, the Section 504 Coordinator will provide a description of remedies afforded to the aggrieved party. A copy of the grievance and notice of outcome will be provided to WKU's ADA Coordinator, Vice President of Student Experience and Dean of Students, and other WKU employees, as necessary.

Individuals accused of violating this or other WKU policies may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct or Human Resources, when appropriate. The University will take steps to prevent recurrence of any prohibited actions, and correct discriminatory, harassing, and/or retaliatory effects on any party involved in this grievance process, including witnesses.

A guide to Student Complaints can also be found at: [https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/documents/guide\\_for\\_student\\_complaints.pdf](https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/documents/guide_for_student_complaints.pdf)

### **Important Complaint Exceptions:**

- Student Disability regarding denial of accommodations, report to Student ADA Compliance Officer and follow WKU policy #6.1010
- Discrimination and Harassment concerns, see below reporting process and follow WKU policy #0.2040 and #0.2070
- Discrimination is always reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity Employment (EEO)
- Student-to-student harassment is reported to The Office of Student Conduct or the WKU Title IX Coordinator
- Student-to-faculty/employee harassment is reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity Employment (EEO)

It is the position of The Office of Student Conduct that among the violations of misconduct considered to be of an especially serious nature are those that represent a threat to the safety and health of members of the University Community. These violations include but are not limited to harassment, physical violence or threat of violence, non-consensual sexual contact, rape or any form of sexual violence. Students are expected to understand [WKU's Student Conduct policies](#) including Investigative Procedures, Complaint Process, Complainant Rights, Respondent Rights, Appeal Procedures.

## Student Concerns and Resolutions

When students have concerns or complaints regarding an academic issue or grade, they should follow WKU's Student Academic and Grade Complaint Procedures. The details can be found at [https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/documents/student\\_complaint\\_procedure.pdf](https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/documents/student_complaint_procedure.pdf)

The procedure generally follows the steps below:

1. Faculty Member: Student brings the concern or complaint to the faculty member involved.
2. Departmental Level: If the student and faculty member are unable to resolve the concern, the student contacts the Department Head
3. College Level: If the student is unable to reach a satisfactory resolution at the departmental level, the concern is brought to the college level (i.e., Deans Office).
4. University Level: Should the student want to appeal the decision made at the college level, a formal written notice of appeal can be submitted.

Students who pursue a formal complaint are responsible for ensuring they are informed and have knowledge of policies in official WKU publications.

## Expectations of Graduate Students

The faculty of the Student Affairs in Higher Education graduate program in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs are committed to supporting the academic, professional, and personal development of graduate students. In turn, students are expected to uphold high standards of responsibility, accountability, and dedication to their success. This expectation includes a focus on academic excellence, professional growth, self-awareness, cultural sensitivity, and collaboration.

### Personal and Interpersonal Development

Graduate education in a helping profession such as student affairs emphasizes personal and interpersonal growth. Students are encouraged to develop introspection, self-awareness, and cultural sensitivity, which are vital for understanding diverse perspectives and fostering effective professional relationships.

Students will engage in activities designed to enhance their self-awareness, including class discussions, reflective assignments, and peer feedback. These exercises may challenge students to confront biases, explore personal values, and address areas of growth. The ability to engage constructively with these activities is essential for developing as a professional in the field.

While self-reflection can be challenging, it is a necessary part of professional development. Students are encouraged to seek support—whether through faculty guidance or personal counseling—when navigating these experiences. In rare cases where a student's goals or capacities are not aligned with the profession, faculty will work collaboratively to explore alternative career paths.

## Professionalism and Self-Care

Maintaining professionalism and practicing self-care are fundamental expectations of graduate students. Students should:

- **Stay organized:** Use calendars or tools to track deadlines and responsibilities in academics and life.
- **Minimize distractions:** Address obstacles that hinder focus and wellness, including counterproductive peer interactions or unproductive discussions.
- **Seek clarity:** Direct questions and concerns about courses, advising, or program requirements to the appropriate faculty member or advisor.
- **Cultivate balance:** Engage in activities that promote wellness, including regular breaks and creative self-care practices.

