

IMPACT REPORT

2024-2025



UNIVERSITY *of* WEST FLORIDA

Division of Academic
Engagement and Student Affairs

Division of Academic Engagement and Student Affairs

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DAESA IMPACT: DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Over the past year, DAESA has sustained momentum in advancing institutional priorities through intentional planning, assessment and collaboration. The areas highlighted in this report align with DAESA's strategic priorities, illustrating how divisional efforts translate strategy into action across the student experience. Importantly, this report reflects not only what the Division does, but why these efforts matter in advancing student success and institutional effectiveness.

■ Fostering students' connection to campus

Through expanded welcome initiatives, signature campus traditions and new dynamic programming, the Division strengthened students' connection to UWF and to one another.

■ Increasing engagement with the campus and community partners

Through intentional faculty collaboration, increased family engagement and partnerships with local organizations, DAESA provided a broader range of student support and targeted community impact.

■ Removing barriers and creating optimal conditions to enhance academic success

DAESA addressed students' physical, mental, social, academic and financial needs for support. Increased access to wellness programming and support resources promoted resilience and supported students' ability to succeed both academically and personally.

■ Supporting holistic health and wellbeing

Expanded case management and support services increased access to services and helped students navigate challenges more effectively, particularly during critical transition points.

■ Building a strong career readiness foundation

New leadership and professional development, internships, on-campus employment and career coaching helped students build the skills and gain the experiences needed for successful post-graduation outcomes.

■ Investing in infrastructure to improve the student experience

Strategic investments in facilities supported student engagement, operational efficiency and the Division's ability to deliver services in environments that reflect institutional priorities and student needs.

Collectively, these efforts demonstrate the Division's commitment to advancing institutional priorities through data-informed decision-making, cross-campus collaboration, and a student-centered approach. The final section of this report features student testimonials that provide firsthand perspectives on the impact of these efforts. DAESA remains focused on continuous improvement and on scaling strategies that enhance student engagement, wellbeing, and long-term success.

Distinctive DAESA programs and units

Campus Care Team

Career Development and Community Engagement

- Career Readiness
- High-Impact Practices and Industry Engagement

Counseling and Psychological Services

Dean of Students Office

- Argo Pantry
- Care Services
- Louis Maygarden Program for Financial Literacy
- Student Rights and Responsibilities

Design and Communication

Educational Research Center for Child Development

Hazing Prevention

Housing and Residence Life

International Affairs

- Center for Asian Studies
- Global Living
- Global Quarter
- Intensive English Program
- Study Abroad

Recreation and Wellness

- Aquatics
- Group Fitness
- Intramural Sports
- Outdoor Adventures
- Sport Clubs
- Wellness Programs

Student Accessibility Resources

Student Engagement

- Argo Arrival
- Campus Activity Board
- Commuter Student Services
- Family Programs
- Fraternity and Sorority Life
- Homecoming
- Student Government Association
- Student Organizations

Student Health Services

Student Ombuds

Technology Support Services

University Commons and Event Services

DAESA Strategic Priorities



Transformational Experiences

Transformational experiences result from high-impact learning and other opportunities that focus on personal, intellectual and professional growth.



Health and Wellbeing

DAESA focuses on prevention education and wellbeing promotion to encourage healthy and resilient students and staff.



Academic Success

DAESA supports all UWF students by providing a wide range of services to support academic achievement and persistence.



Staff Development and Operations

DAESA values staff development, community and collegiality and retaining talented professionals. The Division routinely assesses operations to improve efficiency and effectiveness.



Recchella



Argo Arrival: Home in the (Commuter) Hub event

Fostering students' connection to campus

DAESA used data and assessment to strategically combat loneliness in students.

The 2024 American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA) Survey revealed that two out of three UWF students experience loneliness. In response, DAESA developed and expanded strategic programming, working with students to remove barriers to opportunities that foster community on campus.

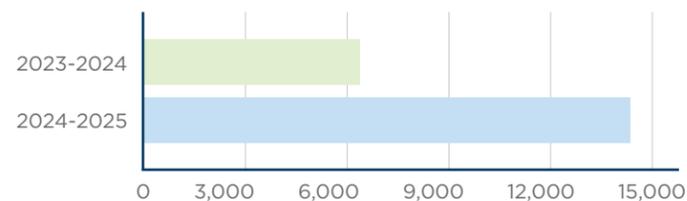
WOW DAESA units leveraged Argo Pulse, DAESA's online student engagement platform, to connect more students on campus.

