



NACA a Lead Partner for New Student Affairs Certification

July 16, 2021 – The [National Association for Campus Activities](https://www.naca.org/) is proud to announce it will be a lead partner in the development of a student affairs certification, called the Certified Student Affairs Educator. The first step in this process will be the creation of a separate 501(c)6 organization, called the Higher Education Consortium for Student Affairs Certification, to develop, oversee and execute the certification. This consortium will include representation from each of the founding association partners, including NASPA, ACUHO-I, ACUI, AFA, ASCA, and NIRSA. In addition to the creation of the general certification, several specialty areas are also being developed with NACA leading the development of a student activities specialization.

“I’m excited to see NACA leading the way on this new certification venture,” said NACA Board of Directors Chair Joshua Brandfon, Ed.D. “We have listened to the needs of our members and this certification will positively impact the student affairs profession for many years to come.”

“After engaging in internal and external conversations, the Association determined a joint venture was not only more impactful to the profession, but also positioned the certification to be fluid within the higher education field,” said NACA Executive Director Amber Shaverdi Huston. “Collaborating with multiple entities allows each investing organization to contribute to the process and to the advancement of the student affairs field. NACA is proud to be a partner on this important project.”

Developing the Certification

NACA has explored the idea of certification/credentialing for campus activities professionals for the past few years. Under the guidance of a credentialing consulting firm, a task force comprised of NACA volunteers convened in 2018 to explore credentialing options for the Association. The taskforce was led through several activities designed to help frame a market research study, which subsequently found strong support for providing professional development support via certification. The task force provided a detailed business plan with recommendations in summer 2019. The first half of 2019 saw a change of staff leadership at NACA. During this time, the board of directors determined it would be wise to place a hold on any developments until new staff leadership was in place. Simultaneously, conversations were beginning to take form with fellow student affairs-based associations, including NASPA. An opportunity arose for multiple student affairs-based associations to come together and support an initiative that could have a broader reach. Unfortunately, the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic slowed progress on this initiative in early 2020, but work was able to pick back up this past spring.

Association volunteer leaders have shared their time and talents alongside fellow student affairs educators, graduate faculty, and professional association representatives developing the

initial components of student affairs certification. As a voluntary credential, student affairs certification holds tremendous potential to the overall student affairs profession; as well as to individuals who have already earned a master's degree, spent several years working in higher education, and who seek a formal means of demonstrating their ongoing learning, competencies, and knowledge.

Student Affairs Practice Analysis Survey

As a part of the development of the certification, there will be student affairs practice analysis – a first-of-its-kind, profession-wide survey – that will identify the essential tasks and competencies of student affairs educators, including those duties that are critical to our respective functional area(s). The results of the survey will inform the overall work of our Association, as well as contribute directly to the development of the new student affairs certification program.

The upcoming practice analysis survey is intended to assess the work of the volunteer groups referenced above, and to generate critical data to guide ongoing certification development efforts. Participation in the practice analysis of the student affairs profession is a key opportunity for student affairs practitioners to share their voice outlining what they do in student affairs. The student affairs practice analysis survey will be emailed to practitioners next week from our partners at NASPA. Survey results will be shared later this year.

Moving Forward

As certification requirements develop, being a lead partner affords the Association the ability to align its curriculum, resources, and membership services to better support professionals who aspire to earn the certification and specialty areas. We will be sure to share information with you as it becomes available and on the NACA website: naca.org/certification.

Questions can be directed to Director of Education & Research [Sarah Keeling, Ph.D.](#)