

Daphne R. Wells



Dear Members of the Search Committee:

I am excited to apply for the Director of Student Activities position within the Department of Undergraduate Student Success. With nearly 20 years of progressive leadership in higher education—marked by innovative program development, multi-million-dollar budget oversight, and the cultivation of high-performing teams—I am eager to bring my expertise to this role and advance your institution's mission.

Throughout my career, I have prioritized student success through strategic leadership and transformative programming. Currently, as Manager of the Girls Empowerment Mentoring Support (GEMS) Program at United College Action Network, I oversee 10 Coordinators across nine campuses and three school districts, designing culturally responsive curricula that have improved GPAs, reduced behavioral incidents, and decreased absenteeism among 7th–11th grade girls at Title 1 schools. In my most recent higher education role, I served as Director of Student Life and The Davis Center, overseeing the Student Union and the Student Life Department, which comprises nine units: Fraternity and Sorority Life, Club Sports, Campus Programs, Student Media, Civic Engagement, Outdoor Programs, Marketing and Communications, the Student Government Association, and the Food Pantry. In this capacity, I served as a student advocate and advised the Vice Provost of Student Affairs on all matters related to campus life. I led a comprehensive departmental reorganization, developed a strategic plan that better aligned the department with our divisional mission, and established a centralized programming model to address gaps in campus-wide diversity initiatives while reducing program duplication. Additionally, I regularly reviewed, wrote and updated university operating policies, facilitated trainings on topics such as Leadership Development, Restorative Practices, and Effective Communication.

My approach to leadership is characterized by:

- **Strategic Vision:** I have consistently developed and executed strategic plans that align with institutional priorities, including leading comprehensive departmental reorganizations that improved cross-functional collaboration and service delivery.
- **Fiscal Stewardship:** With experience managing and building budgets up to \$12M, I have demonstrated strong financial acumen, implementing data-driven resource allocation strategies that maximize impact while controlling costs.
- **Collaborative Partnership Building:** I have established productive partnerships with academic affairs, community organizations, and corporate sponsors to create holistic educational experiences that prepare students for academic and career success.
- **Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion:** Throughout my career, I have championed initiatives that promote equity and inclusion, including implementing an Anti-

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Oppression framework that transformed hiring practices, policy and programmatic offerings and processes.

I have extensive experience spearheading large- and small-scale programs, managing and building budgets as large as \$12M, supervising teams of up to 36 staff members, and creating strategic plans that streamlined operations, reduced unnecessary spending, and advanced institutional goals. My background also includes nine years in Student Conduct, where I managed crisis response, served on behavioral intervention teams, and upheld accountability with a student-centered approach. Additionally, seven years in Residential Life allowed me to refine my skills in staff development, facility management, and co-curricular programming that integrates academic and student life. I have also worked closely with faculty to infuse academic content into student programming and partnered with career services to design career pathways tied to co-curricular engagement.

I am confident that my extensive administrative and student affairs experience aligns closely with the responsibilities of the Director of Student Activities role. I welcome the opportunity to discuss how my skills and experiences can contribute to your mission and vision for undergraduate student success.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to the possibility of contributing as a member of your team.

Sincerely,

Daphne R. Wells, M.Ed.