

Justin Lawhead

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Student Affairs Leader and Educator

Senior Student Affairs Leader with experience in strategic leadership, student engagement, student well-being, and managing comprehensive student support systems in higher education. Proven track record in enhancing student belonging and overseeing large teams and multi-million-dollar budgets. Expertise in developing and implementing programs that drive student retention, persistence, and holistic development, with a strong focus on student engagement strategy. Adept at securing external funding, guiding career readiness initiatives, and developing leadership programs that align with student success and workforce preparation. Significant experience in mental health service expansion, crisis response coordination, and behavioral intervention. Demonstrated ability to lead diverse teams and collaborate with academic units, faculty, and external partners to support institutional goals.

Education

Doctor of Education (Ed.D), Higher Education, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

Dissertation: "Leadership Identity Development in Greek Life Organizations: Lessons Learned"

Completed courses assessment, qualitative research, educational research methods, higher education policy, and environmental theory.

Master of Education (M.Ed), Educational Counseling with a concentration in Student Personnel Services,
University of Pittsburgh, April 1992

Bachelor of Arts (BA), Political Science, University of Pittsburgh, April 1990

Professional Experience

University of Memphis

Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

July 2016 to Present

Lead a group of 120 professional and student employees supported by state, student activity fee, and foundation funding totaling over 13 million dollars. Partner with college deans, department chairs, registrar, and director of financial aid in addressing student concerns, complaints, and barriers to persistence, retention, and graduation. Chair behavior intervention team meetings directing support and intervention strategies for over 250 cases. Establish expected outcomes for each office/unit and its programs and services, evaluate outcomes, and prepare reports as appropriate. Implement overall vision, direction, leadership, and the continued development of a student-centered team and programs focusing on student engagement, support, and success.

Department Oversight

Student Leadership and Involvement, Office of Accountability, Outreach and Support, Career Services (19-24), Veterans and Military Student (19-22) Services, Multicultural Affairs, Disability Resources for Students (19-22) Student Services at Lambuth Campus (16-22), Residence Life (19-22), Police Services (19-22) and Counseling and Health Center (18 to present).

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Career and Integrative Partnerships

- Serving as the QEP lead for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP): Empower through Experience (Tigers Excel) which aims to enhance undergraduate students' career readiness by expanding experiential learning opportunities across the institution.
- Supervised the Career Services Director and collaborated on initiatives to enhance student support and services, including:
 - Developing standardized guides for resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn profiles for all students
 - Supporting the implementation of Stepping Blocks to provide students with graduate outcomes and data-driven career planning resources
- Led a process improvement team to streamline student employment processes, enhancing uniform access for students, expanding the candidate pool for employers, and centralizing information for more efficient use.
- Partnered with the New Memphis Institute to enhance talent retention efforts in the city by involving the University of Memphis in Accelerate, a community-based program that supports college students as they transition to their careers.
- Collaborated with the Senior Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations to facilitate a discovery session with AutoZone, exploring educational partnerships aligned with evolving workplace trends.
- Developed an Emerging Leaders Capstone Course designed to guide students in translating their collegiate leadership experiences into NACE professional competencies with resumes, cover letters, and behavioral interviewing.
- Partnered with 2024 Tennessee SHRM Conference Chair to deliver a conference keynote presentation entitled Creative Workforce Development—Begins with Strategic College Relations.
- Taught 3510 communication management course from 2013-2016 focused on professional communication including resumes, cover letters behavioral interviewing, and network development.
- Created a one-day student personal branding conference in collaboration with Career Services and the Fogelman College of Business focusing on student transition to the workforce. Program attendance grew from 50 to 150 and included 25 different community partners.

First-Generation Initiatives

- Partnered with university stakeholders to establish the inaugural First-Generation Week (2017), creating a campus-wide initiative to celebrate, support, and raise awareness for first-generation college students.
- Collaborated with the Office of First-Generation Student Success (OFGSS) and the First Scholars program to host workshops on personal branding, career development, and professional growth, including the creation of the successful "Tie-It Tuesday" initiative and the First-Generation Career Closet, benefiting over 800 students by offering suits, ties, and professional attire.
- Secured a grant from Tennessee Department of Human Services to conduct SNAP outreach resulting in over 300 students being prescreened for benefits.

Leadership and Service Development

- Established and directed Leadership Education and Development Program (LEAD) program that included the following:
 - The Tiger Leadership Institute (TLI) a student-driven program designed to equip undergraduate students with practical leadership skills for use in academic and real-world settings. The program included three specialized six-week curricula, each crafted to support students at various stages of their leadership journey.