Student Engagement maximized Argo Pulse's capabilities and built staff training, which boosted event postings, student awareness and event attendance. Ongoing staff training and expanded support helped to increase platform use, leading to higher engagement and more student participation in events.

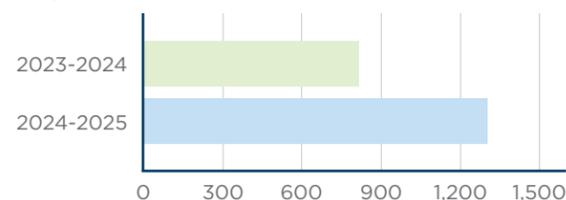
DAESA also expanded event marketing on the

platform: Departments utilize the Office of Design and Communication (ODC) as a centralized resource to request marketing support for their student-facing events. ODC integrated Argo Pulse as a default no-cost marketing tactic for departments and provided graphics for use on the Argo Pulse platform with most marketing requests.

The number of student users who logged in/created their profile on Argo Pulse more than doubled



The number of events listed in Argo Pulse increased by 60%



NEW Recreation and Wellness encouraged more students to find community on campus with Recchella event.

The inaugural Recchella music festival-style event drew over **600 students** and was held in the first week of classes as an orientation to fitness facilities. The event featured movement-based activities, mindfulness sessions and access to campus wellness resources. Students reported positive outcomes on post-event surveys:

- **83%** of respondents expressed intentions to engage in Recreation and Wellness programs
- **85%** of respondents felt a greater connection to UWF after attending Recchella
- One student, as noted on the Fitness Participant Survey, said: *"I met a new best friend at the UWF Recchella event, and now we work out together every week."*

NEW Cozy Corner fostered student connections in a comfortable setting.

The inaugural Fall Cozy Corner event was hosted in the Argo Galley Gameroom and drew **129 attendees**. The event featured fall-themed treats, book recommendations from the UWF library, games and giveaways.

Commuter Student Services (CSS) created flexible programming around commuter students' class schedules.

Commuter students, traditionally, are at higher risk of feeling less connected to campus and more isolated than students who live on campus because their schedules are more restrictive. When Student Engagement staff asked UWF commuter students about their connection to campus, students shared that they will not travel to campus if they do not have classes scheduled for a particular day, even if an event they're interested in is taking place.

In an effort to include more commuter students in campus life, CSS hosted the same event in the Commuter Hub over the course of two days, rather than one and found that 100% of students who attended on day one were different from those who attended on day two. This allowed more students to benefit from the programmatic efforts and participate in experiences than would have been possible otherwise.

Student usage of the Commuter Student Hub rose by 18% over last year, with nearly 4,000 check-ins.

Coffee Hour with Global Quarter created community in a universally-appreciated social setting.

Coffee Hour is a long-standing, popular event hosted by the Office of International Affairs (OIA) and its departmental student organization, Global Quarter. During the event, UWF faculty, staff and students are invited to meet fellow Argos from around the world, learn an international game or try a new international drink. OIA offered 37 Coffee Hour sessions and saw an increase in student attendance at each session, allowing for more students to make connections and find community on campus.



Argo Arrival: Club U-Dub

Students explored campus life and earned their Argo Arrival badge.

Argo Arrival expanded its programming and introduced a new incentive to encourage students to explore the opportunities that campus life has to offer. The new virtual Argo Arrival badge was awarded via Argo Pulse to students who attended three or more Argo Arrival events. The badge was promoted as a way for students to engage in a variety of events with different student outcomes. For example, the Argopalooza Involvement Fair offered students opportunities to join a student organization, while Beach Bash and Club U-Dub helped them make new social connections with peers.

357 students earned the Argo Arrival 2025 badge, representing 27%, or **more than a quarter**, of all participating students.

357 students earned the Argo Arrival badge and engaged in a deeper level of campus exploration, **establishing a stronger connection to campus from the very start of the academic year.**

NEW Student Engagement created Spring programming to impact sense of connection in transfer and spring-start students.

Spring It On is the Spring equivalent of Argo Arrival, UWF's Fall welcome season.