Students are encouraged to build professional relationships with faculty and peers, as these connections are critical for support, mentoring, and future recommendations.

## Faculty Support and Mentorship

Faculty serve as advisors, mentors, and advocates throughout students' academic journey. To maximize this support, students should:

- Build ongoing relationships with faculty and advisors to navigate key milestones such as practicum placement, comprehensive exams, and graduation.
- Engage with faculty beyond coursework, as these interactions foster a collaborative learning environment and strengthen professional networks.
- Proactively seek feedback and guidance about academic and career aspirations.

Faculty are more likely to provide strong recommendations for students who have demonstrated consistent engagement, professionalism, and collaboration.

## Engagement with Department and Community

Active participation in department activities and communication channels ensures students remain informed and engaged. Students are encouraged to:

- Regularly check their WKU email for updates and announcements.
- Connect with the Student Affairs Graduate Association (SAGA). This group offers opportunities for networking, leadership development, service, and professional growth.
- Complete course evaluations to provide constructive feedback that supports the department's commitment to academic excellence.

## Optional Counseling and Support Services

Students are encouraged to seek personal counseling or wellness resources as needed to support their professional and personal growth. The WKU Counseling Center and the Talley Family Counseling Center (TFCC) provide free or low-cost services to currently enrolled students. Additional resources, including national directories for finding a counselor or therapist, are available upon request.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students enrolled in the Student Affairs in Higher Education graduate program are encouraged to engage in their respective professional communities, including attending events and activities that strengthen their professional, personal and interpersonal development. For example, the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, as well as other offices on campus sponsor free professional development workshops to students and the public. Membership in state, regional and national professional organizations also provide students with extensive opportunities to learn more about their field, to create and engage in relationships with professionals across the country, and to develop leadership skills. Examples of professional organizations that faculty, students and graduate have been active in are listed below.

### Student Affairs Associations (not an exhaustive list)

**American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)** The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the primary advocacy organization for the nation's community colleges. The association represents more than 1,000 2-year, associate degree-granting institutions and nearly 12 million students.

**American Association for Higher Education and Accreditation (AAHEA)** is the individual membership organization that promotes research, collaboration, scholarship, best practices, evidence-based research to move together into the era of increasingly digitized education. A leader in the transition from old norms to new standards for a new age. The association equips individuals and institutions committed to such changes with the knowledge they need to bring those changes about.

**American College Personnel Association (ACPA)** College Student Educators International is a values-centered leadership association that has worked to boldly transform higher education since 1924. Student affairs and higher education professionals, faculty, and students trust ACPA to deliver high-quality educational programs, provide access to modern research and scholarship, and promote leadership at all levels through a racial justice and decolonization lens.

- **College Student Personnel Association of Kentucky (CPAK)** CPAK is a state division of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA). CPAK concerns itself with the professionals in the varied areas of student affairs, student services, campus life, academic support, and higher education administration throughout the state of Kentucky.

**Association of College Administration Professionals (ACAP)** The Association of College Administration Professionals was started in 1995 to provide services to all college and university administrators, regardless of their positions. This association composed of members from virtually every area of administration; presidents, vice presidents of academics, business and student services, plus many directors of the various departments.

**Association of College and University Housing Officials International (ACUHOI)** The leading organization of choice for campus housing and residence life professionals and home to more than 17,000 professionals representing 3.2 million on-campus students from around the globe.

- [Southeastern Association of Housing Officers \(SEAHO\)](#) is a regional affiliate of the Association of College and University Housing Officers - International (ACUHO-I).
- [The Kentucky Association of Housing Officers \(KAHO\)](#) provides opportunities of personal and professional growth for college and university housing and residence life officers.