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- Introduced and implemented the nationally recognized LeaderShape program on campus, providing students with a transformative six-day leadership development experience focused on integrity, vision, and personal growth.
- Created a cohesive brand identity for all leadership programs, establishing a unified visual and messaging framework that enhances program recognition, reinforces core values, and effectively communicates the benefits and impact of leadership development opportunities to students and stakeholders.
- Designed and launched the Local Leaders Series within the student leadership program, connecting students with prominent community leaders through workshops and discussions to foster real-world insights, mentorship, and hands-on leadership skills.
- Developed and implemented a professional mentoring program within the leadership program, pairing students with industry professionals to provide career guidance, networking opportunities, and personalized support in leadership development and career readiness.
- Established all learning outcomes and assessment methods for all leadership programs.
- Program engagement grew from 150 students to 1,000 students.
- Designed and implemented service-learning components across leadership development curricula, strengthening civic engagement while cultivating leadership competencies in emerging professionals through hands-on community impact projects.
- Grew enrollment in the Emerging Leaders Scholarship program from 50 to 200 students through intentional partnership with enrollment services including school visits, intentional geographical outreach, and student ambassador program. Manage 1.5 million scholarship dollars as part of this effort.

External Relations and Campus Engagement

- Established LEAD advisory board of community partners who identify opportunities for program growth and support. The board consisted of 20 members and helped raise over \$ 50,000 for leadership training as well as supported community-based leadership training efforts.
- Partnered with advancement to strategically engage, cultivate, and steward donors (\$50k) and principal (\$ 1M+ donors). Secured \$1M for senior class scholarship program.
- Served as Board Member for New Memphis, a leadership development organization, providing strategic direction to enhance workforce readiness programs serving 1,000+ University of Memphis students annually through mentorship and professional development initiatives.
- Chair Board of Directors for Aurora Collegiate Academy, providing strategic oversight and governance to advance college-preparatory education for underserved K-5 students while strengthening community partnerships and stakeholder engagement to support academic excellence.

Student Support Services

- Secured a graduation coach position for the office of multicultural affairs supporting direct guidance for student leaders that resulted in 1,500+ touchpoints, addressing academic planning and intervention.
- Expanded the Multicultural Affairs team by recruiting and onboarding staff dedicated to supporting LGBTQIA+ students, ensuring the department could better address the unique challenges and needs of this community. This initiative included the creation of specialized roles focused on advocacy, programming, and resource development, as well as fostering an inclusive campus climate.
- Created the Tiger Food Pantry supporting students who are experiencing food insecurities which served over 2,500 users in 23-24 academic year.
- Established a student emergency fund providing awards students who experience unexpected or temporary expenses. The fund annually supported 100 students in 23-24 academic year with over

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\$100,000 in awards. Instituted a Power BI dashboard to demonstrate outreach and impact of the student emergency fund.

- Partnered with Director of Counseling and Health Center to secure additional funding for staffing addressing 21% increase in use and adding more expertise in treating clients with trauma and autism spectrum and expanding our effort with LGBTQ+ clients.
- Created a basic needs staff position who coordinates services, functions, and activities related to basic needs; provides case management and specialized information.
- Developed intentional partnerships with both financial aid and the registrars to enhance case management and problem-solving for student referred to the Dean of Students Office.

Associate Dean of Students for Leadership and Involvement University of Memphis

2003 to 2016

Responsibilities

- Led and managed the following student engagement programs: Student Leadership Training and Development, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Student Activities Council, Student Event Allocation, Student Organization Recognition and Registration, Student Spirit Programs, Student Government Association, Student Travel and Volunteer Programs. Administered the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement including staff and student training, budget approval (totaling \$2M), contract review and approval, program evaluation and annual strategic planning.

Selected Accomplishments

- Revised funding guidelines for Student Event Allocation process focusing on improved student stewardship and more informed decision making for a process that awarded over \$350,000 in student activity fees.
- Established a campus wide two-month engagement effort entitled Plug into the Blue focused in connecting new and returning students. Program had over 100 events and 20 different university partners.
- Conducted staff reorganization focused on improved advisement for fraternities and sororities and supporting expanding leadership programs.
- Collaborated with student government association to establish a large event fee supporting high profile/large community interest programs.

Associate Director of Campus Life

July 2000 to July 2003

Kent State University

Responsibilities

- Oversaw the following areas: Multicultural Programs, New Student and Transfer Orientation (00-02), Student Organization Recognition and Registration (00-02), Greek Affairs (02-03), and Campus Wide Special Event Programming.

