Senior Director, First Scholars® Initiatives

Center for First-generation Student Success®

Summary

Established in June 2017 as an initiative of NASPA and The Suder Foundation, the Center for First-generation Student Success drives innovation and advocacy as the premier source of evidence-based practices, professional development, and knowledge creation for the higher education community to advance the success of first-generation students. As college and university leaders and practitioners are actively seeking avenues to best meet the specific needs of first-generation students, the Center for First-generation Student Success leads scholarly discussion, information sharing, networking, and program development and relies upon alignment with four strategic priority areas for success.

The key initiative within the Center's Innovative and Scalable Approaches strategic priority, First Scholars provides institutions of higher education with the tools, resources, and guidance to radically transform the first-generation student experience, advance academic and co-curricular outcomes, and take necessary steps toward a more inclusive institutional structure. First Scholars provides a framework of actionable outcomes supported through diagnostic tools providing critical institutional insight, a host of customized solutions and turnkey toolkits, robust data reporting, and the guidance of experts across the experience. The First Scholars Network, composed of institutions of higher education, serves as the backbone for this national scaling model. First Scholars is designed to allow institutions the flexibility to shape their experience to meet institutional needs while also aligning with the key evidence-based outcomes imperative to advancing the success of first-generation students.

The senior director for First Scholars Initiatives will serve a vital role in leading and supervising an organizational and project management structure for delivering the multi-faceted elements of the initiative. Responsibilities include leading a dynamic team in a remote environment, process oversight and task management, communications and marketing, administrative and fiscal leadership, and engagement with institutional and association partners, third-party contractors, and funders. The senior director will drive overall progress and attainment of key milestones to ensure Network institutions are advancing their objectives. The senior director will work closely with the First Scholars team as well as all members of the Center staff and colleagues across NASPA.

Reports To: Assistant Vice President, Center for First-generation Student Success®

Supervises: This position will oversee a remote-based team of six with direct supervisory responsibilities for four associate directors.

Specific Responsibilities of the Position
The senior director, First Scholars Initiatives will:

**Strategy and Planning:**
- In coordination with the assistant vice president and other key stakeholders, contribute to the strategic vision for First Scholars;
- Organize and participate in planning and strategy workshops to refine processes and offerings and discuss continued growth;
- Communicate the vision to internal and external partners to ensure program development and implementation is in alignment with stated initiative goals; and
- Serve as a strong, neutral, and skilled facilitator who can guide the team, partners, and stakeholders towards consensus and defined shared vision and results.

**Project Oversight:**
- Lead and manage a strong team to ensure excellent operational results for First Scholars;
- Build relationships with institutions as part of recruitment, onboarding and commitment, and implementation phases;
- Oversee the ongoing implementation of First Scholars among multiple cohorts of higher education institutions that are working toward scaling support for first-generation students;
- Using a systems-level view, monitor Asana and other mechanisms for coordination and tracking of activities and milestones for numerous stakeholders across multiple institutions while keeping team members, teams, and collaborators on track to meet deadlines;
- Manage systems to distill and act on information gathered effectively through regular communication with stakeholders and intentional evaluative practices;
- Manage and mentor team members to support implementation of continuous improvement cycles, attainment of key milestones, and creation of deliverables;
- Develop solid relationships with internal and external partners and maintain awareness of major issues that may affect projects;
- Model the use of data and evaluative feedback to inform internal decision making;
- Ensure programmatic materials align with defined goals and outcomes; and
- Lead training, workshops, and presentations related to the Initiatives’ stated goals.

**Administrative & Fiscal Leadership:**
- Serve as an active member of the Center’s leadership team;
- Ensure consistency among First Scholars team members in all facets of engagement with First Scholars Network institutions including, but not limited to, strategic and follow-up communication, programmatic updates, training, data analysis and reporting, and recommendation creation and implementation;
- Lead, in partnership with team members, annual planning and budgeting processes and provide day-to-day management for team;
- Manage and negotiate contracts with third-party service providers and other outside partners;
- Provide strategic oversight of internal and external communications related to the First Scholars team, institutional partners, and other stakeholders; and
- Research and provide input regarding cost structures for First Scholars and related offerings;
Additional Responsibilities:

- Participate in departmental, divisional, and organizational strategic planning, meetings, and projects; and
- Support Center and NASPA tasks, projects, professional development, and engagement as deemed appropriate.

Qualifications:

- Master’s degree in a relevant field required, terminal degree preferred;
- Five or more years of professional work experience managing the design and implementation of large-scale, complex projects in collaboration with multiple internal and external stakeholders;
- Proactive, highly motivated self-starter with a highly engaged, entrepreneurial spirit;
- Track record of successful higher education experience and an articulated and/or demonstrated commitment to first-generation student experiences;
- Knowledge of the higher education landscape and scholarship specific to first-generation student success and intersectional identities;
- Experience working with senior leadership across institutions of higher education;
- Strong and demonstrable project management skills;
- Exceptional communication, organizational, interpersonal, administrative, and managerial skills;
- Experience with data strategy and analytics, assessment, and evaluation;
- Ability to multi-task in a fast-paced environment;
- Ability to work independently and establish work plans with considerable independence within the context of a distributed team environment and a network of relationships within NASPA; and
- Willingness to commit to the mission and goals of the Center and NASPA.

Office Location/Working Conditions/Physical Requirements:

This position may be based anywhere in the contiguous 48 states but may choose to work in the NASPA Washington, D.C. Office (when re-opened) with the option for occasional work from a remote location, if desired.

If remote, this position is home office-based with primary work on a computer, including phone, email, and video conferencing. Must have reliable internet capabilities.

Occasional overnight travel to NASPA and Center events is likely, traveling by air and ground transportation, when deemed safe.

Employment Status:

This position is classified as full-time, exempt status.

Salary Range:

The salary range for this position is $100,000 - $110,000 USD.

NASPA offers a comprehensive benefits package, flexible work schedule, and paid leave.
About NASPA:
NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. We serve a full range of professionals who provide programs, experiences, and services that cultivate student learning and success in concert with the mission of our colleges and universities. Established in 1918 and founded in 1919, NASPA comprises more than 16,000 members in all 50 states, 29 countries, and 8 U.S. Territories.

Through high-quality professional development, strong policy advocacy, and substantive research to inform practice, NASPA meets the diverse needs and invests in realizing the potential of all its members under the guiding principles of integrity, innovation, inclusion, and inquiry.

NASPA members serve a variety of functions and roles, including the vice president and dean for student life, as well as professionals working within housing and residence life, student unions, student activities, counseling, career development, orientation, enrollment management, racial and ethnic minority support services, and retention and assessment.

NASPA is an equal opportunity employer. NASPA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, gender identity, gender expression, affectional or sexual orientation, or disability in any of its policies, programs, and services.

To Apply:
Interested candidates should submit the following for consideration:

- a letter of interest outlining how your skills and past experience prepare you to lead a large-scale initiative guiding institutions of higher education to serve as change agents for first-generation student success;
- resume/vitae;
- three references; and
- a sample of recent academic or professional writing. (No more than three pages, please.)

A complete set of materials should be submitted through this Asana form. Materials received by Monday, September 13, 2021 will receive priority consideration, but review will continue until the position is filled. Please send any questions to firstscholars@naspa.org with the position title in the subject line. No calls, please.