GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs

Department of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies

Higher Education Policy & Student Affairs

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DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

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2020-2021

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education is ever changing. As higher education changes, so must the support programs, student services, and policies to meet the needs and wants of the current college student. This program will prepare student affairs educators and higher education practitioners to meet those changing needs and to provide challenge and support to both undergraduate and graduate college students. Policy implications are important in a changing environment. Students will be prepared to analyze current policies and learn how to navigate the political environment to develop and advocate for policy change to enhance student success.

ACPA/NASPA COMPETENCIES

The Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs program will incorporate the ACPA/NASPA 2015 *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* in all courses creating a foundation of knowledge, skills and disposition for students as they enter into the field of higher education and student affairs. The professional competency areas (see Appendix A) include the following: 1) Personal and Ethical Foundations; 2) Values, Ethics and History; 3) Assessment, Evaluation and Research; 4) Law, Policy and Government; 5) Organizational and Human Resource; 6) Leadership; 7) Social Justice and Inclusion; 8) Student Learning and Development; 9) Technology; and 10) Advising and Supporting[1]. These ten professional competencies outline the "knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of all student affairs educators, regardless of functional area or specialization within the field." Each competency has a set of outcomes categorized as foundational, intermediate, and advanced. Please see Appendix A.

PROGRAM MISSION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Mission Statement

The mission of the Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs (HEPSA) program is to prepare student affairs educators and higher education policy makers to comprehend, analyze, and meet the changing needs of college students. The program is designed to mentor students in understanding and applying higher education policy and student affairs practice that is supportive of student success and social democracy.

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[1] ACPA/NASPA (2015). *Professional competency areas for student affairs.* Washington, DC: Author.

Program Learning Outcomes

Student will be able to:

> 1. Identify, describe, and explain the process and usefulness of applied research within the contemporary higher education environment;
>
> 2. Demonstrate the ability to strategically plan and organize professional pursuits to affect successful outcomes and policy formation in higher education environments;
>
> 3. Exhibit a sense of integrity, purpose, fairness, and ethical behavior in working with higher education students;
>
> 4. Possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to positively impact the learning and development of all students in a post-secondary learning community;
>
> 5. Conduct applied research to produce reliable findings to advance one's ability to make informed decisions, produce effective planning, and contribute to the development of a higher education student affairs and student support programs;
>
> 6. Demonstrate the skills of working collaboratively with others and recognize the diversity of the talent and skills of all while providing leadership in a higher education policy or student affairs environment.

APPLICATION AND MATRICULATION PROCEDURES

Application Materials
Application materials are available online from the Graduate School.

All required transcripts, letters of recommendation, and standardized test scores should be sent directly to the Graduate School as directed in the application. It is your responsibility to follow up with recommenders and your undergraduate institution to ensure timely submission of materials to the Graduate School. West Chester University transcripts are available at the Graduate School and need not be sent.

The following materials must be submitted to complete the application process:
1. Completed graduate application with personal statement
2. Official academic transcripts for all completed undergraduate and graduate coursework
3. Two letters of recommendation that are submitted through the online application process
4. An interview (you will be contacted to schedule either an in-person or Skype interview)

You can check the status of your application by contacting The Graduate School.

Application Deadlines

Admissions to the Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs program are made once per year in the spring, to begin an academic program in the fall semester. In order to be considered for admission and be scheduled for the HEPSA Interview Day, applicants should submit their application to the Graduate School by **March 1.** Applications will continue to be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Admissions Requirements

Admission to the Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs graduate program requires the following:

1. An undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university
2. A 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale
3. Candidates who have a 3.0 GPA in the last 48 hours of course work completed will be considered.
4. Students admitted on a **provisional** basis must petition to be admitted to full status when they have successfully met the provisions specified at the time of their admission, or prior to applying for degree candidacy.

HEPSA Certificate Students

The HEPSA program offers a 12-credit post-baccalaureate certificate. Students are required to take EDH 500 (Introduction to Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs) n consultation with an advisor, students will choose three additional courses within the HEPSA program.

Non-Degree Students

Students are able to take 9 credits as a non-degree student. After 9 credits, students must apply for formal admission to the program. To apply as a non-degree student, please contact the Graduate School.

HEPSA LOGO DESCRIPTION
Designed by Jack Horne, M '20

The circle at the top represents students.

