ANNUAL REPORT
HIGHLIGHTS:
2019-2020
To the members and friends of Owl Nation:

I am honored to serve as your Vice President for Student Affairs; it is my pleasure to represent the student voice with our university leaders. Kennesaw State University is a growing university anchored in excellence and providing transformative learning experiences for our students. Therefore, many of the student stories you will see in this report reflect the impact of the KSU student experience that transforms lives while a student and prepares them for the future.

The 2019-2020 academic year was a year of successes and unique challenges. However, our goal has always been to support students’ collegiate experience with transformative living, learning, and leading opportunities. In this my inaugural year as Vice President for Student Affairs, I am very proud of how the Student Affairs team pivoted during the Covid-19 pandemic, finding alternative ways to engage with our students while maintaining high quality in our programs. Their dedication is reflected in statements from our students as follows: “I am who I am because of what you do, I am forever indebted to your dedication.” Because of your commitment to our students, they too responded accordingly to our new virtual environment.

Change is a very difficult space to navigate, and this year we demonstrated that student success is at the center of our core beliefs, that our students matter, and that together we can do so much more for them and for ourselves. In this report you will see the collaborations that emerged from a crisis, examples of how our student engagement opportunities provided great learning experiences, and how students’ dedication to academics, philanthropy, and service to others resulted in great contributions to our region.

Every student is important and each one makes us a better University and community. Again, thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing the student experience through innovative and transformative opportunities.

GO OWLS!

Dr. Eric E. Arneson
Vice President for Student Affairs
Our academic year 2019-2020 began with the university’s branding launch, *Find your Wings*. Thus, it is not surprising to see how we were able to capture stories from our students that aligned with the branding. In this report, we documented the KSU Student Experience through data we collected over the year, and through stories and reflections from students. Our division prides itself in our focus on students’ success and in creating experiences that transform the lives of our students.

First, *In the Words of Our Students*, you will see students’ self-reflections of how they found a sense of belonging, sense of self, and journey to their purpose while involved in various student affairs programs and activities. *In Student Stories*, we captured select students’ personal accounts of life situations with which they may have struggled in the past and how connecting to a student affairs resource supported their success as a KSU student. These stories provide a glimpse of students’ personal development that is important in helping them learn how to engage in self-advocacy, develop self-efficacy, and navigate life as a young adult in this new environment.

*By the Numbers* showcases meaningful and impactful student experiences that include fun events, awareness campaigns, service efforts, and student fundraising achievements. For example, this past year our students raised almost $20,000 between the *Run for Recovery 5k* and the *Out of Darkness Walk*—all to support students on campus.

Our *Signature Programs* provided a variety of ways that our students engaged in physical activities, engaged in workshops to educate students and contribute to their holistic development as engaged civic leaders of the future.

Our *Student Affairs Responds to Coronavirus* section highlights ways in which we moved our services and programs to a virtual mode, engaged in more collaborative efforts, and stayed connected to our students and their families. The goals were clear: keep students engaged, create venues for connection, and, above all, continue to support our students' well-being and success.

Culminating our KSU student experience are students’ stories of “*Finding My Wings*.” In her story, Grace Takvorian, described how as a first-year student she found a student assistant job on campus. The work experience, the connection with the staff, the caring demeanor of the team, and the opportunity to explore her creativity were all contributing factors to Grace’s KSU wings.
"I always felt like there was a place for me anywhere at anytime within Kennesaw State. Student Activities gave me the opportunity to grow into a self I was unaware I was capable of being."

"I discovered that being a member of a Greek letter social organization was the catalyst that really helped me find my wings...It helped me grow professionally, becoming both a better communicator and someone who could function as a member of a goal-oriented team."

"Women of Color Success Initiative (WOCSI) has provided me with mentors and friends that have helped me work through personal issues...I always left with a feeling of being understood and a new perspective. I'm still working on my confidence, but WOCSI has been a huge, supportive role in my journey to find my wings."

"Through leadership coaching, I have learned how to display empathy in a leadership capacity...My application of what I have learned is evident in my daily habits and routines, and, more importantly, how I treat and see other people."

"Peer Health Outreach and Wellness Leaders exposed me to new ways of thinking while creating different events around campus, enhanced my public speaking and leadership skills through giving presentations on related health topics, and allowed me to become more vocal with plans and ideas during weekly planning meetings."