92% of Argo Arrival post-event survey respondents stated that Argo Arrival introduced them to involvement opportunities on campus and 89% of respondents stated that Argo Arrival allowed them to meet new people. These data illustrated the need for a Spring equivalent to Argo Arrival, so Student Engagement hosted the inaugural Spring It On, featuring seven events that drew **1,069 students**. One student said on the Spring It On Feedback Survey, *"The Spring Involvement Fair was very fun. I got to meet a bunch of new people, and as an officer for a club, we gained several new members."*

93% of Argo Arrival survey respondents stated that Argo Arrival made them feel welcome at the University.



Argo Hall

WOW Residence Life created a supportive environment for all residents.

Housing and Residence Life (HRL) held "House Calls," a signature event in the Fall and Spring, to facilitate engagement between staff and residents. Insights from these interactions helped HRL develop intentional programming, resulting in **346 hosted programs to support all residential students.**

A supportive foundation is critical for all students, including those like DeAngelo Howell, a student who transitioned from military life, who described the HRL community he found as impactful.

"Transitioning from base housing at Malmstrom AFB, Montana, to the Pargo (The Pace/Argo residence hall area) community exceeded my expectations. Despite moving from a two-story house, I found the welcoming environment of Pargo to be both surprising and uplifting. The community's inclusiveness encouraged me to engage more openly with fellow residents. This experience allowed me to share my past experiences and lessons learned with the younger generation. Overall, living in the Pargo community has reshaped my perspective on resident housing, highlighting the profound impact a supportive community can have on personal growth and connection." —DeAngelo Howell, Biology

WOW The childcare center's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program was recognized as "Excellent" by the Florida Department of Education.

The Educational Research Center for Child Development (ERCCD) secured an "Excellent" performance designation from the Florida Department of Education, making it the largest provider to achieve the maximum number of quality points and the largest center to surpass a total of 80 points. With the **7th highest performance score among 71 providers in Escambia County**, ERCCD exemplified high standards in early childhood education. This level of childcare not only benefited young learners but also built trust among college student-parents of children in the VPK program, fostering a stronger sense of connection within the campus community.

ERCCD ranked in the **top 10% of childcare providers in Escambia County.**



Spring It On Involvement Fair



CallOnDAESA: A staff-powered virtual resource to help faculty and advisors support students inside and outside of the classroom



Family Weekend

Increasing engagement with campus and community partners

DAESA maximized partnerships with faculty for comprehensive student support and a safer campus.

NEW CallOnDAESA faculty engagement resources

“Prior to Call On DAESA, faculty and staff often had to ask colleagues or search online for resources. I highly encouraged our department and all faculty/staff on “the front lines” to take advantage of this invaluable resource.”

—Dr. Karen Molek, Chair, Department of Chemistry

DAESA developed a faculty-facing website and email address to provide easier access to DAESA student support services. The most notable faculty support tool on the website is the centralized student reporting framework, which outlines how faculty report various student-related concerns. Faculty can also request presentations via a centralized form and choose from topics that are crucial to facilitating student participation in activities that matter to student learning.

Increased number of faculty referrals to the Dean of Students Office (DOS)

The DOS conducted a faculty mental health training that increased confidence and resulted in more referrals by those who attended the training.

Faculty confidence in referring students to campus resources increased by .9 points after training.



NEW Louis Maygarden Program for Financial Literacy community partnerships impacted students' financial literacy.

This year, the DOS began offering financial literacy programs through the Louis Maygarden Program for Financial Literacy. During the Spring term, **four programs** were offered in collaboration with Community Bank, PenAir Credit Union and Gulf Winds Credit Union with over **140 participants**. Assessments following each program showed an up to 50% increase in financial literacy on topics such as credit building, budgeting and planning for the financial future.

Career Road Trip to Navy Federal Credit Union introduced students to tangible job opportunities.

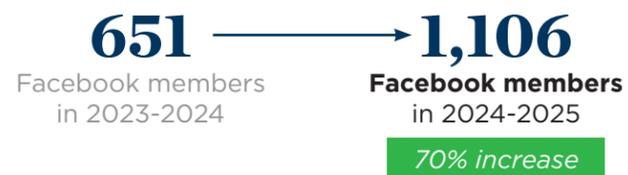
Career Development and Community Engagement (CDCE) collaborated with Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU) for a second annual Career Road Trip to the NFCU site. The Career Road Trip provided a high-impact experiential learning opportunity, that connected students with a major employer and allowed them to explore potential career paths through direct engagement with NFCU leadership.

