The Student Affairs Division enjoys a long tradition of exceptional delivery of service to students, the University, and the community. With the naming of Wray Hollowell Congdon as Lehigh's first Dean of Students in 1947, “student affairs” informally came to be and our work as campus partners, operating in concert with the faculty and in support of the institution’s academic mission, was recognized. The division was formally launched in 1971 with the naming of our initial Vice President for Student Affairs (and Dean of Students), Preston Parr. Subsequent generations have seen the division both grow and contract, always forward thinking and aware of our varied roles as educators and change agents. This has included the appointment in 1983 of Lehigh’s first female vice-president, Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Marsha Duncan, as well as the transition of the division into the Provost’s Office with Dr. John Smeaton serving as our first Vice Provost for Student Affairs. We are currently led by Dr. Ricardo Hall and remain intertwined with the history, success, and bright future of Lehigh.

As with any organization, the makeup of our division is impacted regularly, and often unexpectedly, by staff turnover as our colleagues grow and explore opportunities at other institutions, by retirement, by institutional leadership transitions, and by the addition of (both new and more seasoned) staff members. In the face of these and other changes, it is imperative that Student Affairs maintains the divisional and institutional knowledge that tends to erode over time. We must continue to be intentional in our efforts to educate all staff members on the ideals and practices that have earned our division well-deserved trust, goodwill, and even admiration across campus.

The Student Affairs Standards of Excellence are not intended to be a comprehensive listing of positive staff member traits or to provide specific guidance on how to behave in a given circumstance. Rather, these Standards are intended to be a resource for current and future staff members, providing historical perspective and overarching guidance on practices that have proved to be important in the cultivation of what we believe is an exemplary student affairs division. With these Standards of Excellence as a backdrop, Student Affairs will continue to be mindful of our important place within the fabric of the Lehigh University community and remain dedicated in our efforts to contribute to an optimal Lehigh experience.
AS A DIVISION, WE STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN OUR:

On-Boarding of New Staff Members

Our division recruits and hires exceptional employees. To help ensure a positive professional experience, great care should be taken to orient newly hired staff members to their office/department, the Division, and the University. In addition to the orientation provided by Human Resources, Student Affairs onboarding should include:

- Clear and consistent messages on employee expectations;
- An overview of other offices within the division; and,
- Cross-training when appropriate, to cultivate understanding and appreciation of co-workers’ contributions to the workplace.

Written Correspondence

We communicate with students, families, faculty, academic administrators, media, vendors and others via email, letters, memos, social media, and various other forms of written correspondence. Staff members are reminded to review written correspondence for grammar, typographical errors, length, tone, and content prior to sending or submitting written communication. Work with your co-workers and/or supervisors to review work prior to final submission. We support each other as we strive for excellence.

Timelines and Responsiveness

Each one of us should make every effort to respond promptly to email, phone calls, text messages, etc. in a timely manner, making every effort to answer questions and resolve issues, or taking the time to connect individuals with the proper office or individual.

Overall Quality of Work

Staff members should always be mindful that their work product reflects not only their office/department or even the Division, but also themselves as professionals. Even under the most impromptu or rushed circumstances, our work should be exemplary.

“Is this work suitable for submission to the Vice Provost?” and, “Would I be proud if the Vice Provost shared my work with the President or Board of Trustees?” are questions we might pose to ourselves when completing both formal and informal assignments.

Collaboration Within and Outside of the Division

Student Affairs has a positive record within the Lehigh community. We are considered knowledgeable, dedicated, and valued leaders and partners. We welcome opportunities to collaborate with offices and departments outside of Student Affairs, always mindful that we represent our division during these interactions. Similarly, when collaborating with offices or departments within our division, we hold ourselves and our respective staffs accountable to our Standards of Excellence.

Sense of Ownership

Student Affairs is our Division. Lehigh is our University. Our interactions, our written work, our presentations, and all else that we do in or in relation to our workplace should reflect our belief that our collective experience is made better by our personal investment in our division. We take responsibility and keep others accountable.

Willingness to Help Shape the Lehigh Experience

In the spirit of ensuring that students, as well as employees, have an optimal Lehigh Experience, Student Affairs staff members should extend courtesy, respect, and care to all whom we encounter.