The squiggle inside the circle represents the ups and downs of student life, as well as challenge & support.

The student circle is at the top of the triangle inside the hexagon, and it represents us/ SA professionals working to get students to the top of the "mountain."

The stripes of the mountain represent stages students take to get to graduation.
The six sides of the hexagon represent important traits of a HEPSA student/higher ed professional: Empathy, Innovation, Support, Development, Growth, and Community. These words were voted on by HEPSA Cohort 2 (2019-2020).

M.S. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS/POLICIES

Course Work
The Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs program requires 39 semester hours (credits) of course work. Included in the 39 semester hours are two Internships. Internship students will complete an additional 250 hours/per Internship (500 total) in the field. Please review the HEPSA Internship manual (on HEPSA D2L site) for additional information about the Internship program and requirements. Students will also complete a Thesis during their final semester of the program. Please see the Thesis Handbook (on HEPSA D2L site). See Appendix B for the HEPSA Advising Sheet.

Certificates
Students are able to earn a certificate in Educational Technology or Sustainability by taking 9 additional semester hours (3 additional courses in the concentration). Your advisor can help you determine if a certificate would be possible in your academic plan.

Degree Candidacy Process
HEPSA students enrolled in the M.S. graduate program will articulate and declare their Critical Action Research Thesis thematic concern by 4:30 p.m. on the second Friday of the Spring-1 semester. To declare their thematic concern, students will turn in a one-page explanation of their thematic concern. Students will be instructed by their advisor about where and how to submit this paperwork.

There are two parts to the degree candidacy process.
Part 1
All full-time, first-year students (or part-time students who have completed EDH 500, EDH 510 and EDF 591) will meet with program faculty during fall semester finals week. These appointments will be scheduled during the fall semester and will be a time for students and faculty to discuss student progress in the program, thoughts about their thesis thematic concern, etc.
Part 2
Students will be required to submit a draft of their one-page explanation of their thematic concern by the end of the second week of their first spring semester, following the completion of Part 1 of the Degree Candidacy process. Students will turn in the draft of their thematic concern in EDH 515: College Student Identity Development.

Students must complete the degree candidacy process to receive a grade in EDH 515.

Academic Requirements and Policies

[West Chester University Graduate Catalog](#)

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is an important value at West Chester University and academic dishonesty is a violation of policy. Academic integrity is vital to the community of learners at a university. It is your responsibility to understand and adhere to the academic integrity policy.

Academic dishonest as outlined in the [academic integrity policy](#) includes plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, academic misconduct, facilitating academic dishonesty, and breach of professional ethics. Breach of professional ethics is important in all professions including student affairs and higher education. Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the [ACPA Statement of Ethical Principles and Standards](#) and [The CAS Statement of Shared Ethical Principles](#).

Good Standing
Students must maintain a 3.00 cumulative average to remain in good standing.

Academic Probation/Dismissal
Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation. Graduate students must raise their GPA to 3.00 by the end of the next semester (or full summer term) in which they register. An additional probationary semester may be granted at the discretion of the graduate dean. If a student fails to meet the conditions of academic probation he/she will be dismissed. Graduate students earning a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or lower will be dismissed from their graduate program without a probationary period. Graduate students admitted provisionally who fail to meet the provisions of admission are subject to dismissal.

F Grades
A graduate student earning an F grade in any course will be dismissed from the University. Exceptions may be made for a course outside the student's discipline upon the recommendation of the graduate coordinator and the approval of the graduate dean. An F earned at West Chester University may not be made up at another institution of higher learning for the same course.

IP and NG Grades
IP grades indicate work in progress and will be used only for protected courses (practicums, internships, recitals, and research reports). Students must complete course requirements as stipulated by the professor and not later than the end of the 14th week of the second subsequent semester or the IP grade will convert to an F. An IP grade may not be replaced with a NG.

NG grades will be given when a student fails to complete course requirements by the end of a semester and a time extension is granted by the professor. Students must complete course requirements as stipulated by the professor and not later than the end of the 14th week of the subsequent semester or the NG grade will convert to an F.

Thesis
Students will receive a separate handbook outlining the thesis process. The Thesis Handbook will be posted on the HEPSA D2L.

Graduation
Students must apply for graduation during the semester they intend to graduate. To apply for graduation, log on to your myWCU account and click on the "Apply for Graduation" link found under the self-scheduling section and follow the prompts. A graduation fee will be charged to your account which must be cleared before graduation. The graduation application timeline and additional information on graduation is available on the Registrar's webpage or here.