Family Programs connected with our students' biggest supporters.

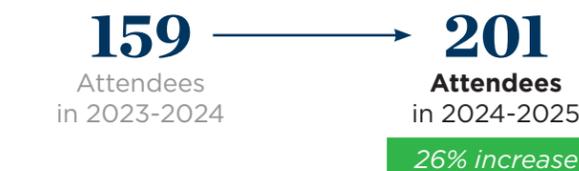
Parent and family engagement significantly impacts student success, as it provides essential support and encouragement during pivotal periods of transition. When parents and families stay involved, students often experience increased motivation, better emotional wellbeing and greater academic achievement. Additionally, strong family support can help reduce stress and promote persistence, thereby increasing the likelihood of timely graduation and long-term success. Family Programs grew in a way that was responsive to parent and family feedback to help facilitate positive outcomes for students:

NEW The Parent and Family Advisory Board was formed.

- The Facebook group continued to be a successful way to engage families online.



■ Family Programs hosted the largest Family Weekend to date, with 201 attendees.





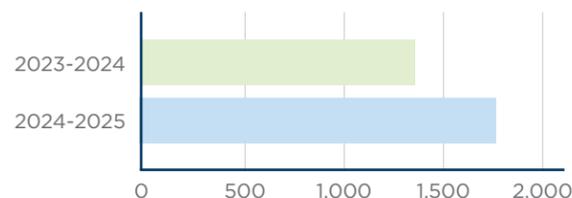
The Health Fair improved student access to healthy foods and advertised the many wellness-related resources on campus

Removing barriers and creating optimal conditions to enhance academic success

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS simplified the paperwork process to remove a significant barrier to care, aiming to have 80% of students complete it and attend their first appointment within five business days. Data show cancellations due to missing paperwork decreased significantly and initial appointments increased, indicating improved access to services.

The number of individual counseling appointments increased by 30%



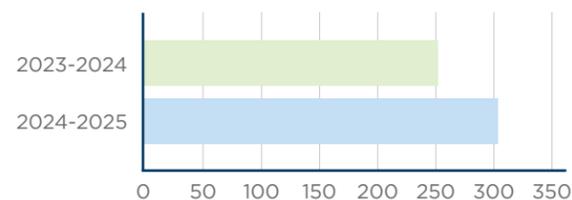
Office of International Affairs (OIA)

After achieving the highest international student enrollment to date, the OIA focused on an enhanced orientation, personalized advising and academic workshops to support academic performance. OIA observed an overall average GPA increase from 3.52 to **3.56** for F-1 degree-seeking international students in face-to-face programs.

Student Accessibility Resources (SAR)

SAR improved accommodations by streamlining processes and enhancing communication to reduce delays and barriers to support students' access to essential services.

The number of unique SAR registrations increased by 21%



Educational Research Center for Child Development (ERCCD)

The ERCCD infant classroom reopened in Fall, marking its first operation since the 2019-2020 academic year. Re-establishing this classroom was mission-critical to meeting the childcare needs of University students, faculty and staff, allowing parents to return to their own classroom or positions in student support roles.

Student Health Services (SHS)

SHS implemented a nurse call-back system to remove barriers to follow-up care for students seen for acute visits. Nurses contacted these students a week after their appointment to check on their progress. The impact was measured through student responses:

- **98%** reported completing their prescribed treatment plan
- **98%** had returned to class and normal activities as recommended
- **95%** said they felt better

Those who had not improved were offered a follow-up appointment, ensuring there was no barrier to follow-up care and no student was left without continued support.

From a departmental perspective, the call-back system added an additional layer of quality assurance, helping providers assess the effectiveness of treatment plans and adjust care as needed. The system also facilitated the early identification of unresolved health issues, which **helped prevent further complications and minimize potential disruptions to students' academic success.**

“ I was extremely fortunate to have UWF Student Health Services as my starting point for receiving life-changing diagnoses and treatment.