Selected accomplishments

- Partnered with Assistant Director of Greek Affairs to enhance governance procedures and structures of the Interfraternity and Panhellenic Councils.
- Initiated review of IFC constitution concentrating specifically on issues regarding membership status, financial management and executive board duties.
- Conducted review of Student Social Event Policy along with NPHC Council leaders, student organization advisors, and University police.
- Revised social event planning guides and student activity fee allocation guidelines.

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT WILMINGTON (UNCW)

May 1994 to July 2000

Assistant Director of Campus Activities

- Supervised three professional staff: Program Coordinator, Program Assistant, and SGA Business Manager.
- Managed the Student Government Association and the Campus Activities budgets totaling over \$ 520,000.
- Created UNC Weekend program and marketing campaign supporting an engaged campus during the weekend.

DELAWARE VALLEY UNIVERSITY

June 1992 to July 1994

Coordinator of Student Activities

- Advised the Student Activities Committee, Student Government Association, Inter Club Council, and Student Yearbook.
- Managed a programming budget of \$70,000.

Instructor Experience

University 4380 – Senior Emerging Leader Capstone Course

2018 to current

- Designed and instructed course for students to identify personal leadership styles and strengths, as well as awareness of how various leadership approaches are engaged in a professional environment.
- Guided students through exercises and assignments to synthesize their collegiate leadership experiences and translate those experiences to the post-collegiate environment.

Management 3510 – Business Communication Skills

2013 to 2016

- Taught course focusing on communication strategies and theory applied to business and the professional job search.
- Worked with students on effective writing, presentation of written and oral case solutions, letters, memoranda, reports, and employment applications.
- Conducted in class exercises focusing of presentation strategies, interviewing and intercultural communication.

Fresh Connections Student Leadership

2013

- Developed a learning community designed to appeal to entering freshmen who are interested in leadership training.
- Met and communicated with faculty regarding learning outcomes and community enrichment activities.
- Taught one credit course focusing on introductory to leadership study and personal awareness.

Communication 3342 – Leadership theory for Emerging Leaders

2003 to 2008

- Developed syllabus/curriculum for course focused on of the history and origins of leadership, theoretical approaches to leadership, and issues in contemporary leadership.
- Organized course discussion and exercises, small group activities and graded papers

Communication 3341 – Leadership and Social Change

2003 to 2008

- Developed syllabus/curriculum exploring how to create change in society through everyday acts of leadership.
- Created opportunities s for practice, application, and documentation of leadership, and reflection on individual responsibility for and potential in leadership roles.

Professional Affiliations

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National Association for Campus Activities Chair of the Board

**1994 to present
2004 to 2005**

Served as the chief representative of the organization and main spokesperson for policy issues and matter.

- Develop and set priorities- in conjunction with the Board of Directors- for the Association's goals and objectives and establishes activities that are consistent with the Association's strategic planning.
- Reviewed and evaluated the Executive Director at least once annually.
- Approved and monitored annual association budget totaling over \$5 million.

Chair Elect

2003 to 2004

- Oversaw the coordination of six Summer Workshops covering topics including Student Government Leadership, Concert Management, and Programming Basics.
- Selected chair and staff for 2005 convention.

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)

Member

2012 to present

Tennessee State Representative

2016 to 2018

National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA)

Member

2018 to present

National Association of Colleges and Employers

Member

2019 to present

Publications

Bureau, D., & Lawhead, J. (2018). Assessing leadership development programs. In Hastings, L., & Kane, C. (Eds). Mentoring, Advising and Coaching for Leadership Development. New Directions for Student Leadership #158.

Bouldin, J., Lawhead, J., & Simpson, T. (2017). New models for partnerships between cocurricular programs and Career Services. In A. Peck (Ed.) Engagement and employability: integrating career learning through cocurricular experiences in postsecondary education. Washington, DC: NASPA–Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

Peck, A., (ed), Cramp, C., Croft, L., Cummings, T., Fehring, K., Hall, D., Hnatusko, P & Lawhead, J. (February, 2015). "Considering the Impact of Participation and Employment of Students in Campus Activities and Collegiate Recreation on the Development of the Skills Employers Desire Most: A Joint Whitepaper from the National Association for Campus Activities and Leaders in Collegiate Recreation": NIRSA. Columbia, SC, and Corvallis, OR.

Recent Presentations

"Squiggly Careers: Thriving on A Non-Linear Career Path," 2024 New Memphis Leadership Summit, Memphis, TN, August 2024.

"Creative Workforce Development—Begins with Strategic College Relations 2024", Tennessee SHRM Conference, Memphis, TN, August 2024.

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“How Community Engagement Can Shape Career Development, Fogelman College of Business, Human Resource Internship Course, Memphis, TN, Fall 2023 and 2024.