ACADEMIC FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

Transfer of Credit
Students may transfer up to 9 credits of coursework from another institution. All credit transfer requests are evaluated by and at the discretion of the Graduate Coordinator. Factors considered in the process are: similarity to a course in the WCU curriculum, accreditation Status of the other institution, and applicability to the student's course of study. The student must submit a course description and a syllabus from course they wish to transfer.

Change of Curriculum within a new department (college)

Change of Curriculum within the same department

Continuous Enrollment/Leave of Absence
Students are expected to maintain enrollment during fall and spring semester until completion of their graduate program. Students may take two consecutive semesters off without needing to take action (excluding Summer or Winter Terms). A student must apply for a formal leave of absence during the second semester of non-enrollment or enroll in a credit-bearing courses for the upcoming semester to be able to maintain good enrollment status.

Course And/Or Term Withdrawal
From time to time, students find it necessary to withdraw from a course after the drop/add period or may need to withdraw from the entire semester. Please complete the course or term withdrawal form and submit to the Graduate School.

Petitions for Exception to Policy
Students who need an exception to Program, Department, or University policy must

complete the Exception to Policy form which can be found on the Graduate School webpage, Graduate Forms.

Grade Appeals
The policy and procedure for appealing a grade can be found in the Graduate Catalog, Grade Information.

ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Non-Discrimination
The University prohibits discrimination, including sexual harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, religious creed, disability or veteran status. The HEPSA program of West Chester University strives to provide an inclusive learning environment for all members of its community by ensuring that faculty, students, and staff reflect the larger community, and by building a program committed to inter-cultural growth and learning. Please contact the Campus Climate Intervention Team if you have any concerns.

Title IX
West Chester University is committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to meet this commitment and to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Lynn Klingensmith. The only exceptions to this reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, as part of a University-approved research project or to a designated Confidential Resource Person (Counseling Center, Center for Women and Gender Equity, etc.) West Chester employees are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the person designated in the University protection of minors policy. Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at the webpage for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Disability Accommodations
If you have a disability that requires accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) please contact West Chester University's Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD). The OSSD is located in 223 Lawrence Center. The OSSD hours of Operation are Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Their phone number is 610-436-2564, their fax number is 610-436-2600, their email address is ossd@wcupa.edu. Click here to find out more information.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Orientation
Orientation is an important activity for any new student. Whether you are new to West Chester University or you are an alumnus, orientation to the program and to graduate studies will offer you an opportunity to learn more about graduate education and the Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs program.

The Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs program orientation is mandatory and students are expected to attend. The program is typically held the week prior to the beginning of the fall semester on the same day as the Graduate School orientation, which is held in the later afternoon. During orientation students will learn more about the program, meet the faculty and other department staff, and have an opportunity to network with other graduate students in the program.

Advising
All Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs graduate students will be assigned an academic advisor. You should meet with your advisor to discuss the curriculum and before registering for classes. Your advisor can also assist you in navigating the university policies and procedures and can connect you to various campus, community, and professional resources.

Course Registration
Students can register for courses through the myWCU system which is accessed from the WCU home page. Registration for graduate students typically is held in October (for Spring) and February (for Summer and Fall). You can find your registration date on your myWCU. **Department faculty will register you for some or all of your courses each semester**. All students should meet with their academic advisor or the graduate coordinator to ensure they are choosing courses that advance their degree plan. Instructions for navigating the myWCU system can be found on the Office of the Registrar webpage. Class times for courses in the Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs program will typically meet once per week from either 4:25-7:10 on the Main campus.

Your Records
It is important that you begin to keep a file (paper and/or electronic) of all important paperwork, email correspondence, letters, syllabi, transcripts, etc. related to your graduate program. If you change your name, phone number, and/or address please make sure to inform the Office of Graduate Studies and the Department of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies. For questions about changes to personal information, please see your academic advisor who can refer you to the most appropriate resource on campus.

Communication (Email and D2L)

Once you are enrolled as a student at West Chester University most programs and offices will communicate with you via your WCU university email account. Information about how to forward your WCU email to a personal account can be found on the Information Services webpage or by calling the Help Desk at 610-436-3350. Some faculty and staff may be willing to use your personal email account in addition to your WCU email. You are responsible for the information sent to your WCU email account. Please make sure to access it on a regular basis.