**College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPAHR)** CUPA-HR is higher ed HR serving higher education by providing the knowledge, resources, advocacy and connections to achieve organizational and workforce excellence.

The **National Association for Campus Activities (NACA)** is an organization that provides resources for student activities programmers throughout the United States and Canada. Formed in 1960, NACA links higher education and entertainment in a business and learning partnership for students and professional staff. It provides resources for campus life. It is a member-only organization that provides programs and events focused on student and professional leadership development, program planning, and concert management.

→ **NACA-Lexington (regional)**

**National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)** NASPA is a leading voice for student affairs administration, policy, and practice, and affirms the commitment of the student affairs profession to educating the whole student and integrating student life and learning. NASPA promotes quality and high expectations; advocates for students; encourages diversity; and excels in research and publication.

**Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA)** The Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) is an independent, regional, and generalist association designed for the professional development of practitioners, educators, and students engaged in the student affairs profession. It is committed to being the preeminent generalist organization for practitioners, educators, and students engaged in the student affairs profession.



## PROGRAM FACULTY



**Dr. Aaron W. Hughey** is a University Distinguished Professor in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs at Western Kentucky University, where he oversees the graduate degree program in Student Affairs in Higher Education. Before joining the faculty in 1991, he spent 10 years in progressive administrative positions, including five years as the Associate Director of University Housing at WKU. He was also Head of the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs for five years before returning to the faculty full-time in 2008. Dr. Hughey has degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Western Kentucky University, and Northern Illinois University. He has authored (or co-authored) over 70 refereed publications on a wide range of issues including leadership and student development, counseling, standardized testing, diversity, legal issues, and educational administration. He regularly presents at national and international conferences and consults extensively with companies and schools. He also provides training and professional development programs on a variety of topics centered on enhancing student success.

**Dr. Monica Galloway Burke** is a Professor in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs at Western Kentucky University. Prior to her 26 years of experience as a faculty member and practitioner in Student Affairs and Higher Education, she worked in the field of mental health. Dr. Burke has authored numerous peer-reviewed articles in scholarly journals and contributed chapters to various books. Furthermore, she served as the lead author for *Helping Skills for Working with College Students: Applying Counseling Theory to Student Affairs Practice* and the lead editor for *Helping Students in Distress: A Faculty Guide*. She is also a co-author for *Mindful Strategies for Helping College Students Manage Stress: A Guide for Higher Education Professionals*. Dr. Burke also served as a co-editor for *No Ways Tired: The Journey for Professionals of Color in Student Affairs* (a three-set volume), *Contemporary Issues within Caribbean Economies*, and *Culturally Responsive Leadership for Social Justice and Academic Equity for All*. Additionally, Dr. Burke has conducted over 150 workshops and presentations at the international, national, regional, state, and local levels. She was also a co-recipient of a prestigious grant from WorkRise, a research-to-action network on jobs, workers, and mobility hosted by the Urban Institute with the goal of driving action towards accelerating economic mobility and advancing equity in the US labor market. She is a Global Labor Organization (GLO) Fellow, a Fellow for the Office of the Provost (WKU), and a member of the Kentucky Faculty Advisory Network for the Council for Postsecondary Education in Kentucky.

Dr. Burke has been recognized for her commitment to preparing graduate students for a career in student affairs; work to promote the field of student affairs and diversity in higher education; and collaboration with colleagues as well as students by receiving various awards from student groups, WKU, professional organizations, and the Bowling Green community. For example, some of the honors she has received include awards for advising, research, and teaching excellence in the College of Education and Behavioral Science (WKU), the Faculty Mentoring Award at WKU, the President's Award for Diversity (WKU), Bowling Green Human Rights' Commission Woman of Achievement in the field of College Education, and the Melvne Draheim Hardee Award from the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA). In 2023, Dr. Burke was awarded the University's Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching (WKU) and inducted into the Kentucky Hall of Fame for the College Personnel Association of Kentucky (a state division of ACPA).