

Daphne R. Wells, M. Ed

Executive Summary

Strategic leader with 19+ years of experience developing innovative programs, managing multi-million-dollar budgets, and leading cross-functional teams within educational environments. Proven success in strategic planning, staff development, and implementing student-centered initiatives that increase retention and academic achievement. Skilled in building collaborative partnerships with diverse stakeholders and managing organizational change.

Relevant Experience

United College Action Network (UCAN) | Sacramento, California

Manager of Girls Empowerment Mentoring Support (GEMS) Program 08/2024 – Present

- Provide strategic leadership for innovative mentoring program serving 7th through 10th grade girls across four school districts.
- Lead and mentor team of 10 Coordinators across multiple districts, implementing performance metrics that improved service delivery efficiency in first six months.
- Develop culturally-responsive curriculum addressing social-emotional learning and academic achievement, resulting in 30% reduction in behavioral incidents and increased attendance.
- Assisted in the planning and logistics for high-impact, two-week HBCU college fair across multiple states, coordinating with 40+ universities and college recruiters.
- Established comprehensive student support framework integrating mental health resources, academic interventions, and family engagement strategies, serving 500+ students annually.

Bridges Behavioral Health | Houston, Texas

Contract Consultant 07/2021 – Present

- Provide specialized training and coaching for foster youth transitioning to higher education.
- Designed and implemented self-awareness training program for 100+ foster youth and administrators, with 85% of participants reporting improved confidence in college readiness.
- Coach 15-30 high school seniors annually on goal setting, academic self-efficacy, and resilience strategies, resulting in 40% higher college persistence rates compared to non-participant peers.

University of Vermont | Burlington, Vermont

Director of Student Life and the Dudley H. Davis Center 07/2018 – 06/2021

- Provided executive leadership for comprehensive Student Life department serving 10,000+ students.
- Led strategic management of nine operational units including Fraternity and Sorority Life, Campus Programs, Civic Engagement, Club Sports, Student Media, Marketing and Communications, Food Pantry, Outdoor Programs, and Student Government.
- Management a diverse, multigenerational team of 23 professionals across three operational units, driving performance and collaboration.

- Directed development and management of \$12M departmental budget, implementing cost-saving measures that reduced operational expenses while expanding student programming offerings.
- Spearheaded campus-wide diversity initiatives through Anti-Oppression framework that informed hiring practices, programming, policies and departmental processes.
- Collaborated with executive leadership to design and implement campus-wide COVID-19 response protocols and established virtual engagement platforms that maintained 75% student participation during remote operations.
- Centralized programming efforts to reduce duplication and foster greater collaboration across departments.
- Contributed as a key member of the campus Emergency Operations Team, developing protocols for responding to student protests and campus unrest, ensuring student safety and institutional preparedness.
- Created unified departmental culture and dismantled organizational silos through formation of cross-functional Leadership Team, improving interdepartmental collaboration.

University of Texas San Antonio | San Antonio, Texas

Associate Director of Student Activities 03/2017 – 12/2017

- Provided leadership for student engagement initiatives serving 30,000+ students.
- Supervised and mentored two Assistant Directors and 15 student staff, providing ongoing support and development to enhance team performance and organizational effectiveness.
- Designed innovative programming model for the Downtown Campus serving the graduate student population, a traditionally underserved population.
- Streamlined student organization registration and accountability processes, managing 350+ registered organizations and reducing administrative processing time.
- Developed targeted marketing strategies that increased event attendance by 25% and social media engagement.

Mississippi Valley State University | Itta Bena, Mississippi

Director of Student Leadership & Engagement February 2015 – August 2016

- Directed comprehensive student development department encompassing seven operational units.
- Led and managed multifaceted department including Student Activities, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Recreation and Intramural Sports, and Student Union, supervising 7 professional staff and 25 para-professional staff.
- Developed and facilitated Student Leadership Institute, providing ongoing leadership development for 120+ student leaders annually, with 85% reporting improved leadership competencies.
- Led cross-functional team to design and implement comprehensive First and Second Year Experience Program, contributing to 7% increase in first-year student retention.
- Served on Behavior Response Team, managing Title IX and non-academic conduct cases, resolving 95% of cases through restorative justice approaches.

California State University | Chico, California

Residence Community Coordinator 09/2013 – 02/2015

- Managed residential operations and student development programming for 530 first-year students.
- Supervised and mentored 18-member residential staff team, including full-time Assistant Coordinator and Faculty-in-Residence.
- Implemented Restorative Practices model for student conduct, reducing conduct cases by 44%.
- Designed and delivered comprehensive Diversity Training Series across the division, reaching 200+ staff members and resulting in improvement in cultural competency.

Morgan State University | Baltimore, Maryland

Academic Enrichment Program Coordinator 08/2010 – 06/2013

- Directed all aspects of Tutorial Services, including marketing, recruitment, training and performance evaluation of 30+ peer tutors, serving 500+ students annually.
- Designed and implemented leadership accelerator programs for underrepresented populations, including Living/Learning initiatives that demonstrated higher engagement rates than general student population.
- Created Residential Scholars Recognition Program, establishing leadership pipeline that increased student leadership application rates by 25%.

The LeaderShape Institute, | Urban Champaign, Illinois

Co-Lead Facilitator 2008 – Present

- Co-managed a transformative 4-day campus-based intensive leadership institute, focusing on leadership development, identifying core values, and leading with integrity.
- Provided expert guidance and training to staff on leadership development techniques and the multidimensional course curriculum, ensuring effective delivery and impact.
- Served as a dedicated advisor, coach, and resource for both LeaderShape students and staff, offering continuous support and fostering a positive, growth-oriented learning environment.

Education

Doctor of Philosophy: Higher Education Administration

In Progress | Morgan State University

Master of Education: Higher Education & Student Affairs Administration

2006 | University of Vermont

Bachelor of Arts: Sociology

2004 | California State University, Chico