If you need assistance in accessing your email you can contact the Help Desk or locate information on the Information Services webpage.

The Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs program also maintains a D2L site. This site is used to post general information about the program, important dates and deadlines, graduate assistantship and employment information, internship site descriptions, forms and policy information, etc. Please makes sure to check D2L on a regular basis. You may edit your preferred name on the D2L platform only. Contact D2L Services at d2l@wcupa.edu

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Department and Program Workshops/Experiences
Throughout the semester, there will be many opportunities for you to participate in workshops, seminars, programs, and meetings. The HEPSA program has reserved **Wednesdays from 3:15-4:15** for important department meetings and workshops on topics such as internship preparation, thesis development, etc. Please check your email and D2L to learn more.

On-Campus Involvement
For HEPSA students, the campus is your lab! Working in a higher education community requires that you participate in the life of the campus by attending meetings and opportunities on campus. These experiences will help you to connect with other students and professionals, provide insight into the workings of a college or university, assist you in connecting and supporting undergraduate students, and offer you opportunities to increase your knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Chi Sigma Alpha
Chi Sigma Alpha is an international honors society comprised of graduate students, alumni, faculty, and student affairs professionals to promote and recognize excellence in academics, research, and service to the profession of student affairs. In order to be eligible to join, you must have earned at least 9 credits and a 3.7 grade point average in your graduate work. Chi Sigma Alpha sponsors events for students on campus, including supporting the WCU Resource Pantry as their philanthropy. For more information, please contact the chapter advisors, Dr. Jacqueline Hodes and Dr. Sara Hinkle.

Off-Campus Involvement

There are a multitude of opportunities to learn about student affairs and higher education. Conferences, events, and meetings occur throughout the academic year and the summer. As best as possible, we will make you aware of these opportunities. Please check your email and the HEPSA D2L site. Attending a conference will help you to learn more about the profession and network with other graduate students and professionals in the field. Presenting at a conference will assist you in your professional development and position you as a resource to your colleagues.

Professional Organizations
There are myriad professional organizations that serve the many professionals in higher education and student affairs. The two student affairs professional organizations that are umbrella organizations are ACPA-College Student Educators International and NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. West Chester University holds an institutional membership to both organizations which allows you to purchase a student membership at a reduced cost. Joining a professional organization provides you opportunity for professional growth and development, networking, and understanding the scope of student affairs. Membership benefits differ for each organization but most often include reduced cost for conference and professional meeting registrations, access to scholarly publications, and access to member-only events. Both ACPA and NASPA have state/regional organizations and provide opportunities to attend conferences in your local area.

Additionally, each functional area in student affairs is associated with a professional organization. For more information on national and regional organizations, please go to the HEPSA D2L page.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS/WAGE POSITIONS

On Campus
Graduate Assistantships provide graduate students an opportunity to work in a research or service setting and earn tuition remission and a stipend. A GA position is a wonderful way to gain experience and knowledge for the future. For more information about Graduate Assistantships at West Chester University, please visit the Graduate School webpage. Additionally, opportunities will be shared with HEPSA students via email and on the HEPSA D2L site. **Please note: When opportunities are posted, please apply asap!**

Off Campus
Many colleges and universities in our area provide graduate employment opportunities to graduate students. Please watch your email and the HEPSA D2L site for information about available off campus experiences. These opportunities will provide you with a stipend, experience, possible room and board but NOT tuition remission.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Supporting college students as they engage in their higher education experience is important work. There are many ways for you to learn more about the profession, to stay engaged in current events in the field, and to hone your knowledge, skills, and abilities. Again, the campus is your lab and you will learn the most if you engage in the life of the campus. Please see the handout, *Tips for MS Student in Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs* posted on the HEPSA D2L site for additional ways to get learn more about higher education and student affairs.

APPENDIX A: ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies

The ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies

Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF)
Involves the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to develop and maintain integrity in one's life and work; this includes thoughtful development, critique, and adherence to a holistic and comprehensive standard of ethics and commitment to one's own wellness and growth. Personal and ethical foundations are aligned because integrity has an internal locus informed by a combination of external ethical guidelines, an internal voice of care, and our own lived experiences. Our personal and ethical foundations grow through a process of curiosity, reflection, and self-authorship.

Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH)
Involves knowledge, skills, and dispositions that connect the history, philosophy, and values of the student affairs profession to one's current professional practice. This competency area embodies the foundations of the profession from which current and future research, scholarship, and practice will change and grow. The commitment to demonstrating this competency area ensures that our present and future practices are informed by an understanding of the profession's history, philosophy, and values.

Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)
Focuses on the ability to design, conduct, critique, and use various AER methodologies and the results obtained from them, to utilize AER processes and their results to inform practice, and to shape the political and ethical climate surrounding AER processes and uses in higher education.

Law, Policy, and Governance (LPG)
Includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to policy development processes used in various contexts, the application of legal constructs, compliance/policy issues, and the understanding of governance structures and their impact on one's professional practice.

Organizational and Human Resources (OHR)
Includes knowledge, skills, and dispositions used in the management of institutional human capital, financial, and physical resources. This competency area recognizes that student affairs professionals bring personal strengths and grow as managers through challenging themselves to build new skills in the selection, supervision, motivation, and formal evaluation of staff; resolution of conflict; management of the politics of organizational discourse; and the effective application of strategies and techniques associated with financial resources, facilities management, fundraising, technology, crisis management, risk management and sustainable resources.

Leadership (LEAD)
Addresses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of a leader, with or without positional authority. Leadership involves both the individual role of a leader and the leadership process of individuals working together to envision, plan, and affect change in organizations and respond to broad-based constituencies and issues. This can include working with students, student affairs colleagues, faculty, and community members.

Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI)
While there are many conceptions of social justice and inclusion in various contexts, for the purposes of this competency area, it is defined here as both a process and a goal which includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create learning environments that foster equitable participation of all groups while seeking to address and acknowledge issues of oppression, privilege, and power. This competency involves student affairs educators who have a sense of their own agency and social responsibility that includes others, their community, and the larger global context. Student affairs educators may incorporate social justice and inclusion competencies into their practice through seeking to meet the needs of all groups, equitably distributing resources, raising social consciousness, and repairing past and current harms on campus communities.

Student Learning and Development (SLD)
Addresses the concepts and principles of student development and learning theory. This includes the ability to apply theory to improve and inform student affairs and teaching practice.

Technology (TECH)
Focuses on the use of digital tools, resources, and technologies for the advancement of student learning, development, and success as well as the improved performance of student affairs professionals. Included within this area are knowledge, skills, and dispositions that lead to the generation of digital literacy and digital citizenship within communities of students, student affairs professionals, faculty members, and colleges and universities as a whole.

Advising and Supporting (A/S)
Addresses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to providing advising and support to individuals and groups through direction, feedback, critique, referral, and guidance. Through developing advising and supporting strategies that take into account self-knowledge and the needs of others, we play critical roles in advancing the holistic wellness of ourselves, our students, and our colleagues.

ACPA/NASPA (2015). *Professional competency areas for student affairs educators.* Washington, DC: Author.

APPENDIX B: Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs Advising Sheet
Department of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies
M.S. in Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs
Advising Sheet (Total: **39** credits)
As of Fall 2019

Required Courses (39 credits)

Courses	Credits
ERM 591 Introduction to Critical Action Research (Fall 1)	3
EDH 500 Introduction to Higher Education Policy & Student Affairs (Fall 1)	3
EDH 510 Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Higher Education (Fall 1)	3
EDH 515 Theories of College Student Identity Development (Spring 1)	3
EDH 545 Issues of Power/Privilege in Higher Education Policy & Student Affairs (Spring 1)	3
EDH 530 Internship 1: Advising and Supporting Students (Spring 1) Prerequisites: EDF 591, EDH 500, Pre/Co Requisites: EDH 515, EDH 510 **or** EDH 545	3
EDH 540 Transformative Leadership in Higher Education & Student Affairs (Summer) **250 Internship Hours required**	3
EDT 525 Applications/Implications of Technology in Higher Education & Student Affairs (Fall 2)	3
EDH 535 Law, Policy and Equity in Higher Education & Student Affairs (Fall 2)	3
EDO 550 The Sustainable Campus (Fall 2)	3
EDH 555 Program Development and Implementation Higher Education & Student Affairs (Spring 2)	3
EDH 520 Program Management and Evaluation (Spring 2)	3
ERM 595 Action Research Thesis (Spring 2)	3