Student Support Guidelines

Vision
Purdue University will offer a robust and meaningful residential experience to all students.

Mission
In alignment with the Steps to Leaps Pillars, using a health and well-being lens, develop a plan to preserve safely the residential student experience, including virtual experiences as it relates to student support.

Assumptions:
- Any unit that delivers a service to students – student facing - is considered a "student support" office and should consider these recommendations
- All guidelines offered in this document are only suggestions and viewed in the context of particular local units and in response to local supervision.
- Summer Start, Early Start, and Fall instruction will need to be delivered in new ways that de-densify campus, including expanded night and Saturday classes
- Undergraduates care about academics, extracurricular activities, and social life
- Students will seek out critical services from all student facing units
- Some students cannot return to campus (e.g., international students currently outside the United States, domestic students with underlying health conditions).
- Providing a supportive and inclusive campus environment for Black students is particularly important in the current social context.
- Until we have a vaccine that is widely available (at-scale) uncertainty will remain a common part of our lives

Many unknowns remain about the ongoing impact of COVID-19, making planning difficult. Purdue University student support offices will adapt and deliver support across a spectrum of possibilities—in person, remotely, and a hybrid of varying degrees of both. To ensure flexibility and support, key services and functions require modifications. In an effort to enhance support for students, recommended are five (5) key principles for implementation with student facing units: Communication, Flexibility, Structure, Consistency, and Connection.

COMMUNICATION: Clarity, inclusivity and availability are important when communicating and providing student support. Consider these elements related to websites, social media platforms and other modes of communication.
- Respond to messages and correspondence in a timely and efficient manner
- Consider how the lack of daily, organic interactions change and impact connections with students
- Share information and also acknowledge anxiety and students' needs for emotional support; emphasizing the Steps to Leaps 'Wellness' pillar. contribute to and sustain a community of care

- Evaluate current communications and resource offerings, including but not limited to webpages; update and revise
- Ensure that resources and services are easy to find and navigate. Regularly review same information to confirm it is up-to-date
- Promote Protect Purdue norms, regulations, and website
- Use positive and inclusive language to ensure that all students feel supported
- Promote the development of authentic and sustained interracial interactions.
- Use social media platforms to communicate; limit to three or four main messages per communication piece
- Know your target audience: students, parents, alumni, visitors, community members, faculty/staff

FLEXIBILITY: Flexibility is imperative as students and staff are balancing multiple shifting factors (e.g., health, schedules) that are often beyond their personal control.
- Offer multiple modes of service delivery: phone, web-based, in person, etc.
- Review all policies and procedures and consider modifications that ultimately support students in both in-person and remote environment and reduce/eliminate extra steps and requirements that are no longer relevant to a new normal; think responsiveness and efficiencies
- Make it easy for students to reach staff and ask questions
- Make it easy for students to obtain self-service resources
- Facilitate the removal of barriers where possible (e.g., financial/administrative/academic holds)
- Consider time zones for remote learners and availability of services for these students
- Be cognizant that services and processes may take longer to deliver, be less efficient, and may have altered outcomes

STRUCTURE: Structure provides students with a sense of predictability and confidence in navigating transformed and potentially unfamiliar campus and online experiences.
- Determine the essential services/processes (i.e., primary mission focus) required to support your students and build upon that base as you are able
- Identify how each service/process offered can be provided through multiple modes of delivery (in-person; video call; phone call; email; online) while maintaining all safety regulations as directed by the University
- Determine technology needs to carry out delivery of services
- Consider variables impacting which modes of delivery will provide meaningful interactions with students/stakeholders
- Communicate benefits and limitations of each mode as it relates to each service so students/stakeholders have appropriate expectations
- Consider the infrastructure and implement all office safety procedures and protocols
- Identify other spaces in which you can safely hold meetings (e.g., outside spaces)
- Allow the space and time to support and maintain team members physical and emotional wellbeing, including promotion of authentic interracial interactions

CONSISTENCY: Consistency reduces students' cognitive load as they work to engage with a wide range of offices across campus.

- Create a universal Purdue website button/tile for all areas to display on their webpage through which students can request assistance; include common language and direction to assist students
- Establish a consistent timeframe in which students/parents/etc. can expect to hear back from office/area regarding emails, phone calls, requests for appointments, etc.; no later than 2-3 business days is preferred.
- Identify one central location as the general Help Desk /Call Center for students/families to utilize for information and resource locating
- Consider options for after-hours services due to the expansion of evening and Saturday classes. Post "business hours" clearly with time zone.
- Hold virtual meetings within Microsoft Teams when possible for the option of closed captioning. Instructions about Teams should be widely available for students and staff
- Provide training to faculty, staff, and student workers on all modes of service delivery to ensure consistency and accuracy in process
- Determine how documentation of services provided will occur, Boiler Connect, etc.

CONNECTION: Connections contribute to positive coping, foster motivation, and enhance learning.

- Cultivate multiple ways to support students and build interpersonal connections
- Employ a holistic service/advising methodology; approach students as whole people with dynamic life experiences
- Establish peer-to-peer interaction opportunities for students, emphasizing the Steps to Leaps 'Networks' pillar.
- Implement an outreach strategy that includes questions: what is missing from this student's college experience? What does the student need? What are the biggest challenges the student is facing? What resources need referred to the student? Does the student have all of their basic needs met?
- Utilize the Student of Concern (SOC) process to refer students needing support
- Evaluate websites, language, accessibility, technology and services for all populations served: undergraduate, graduates, international, domestic, first generation, adult learner, in-state, out of state, URM, low income, parents/families, faculty staff, remote, on campus, students with disabilities, and others
- Evaluate frequency of contact with students throughout the academic year; seek opportunities to establish regular touchpoints as appropriate to scope of work
- Use social media to connect with students
- Do outreach to students who have not connected appropriately
- Engage students in conversation about outside the classroom experiences and encourage personal passion areas, emphasizing the Steps to Leaps 'Impact' pillar.

Lederman, D. (May 20, 2020). How college students viewed this spring's remote learning. Chronicle of Higher Education.
Douglas, K. (2020). Students experience and social support in online engineering courses during COVID-19.