"Know that what you are doing is important. Know that because of your efforts, there are students like myself whose lives are actively being changed for the better...I am who I am because of what you do, and I am forever indebted to your dedication."
Jalaal Malik sought out leadership coaching to better prepare for his role as president of the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS). When asked about his experience, he said, “I learned about my strengths as a leader. Before my sessions I thought I lacked leadership, but I was able to learn that I have key values and beliefs that make me a stronger leader. I used what I highlighted as my values to inform my design process in studio. I also focused on using my key strengths to inform my decisions and improve as a leader. I want upcoming NOMAS board members to take leadership coaching.”

Getting out of the military was a hard task, given that I spent the last few years operating under regimented conditions, I had to prepare for a new chapter. I knew I wanted to attend school after the service, I was just unsure where I wanted to go and what I wanted my degree in. The decision became clearer after walking onto the KSU campus and being introduced to the Military and Veteran Service Center. The transition to the civilian “norms” in the company of other veterans eased that process. The Military and Veterans Service Center directed and provided answers to the many questions I had with regards to attending KSU and how to use my benefits earned in the service. After being accepted into KSU I was still unsure what my major was going to be, but once I was surrounded by veterans in a safe space provided by the MVS center, I began to see how I could still be of service without being in the service. The MVS center has played a key role in my matriculation and attainment of my degree. The men and women in the MVS center are dedicated to providing a unique experience to the veterans at KSU and for that I thank them for the hard work and service on/off the battlefield.

William Tyler Wisener is a student assistant in the Adult and Commuter Student resource center on the Marietta campus. When asked of his experience working there, he wrote, “Working at the ACSRC this spring has made a profound impact on my college career. It has opened the door to so many opportunities for my college and professional career. As a student who commutes about an hour each way to the school, I had never taken the time to socialize or participate in the events on campus. The first time I visited the Adult Commuter and Student Resource Center, I realized that I did not have to spend large amounts of time each day to become part of KSU culture. The center became an avenue for me to make friendships and participate in events despite my busy schedule. When a Student Assistant position became available, I immediately applied. I wanted to help others enjoy their college experience as well and to learn leadership skills in the process. After working there for just one semester, we have seen growth in attendance and those interested in learning more about the center. I believe we have made a positive impact on the campus and maintained a safe place for students to hang out. I am proud to be a part of this team of staff members and the work they are doing here.”
After surviving cancer, battling depression and undergoing treatment following years of alcohol addiction, Blake Gordon moved to the Atlanta suburbs to get a fresh start. Gordon learned about KSU’s Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery (CYAAR), and thought it was just what he needed once he had been sober for a year and was ready to tackle attending college. He now credits his involvement with CYAAR for helping him thrive at Kennesaw State, as he is on track to graduate in December 2020 with an accounting degree. “Without this program, I would not still be in school,” Gordon said. “It’s a wonderful support system because we’re all in this together. Everybody has gone through similar circumstances, so you have the sense that you’re not alone.” Gordon became nearly a daily fixture at the Center, whether he was seeking advice from staff members, participating in programs, spending time with other students in recovery or accessing the computer lab. His first semester that had started so poorly ended with Gordon earning a 4.0 grade point average. “The financial support from CYAAR is life-changing. They say, ‘We’re going to keep the dream alive for you,’” Gordon said. “I went from thinking, ‘This is extremely difficult and I don’t know if I can do this,’ to, ‘This gave me the confidence that I needed and I know that I’m going to do this no matter what life throws at me.’”

I have been a picky eater and had issues with food practically my whole life. It has impacted social situations I have been in and my daily living since I was not eating as healthy as I should have. This is something that I have had a hard time overcoming and I have wanted to improve about myself. I believed by working on this it would improve my flexibility and open new opportunities to eat healthier and more mindfully. My case manager at Counseling and Psychological Services recommended that I see a dietitian and try nutrition counseling to help address these issues. I did not know about the services that Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) provided at the time. I was excited to start actively working on overcoming my picky eating habits and issues with food. I started working with the HPW dietitian this year, and I can already see a difference in how I approach different situations with food. She has helped me open my eyes to different ways of looking at food. Being connected to Health Promotion and Wellness has given me resources to figure out creative ways to tackle food issues. I attend all the cooking demonstrations that I can with a friend and this was a fun and free way to try new foods and ways of preparing foods I already enjoy. I have also attended the Healthy Eating on a Budget nutrition workshop which has helped work on my goals without having to spend too much money. During quarantine, I have gained more of an excitement and eagerness of tackling food issues than ever before. I added new dishes into my routine that I would have not imagined eating on a regular basis. I have a long way to go but I am so grateful for the progress I have been making these past few months. I am excited for what the future holds with my journey with food.
### BY THE NUMBERS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>23,700</th>
<th>$19,301</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hours of community service logged between Fraternity &amp; Sorority students and Volunteer KSU, an equivalent value of</td>
<td>Raised at 13th annual Run for Recovery 5K, supporting students in recovery, and Out of Darkness Walk for American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.</td>
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<th>$664,640</th>
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<tr>
<th>95%</th>
<th>19,418</th>
<th>47%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Military &amp; Veteran Services survey respondents said experience &amp; response time exceeded/met expectations</td>
<td>Cultural and Community Centers interactions logged this year.</td>
<td>Increase in Student Disability Services one-on-one trainings for assistive note taking technology.</td>
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<th>43%</th>
<th>39,940</th>
<th>3.30</th>
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<td>Increase in community service hours completed by Fraternity &amp; Sorority students.</td>
<td>Check ins at Student Affairs programs during 2019-2020.</td>
<td>Highest ever GPA for student athletes (Spring 2020).</td>
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A committee, made up of representatives from Student Activities and Department of Sports and Recreation, the College of Computing and Software Engineering, and Athletics, as well as student representatives from KSU’s active gaming community, worked hard to quickly develop and implement the Virtual Owl “Game On KSU” tournament as KSU moved to online programming in spring 2020. Drew Harvill led the team as they figured out what platform to conduct the tournament with and how to broadcast games so students could watch. He also liaised with KSU’s Office of Strategic Communication and Marketing regarding how best to market this tournament to students. The brand-new tournaments attracted 77 players, and the program is poised to move forward in FY21 as an official KSU initiative.