The staff addressed my concerns with care, referred me to specialists, and provided essential information about health insurance. Thanks to their support, I was able to undergo a crucial surgery and continue my studies throughout.”

—Anonymous student

Dean of Students Office (DOS)

Financial difficulties are a significant source of stress that can be a barrier to academic progress. As one student shared, Dean of Students Office (DOS) emergency funding was critical to her academic persistence.

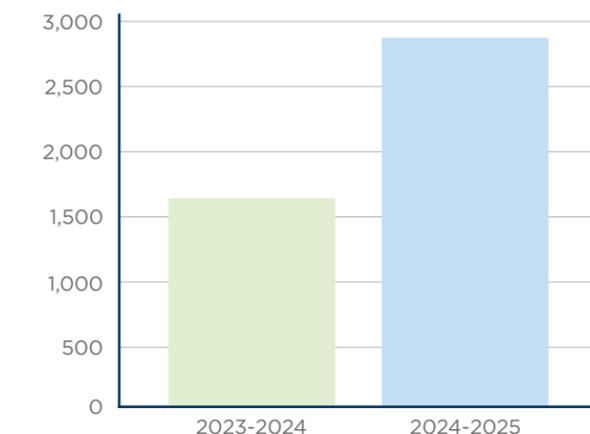
“ As a first-generation college student, navigating higher education has come with its fair share of challenges—especially financial ones. Receiving the emergency grant was a true blessing and came at a time when I was facing serious reflection and uncertainty about continuing my education and how much it means to me. **These funds allowed me to remain registered for the upcoming semester, and most importantly, focus on my academic and personal growth without the constant weight of financial stress. I am beyond grateful to the university for believing in students like me and providing the support we all need to keep moving forward.”**

—Maya, Exercise Science

Argo Pantry

The DOS observed a rise in the use of the Argo Pantry, a trend attributed to inflation and increasing grocery costs. In response to student feedback, the Argo Pantry expanded its inventory to include fresh fruits and vegetables for the first time. By alleviating concerns about basic needs, the Argo Pantry played a vital role in supporting students' academic success, allowing them to concentrate on their studies.

The Argo Pantry saw a 77% increase in total student usage due to inflation and the rising cost of groceries in the last academic year.



Office of International Affairs, Study Abroad

Study Abroad programs offered students unique opportunities to develop their soft skills, including problem-solving, communication and time management, by immersing them in real-world and sometimes challenging, environments. While travel costs are often seen as a barrier, **97 students**, with the support of UWF faculty and staff and scholarship resources, were able to participate in these high-impact practices. This transformational experience contributed to their overall academic success and personal growth.



Study Abroad in Rome, Italy

81% of students who studied abroad agreed that their experience improved their ability to think critically about real-world problems.



Bouldering Lounge

Supporting holistic health and wellbeing

NEW The Bouldering Lounge expanded student access to a popular fitness activity.

Recreation and Wellness opened the new Bouldering Lounge, which includes technology-driven and high-performance climbing equipment to support continuous climbing and upper body strength conditioning. The space is designed for climbers of all levels to explore movement, build strength and have fun. In the first four months, the space recorded **1,264 users**.

“ The climbing wall and bouldering lounge have [...] been life-changing in helping me find a passion.” —First-Year General Studies student, 2025 NSSE Student Comment

NEW The TalkCampus mobile app gave students 24/7 access to mental health support.

CAPS introduced TalkCampus, an online, mobile-friendly self-help resource for students. TalkCampus offers a 24/7 safe and anonymous space where students can connect with their peers.

The “10 for 10” campaign celebrated the Argo Pantry and secured future support.

The “10 for 10” Argo Pantry Campaign was launched to celebrate the Pantry’s 10-year anniversary and to raise funds in support of its mission and supporting student food security. The goal was to raise \$10,000 and **the campaign successfully raised \$10,300.**

A key component of the campaign was a promotional video that highlighted the Pantry’s history, services it provides and positive changes it has made over the past decade, such as offering a larger variety of items in response to students’ needs. Additionally, new donors for the Pantry were identified and their contact information will be used by the Foundation to guide future fundraising efforts. The funds collected will help sustain the Pantry’s services as operating costs continue to rise, ensuring ongoing student support.

NSSE

According to the 2025 National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE), UWF seniors identified studying abroad as one of the most significant learning experiences.

