

Division of Student Success Service Statement

Summary

The Office of the Vice Provost for Student Success (VPSS) is a member of the provost's senior leadership team with primary responsibility for leading the university's initiatives to improve undergraduate first-to-second-year retention, persistence, and graduation rates.

Strategic Initiatives

This charge is achieved through planning and assessment, programming, communications, and strong collaboration with faculty and the nine undergraduate academic colleges. In partnership with the UT community, the VPSS leads innovative initiatives, including the Volunteer Experience, Student Success Grants, Vol Success Teams, Vol Start Back, and Summer @ Rocky Top, enhancing undergraduate students' academic performance success.

For example, students who engage with their Vol Success Team report higher perceptions of academic success and sense of belonging on campus and report lower perceptions of stress than students who do not engage with their Vol Success Team. Also, in partnership with the UT faculty and staff and intentional student success efforts, we have increased the first-to-second-year retention rate from 86.5% (2018) to 87.8% (2020) university wide.

UT Strategic Vision—Volunteer Experience

After an eight-month collaborative effort, the Strengths Advisory Council, charged by Provost Zomchick, proposed actionable items to support the Volunteer Experience as articulated in goal one of the Strategic Vision. The VPSS, in collaboration with the broader UT community, will serve as the strategic and accountable administrative leader as we transform the student experience. The goal of the Volunteer experience is increasing persistence and graduation rates while also preparing our students for improved positive career outcomes (job or graduate school within six months of graduation).

Volunteer Experience Summary

The Volunteer Experience will be a comprehensive, university-wide approach to student well-being and success—inside and outside the classroom. Undergraduate scholars will be critical partners in the creation of their unique Volunteer Experience.

The Volunteer Experience will harness the power of our students' strengths, promote their well-being, and produce graduates who are self-motivated, resilient, confident, and driven by service.

As members of an active community, students who choose to participate will have opportunities to deepen their campus engagement through meaningful academic and co-curricular experiences designed to impact their educational, personal, and career goals.

Reporting Offices--Overview

New Student Orientation (NSO) is responsible for the processes and programming related to orienting new students to campus. NSO engages incoming students through a four-part orientation experience comprised of virtual advising, online pre-orientation, Summer Welcome (in person), and Big Orange Welcome, which includes six weeks of welcome activities in the fall and spring semesters. In addition, New Student Orientation is responsible for special events programming for DSS.

The UT Success Academy (UTSA) program is designed to maximize first-year Black and Latinx men's transition to the Volunteer community by developing their strengths and potential through an innovative, four-year customized infrastructure, experiential learning, community building, and transformative experiences, both on and off-campus.

First-Year Programs (FYP) facilitates programming to ensure students have a smooth and successful transition to UT academically, personally, and socially. In consultation with faculty, programming includes FYS 101, the UT Experience, and TRNS 201: Transitioning to Rocky Top. FYS 101, designed for first-time students, equips students with the skills needed to succeed at UT and in their field of choice. The curriculum of TRNS 201 supports transfer students' successful transition to UT. In addition, Volunteer Bridge is housed in FYP. Volunteer Bridge is a pathway program that enables students to live on the UT campus during their first year of college while attending courses at Pellissippi State Community College. Upon meeting specific requirements, students return to UT to complete their remaining coursework.

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides academic support services to the university's undergraduate student body. Academic coaches in the ASC primarily assist students with study skills, time management, goal setting, and test preparation. The Vol Study Center, housed within the Academic Success Center, provides study sessions and space, Supplemental Instruction, and additional learning support services. Staff in the Vol Study Center regularly collaborate with faculty to ensure services align with the curriculum. In addition, the ASC oversees early alert campaigns that enable faculty to connect students exhibiting signs of academic distress to resources.

Academic Inclusive Initiatives (All) leads the division's first-generation programming and efforts to support low-income and racial and ethnic minority students. Housed within All, the UT LEAD program promotes leadership, excellence and achievement, and diversity for first-generation students.

The Center for Career Development & Academic Exploration (CCDAE) promotes undergraduate student success by providing career development and academic exploration services. The center offers assessments, workshops, and coaching to assist students in finding a successful career path and facilitates connections to employers through job fairs and employment. The CCDAE also helps students who are exploring majors or are in transition through advising and coaching. The center regularly supports and collaborates with faculty by facilitating in-class presentations on career topics, job fairs and providing career outcomes data, and recruiting students to majors. In addition, a representative from the center chairs the undergraduate curriculum committee sub-committee that assists faculty in modifying courses as "N" designated.

Campus-wide advising initiatives. Academic advising consists of four major components: Self Exploration, Career Exploration, Experience Learning, and Academic Planning. Central to the model is the design of a common experience for all students. The shared experience is achieved by assigning all students a professional academic advisor for their entire UT career and engaging them early in exploring majors and careers and their chosen discipline. Each college provides engagement in the discipline utilizing faculty as mentors, who help guide students in research, scholarship, and/or internship opportunities.

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) provides services and programming for student veterans and their dependents. The VSC works collaboratively with campus partners to provide programs and opportunities to bridge the gap from military service to higher education to job obtainment and ensure veteran success both in and out of the classroom.

Honors & Scholars Programs (HSP) provides custom academic experiences for the university's highest achieving students. Four unique honors programs enable students to identify a program that meets their academic, personal, and professional goals. In collaboration with faculty and the campus community, HSP provides coursework, specialized programming, and high-impact practices to enhance students' experiences and academic success.

Undergraduate Research & Fellowships (URF) facilitates undergraduate students' application to nationally competitive funding opportunities and connection to research with faculty. URF collaborates with faculty, staff, and units across campus to identify research mentoring and funding opportunities. In addition, the team mentors students through rigorous application processes for competitive awards and facilitates campus endorsement.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE

DIVISION OF STUDENT SUCCESS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Updated October 20, 2021