“Many good things happen while attending the university, so I would have to say studying abroad, working with the faculty and staff, working with my mentor, [...]”
—Marine Science student

“Learning to live abroad in a country full of people I don’t quite understand, relate to, and struggle to communicate with.”
—Mechanical Engineering student



Study Abroad in Lucerne, Switzerland

In a CAPS survey administered to students in the Spring, **94%** of students agreed or strongly agreed that **counseling at CAPS contributed to an increased sense of wellbeing.**



CAPS partnered with Recreation and Wellness on the Health Fair to raise awareness about mental

CAPS worked towards positive trends in UWF student mental health.

Stress, depression and anxiety were highlighted by the 2024 American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA) Survey as medical conditions that most impede academic performance. CAPS took strategic steps to help students who were suffering from those conditions return to class and achieve their academic goals. CAPS used industry-standard assessment tools to track client progress toward symptom reduction and noted positive changes:

Positive trends towards feelings of hope and overall sense of wellbeing

In Fall and Spring, CAPS conducted surveys with clients to gather feedback about their experiences with CAPS. Survey results showed that 60% of Fall respondents and 86% of Spring respondents reported feeling more hopeful after meeting with a counselor, **demonstrating a notable improvement across the two semesters.**

In the Spring, 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that counseling at CAPS contributed to an increased sense of wellbeing.

Positive trends towards stress reduction

CAPS administered the Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS) at both entry and completion of treatment to track clients' psychological distress and measure symptom reduction over time. The survey data showed a 24% overall improvement in the Distress Index between Fall and Spring. **CAPS clients' aggregated improvement scores exceeded the national average score of 23%.**

86% of Spring CAPS survey respondents reported feeling more hopeful after meeting with a counselor.

The Hazing Prevention Taskforce strengthened campus wide hazing prevention education and outreach.

DAESA is home to UWF's active Hazing Prevention Taskforce, comprised of professional and student staff from the DOS, Student Engagement, Recreation and Wellness, Housing and Residence Life and Athletics.

The taskforce conducted outreach at athletic events, football game tailgates and the Argo Rally pep rally. They also delivered educational presentations to Fraternity and Sorority Life and Sport Clubs. Ongoing education efforts include the AliveTek course, Hazing Prevention 101 course and the Fraternity and Sorority Life Module on AliveTek. All courses combined have registered **448 UWF student course completions.**

DAESA health and wellbeing staff from the DOS, Student Rights and Responsibilities, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Recreation and Wellness, Sport Clubs and Student Engagement participated in the State University System Hazing Prevention Summit hosted at Florida State University, joining peers from across the system to share best practices and strengthen prevention strategies. The team focused not only on compliance and policy alignment, but also on advancing healthy, values-based approaches to group cohesion that eliminate harmful practices. Hazing prevention remains a strategic priority of the Florida Board of Governors, and participation reflects the University's continued commitment to student safety and positive organizational culture.



Case Managers provided timely assistance to students.

DOS Case Managers coordinated directly with CAPS to connect students with mental health support as part of a new referral program launched this year. The referral program streamlined the student support experience during a critical time and demonstrated a holistic approach to student health and wellbeing.

The DOS also improved its response time to student care referrals. Staff were able to reach out to students within 24 hours of receiving a referral, which made it easier for students to access support, resources, absence verification, start the medical withdrawal process or be referred to another university resource for next steps or further care.

Referral Response <24 HRS

WOW The Louis Maygarden Program for Financial Literacy provided holistic student care with special programming at the Argo Pantry.

In addition to working with community partners to increase financial literacy, a special financial literacy program was introduced at the Argo Pantry. This offering focused on budgeting for meals, healthy eating and meal planning to help students facing financial hardships. The addition of these programs helped students access financial assistance and equipped them with skills to manage and balance their finances more effectively, **which could reduce the frequency of students needing to apply for aid.**

Financial literacy programming was introduced at the Argo Pantry to help students facing financial hardships.

NSSE

Results from the 2025 National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) show that UWF students reported a significantly stronger institutional emphasis on helping them manage non-academic responsibilities, such as finances, compared to their peers at other Southeastern Public institutions. These results are attributed to the effectiveness of financial literacy programming.

- First-Year: **+5% above Southeast Public peers**
- Senior: **+9% above Southeast Public peers**



Group fitness class led by Recreation and Wellness student employee

Building a strong career readiness foundation

UWF students won employer praise for demonstrating exceptional soft skills.

CDCE collected feedback from 230 employers who recruited at UWF career events during 2024–2025.

- **99%** agreed that students communicated effectively
- **96%** agreed that students presented themselves professionally
- **96%** agreed that students demonstrated confidence at the events

Argos Suit Up! empowered students.

Career Development and Community Engagement’s annual Argos Suit Up! program allowed UWF students and alumni to shop for professional attire at JCPenney at a special discounted rate. Students and alumni were able to apply for additional financial assistance as needed, and build an affordable professional wardrobe for interviews and future employment.

This collaborative program addressed a key barrier to career confidence: Professional self-presentation. For students like Sudakshina Singha Roy, a graduate researcher, having access to affordable professional attire was transformative, allowing her talent to shine without distraction.

*“ I have always believed in hard work, in letting my research and dedication speak for me. But at a major conference this year, I realized that while my work was strong, something was missing. I believed in my research, but for the first time, I wondered if I looked like I truly belonged. Argo Suit Up! changed that for me. **With their support, recently I was able to step onto the stage at a competition representing UWF, fully prepared—not just in my presentation, but in my presence. I didn’t have to think about my outfit or whether I looked the part. Instead, I focused entirely on my research, on my passion, on my purpose.**”*

—Sudakshina Singha Roy, Master of Science in Data Science Analytics and Modeling

DAESA student employment impacted students’ career-readiness.

Student employment offers more than a job: it provides professional experience and mentorship in their field of study. In units like the Educational Research Center for Child Development (ERCCD), a Gold Seal-accredited early learning center, students applied their coursework in a high-quality, real-world setting.

*“ I was just starting out in my early childhood education experience after transferring to UWF as an Elementary Education major. I have been able to collaborate with my lead teacher, Leah, to plan and implement developmentally appropriate lessons, while gradually leading small group activities focused on supporting children’s literacy and math development. **Classroom management is a skill that comes with practice, and the Center has been incredibly accommodating to let me lead lessons and activities that help me develop my own style of classroom management.** I recently graduated with my bachelor’s degree in May 2025. Without the support and guidance I received at the ERCCD, I wouldn’t have applied to continue my education here at UWF, pursuing a master’s degree in **Exceptional Student Education.**”*

—Bailee McGuffin, Exceptional Student Education M.A.,—Applied Behavior Analysis

Recreation and Wellness continued to be one of the top on-campus employers. Student employees developed critical career readiness skills as demonstrated by their responses on the Recreation and Wellness Fitness Student Employment Survey:

- **86%** reported improvements in communication, time management and organization
- **79%** reported enhanced conflict management skills
- Respondents also highlighted increased self-confidence, professionalism and interpersonal skills, citing personal growth, improved leadership and better task prioritization

University Commons and Event Services (UCES) adopted the Argo2Pro program to assess and improve the career readiness skills of their student employees.

A notable **85%** of students reported growth in at least one of the eight learning outcome areas:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Communication | 5. Critical Thinking |
| 2. Global Learning | 6. Career and Self-development |
| 3. Technology | 7. Professionalism |
| 4. Leadership | 8. Teamwork |

Student employment is crucial for enhancing career preparation, providing financial support and developing student leaders.

DAESA employed 296 students.

NSSE

2025 National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) data show that UWF seniors reported on-campus and previous employment influencing their career plans at a higher rate than seniors at comparator institutions. This is significant data, because our seniors began their college careers during the pandemic, when traditional methods of career exploration, such as a part-time job, were limited.

The Nautilus Leadership Program was designed to develop leadership as a mindset and skillset. It focused on three key skills that are **highly valued in the workforce and are essential for student success**:

1. Collaboration
2. Critical thinking
3. Professionalism



Erin Mayhew (right) was awarded the Cannon Citation student leadership award

“The Nautilus Leadership Program helped to shape me into the leader that I am today by allowing me to become a more confident leader and speaker while also expanding on basic leadership principles like professionalism, collaboration, and critical thinking. As a participant, I was pushed out of my comfort zone multiple times throughout the program whether that was introducing myself into the microphone or participating in a skit with my peers. The skills that I exposed myself to as a participant translated directly into the skills that I would then use as a facilitator the next year when I presented on the pillar of collaboration with the Homecoming Executive Board. I am thankful to the Nautilus Leadership Program for helping to create professional, empowered, and connected leaders across all programs here at the University of West Florida.” —Erin Mayhew, Direct Entry Masters of Nursing

Student highlights



Career development support

Mikayla secured a summer internship at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where she connected with scientists and explored new landscapes that will help inform her future career path.

Mikayla’s recommendation to other Argos:

*“Seek advice from others who have had similar experiences to understand if an internship aligns with your goals. **UWF is supportive and offers resources to help students succeed. CDCE provides valuable resume/CV reviews, up-to-date information on the job market, and tailored guidance on interview preparation.** They helped me understand the desired tone for my responses and how to effectively discuss critical feedback.”* —Mikayla Swatscheno, Biochemistry



Pursuit of purpose with student organizations

*“In addition to receiving an education, college is about finding your place and purpose in the world. When I joined the Student Organization Council (SOC), I was looking for something to help me do just that, but I never expected to develop a passion for helping people find their own. Working closely with UWF’s 130+ student-led groups has granted me a unique opportunity to see just how many ways students can get involved and develop their individual interests and goals. **I’ve met people from all walks of life and watched them thrive when they find a space that feels right for them. Helping others find their place while finding my own has been one of the most fulfilling and rewarding parts of my time at UWF.**”* —Ichelle Jones, Legal Studies



Impact of student employment on sense of connection

*“Financially, I could not go to college without this (Housing and Residence Life Resident Assistant) position. Having employment of some kind I knew was going to be an important choice later in my schooling and I do not think there is any other better choice than the RA Position. **Not just as a job, but it gives me the ability to live on campus too, which has helped me thrive socially.**”* —Resident Assistant Regan O’Donnell, Computer Science

NEW The Nautilus Leadership Program (NLP) developed student leaders with skillsets highly sought by employers.

Student Engagement’s NLP was designed to fill a gap in campus student leadership opportunities. The program focused on three key pillars: collaboration, critical thinking and professionalism; skills highly valued in the workforce and essential for student success.

NLP was comprised of interactive workshops, team-based activities and peer-led facilitation. In Fall, **nearly 30 student leaders** participated in activities that applied the leadership pillars.

In Spring, those same student leaders applied what they had learned in Fall and facilitated workshops at the Nautilus Leadership Summit and engaged over **100 attendees**.

As a result of the program:

- **93%** of participants reported feeling more knowledgeable about leadership
- **91%** of participants reported being inspired to pursue or improve leadership roles
- Participants reported improvements in public speaking, communication and facilitation skills, along with increased confidence, community and leadership capacity
- The student leaders who facilitated NLP programming earned leadership certificates

The program’s strategic design and peer-led approach have fostered sustainable growth and strengthened campus-wide student leadership development.



Study abroad supported by highly competitive Gilman Program scholarship

The Gilman Program Scholarship is highly competitive, with a national acceptance rate of about 25%. Students are chosen based on a rigorous selection process that considers factors such as academic preparedness, background and experience and community impact. Shayna was selected for the scholarship and traveled to Japan.

“ Being awarded both the Gilman and the UWF Foundation scholarships made my experience abroad indescribable. Because I did not have to worry as much about paying money out of pocket, I was able to instead focus on appreciating the beauty of Japan, the culture, the food, and meeting all the amazing people I did. By being more at ease while abroad, I was able to really focus on trying to open up to people better, which was one of my main goals going into it. **Additionally, this experience has helped me professionally, because I feel like I pushed myself to try and communicate with people despite the language barrier and cultural differences, and I ultimately feel more motivated to find and pursue something I am passionate about in the same way I felt while abroad.** Honestly, there were many instances throughout the trip where I would think to myself, ‘I have no idea how I would have been able to cover everything without these scholarships.’ I am exceptionally grateful I was given this opportunity.” —Shayna Chasteen, Communication

Data, assessment and benchmarking reports referenced and used to build this report:

- 2024 American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA)
- Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS)
- 2024 National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)
- 2025 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Fitness Participant Survey
- Spring It On Feedback Survey
- Recreation and Wellness Fitness Student Employment Survey
- UWF Departmental Annual Reports



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