Marietta Commuter Student Appreciation Weeks: The Marietta Adult and Commuter Student Resource Center hosted:
- 5 commuter student events in November 2019
- 5 commuter student events in March 2020
- Over 300 students participated in one or more of the social or personal development events.

The Engaged Owl Leaders (EOL) program is a semester-long, cohort-style experience designed for first and second year students interested in personal growth, friendship, and leadership development. Participants connect with other KSU students while learning fundamental leadership concepts through a series of 10 experiential sessions.

- Fall 2019 - 11 Student EOL Coordinators, 3 EOL sections, 23 new participants.
- Each section - 2 hours leadership development for 10 weeks per section, 20 hours per student.
- Leadership Weekend - additional 21 leadership development hours.
- Spring 2020 - 6 Student EOL Coordinators, 2 EOL sections, 10 new participants.
- Each section - 2 hours of student-led leadership development for 5 weeks before COVID closure.
- Virtual sessions after Spring Break- 3 virtual sessions, 16 leadership development hours.
- Leadership Weekend - additional 12 leadership development hours.

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

Mental Health Matters Week was a week long signature event held in September 2019, featuring 5 programs promoting mental health and stigma reduction. In addition, Counseling and Psychological Services opened the Clubhouse, a residential focused satellite office in the midst of the residence halls on the north side of the Kennesaw campus.
Recovery Support Services provide assessment, counseling, and referral to all KSU students seeking recovery from substance use and other process disorders. One of KSU’s signature programs, the Collegiate Recovery Program, is designed to help students connect with each other and access resources to succeed academically while sustaining recovery from substance use and other process disorders. This active group of 90+ students have an average GPA of 3.15 and progression rates of 85%. Thirty-one students in recovery during the 2019-2020 academic year were awarded scholarships.

Intramural Sports hosts an average of 28 leagues and tournaments each academic year, with nearly 12,000 registrations across the two campuses. The program has sent multiple student officials to Regional and National Tournaments, including basketball and flag football, with multiple All-Tournament recognitions at tournaments, including KSU’s first official to be invited to the National Basketball Tournament in 2019. Some of the most popular programs included:

- Basketball League - 2,133 registrations, 521 unique participants, and 153 games.
- Flag Football League - 1,888 registrations, 515 unique participants, and 105 games.
- Outdoor Soccer League - 1,561 registrations, 487 unique participants, and 110 games.

Fraternity & Sorority Life and Friends - Developed this year in response to operations moving to a virtual platform, FSL and Friends was created as a weekly program through the Department in order to interact with various individuals and departments across campus to be able to showcase their services and/or provide education to the FSL community. In addition, the weekly series was made available to incoming students and/or others via the FSL social media platforms. Thus far, "friends" contributing to this program have been Orientation and Transition Programs, Parent and Family Programs, Student Government Association, Athletics, Career Planning and Development, and the Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery.

Student Activities and the Cultural Community Centers collaborated to host the Amplify Your Voice workshop series. The workshops provided an opportunity to engage students in student activism, understanding the SABAC funding process, and voting rights.

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### Student Affairs Responds to Coronavirus

When Covid-19 began to affect the country in Spring 2020, Kennesaw State University worked hard to maintain the high level of service our students have come to expect. Student Affairs departments responded immediately, using technology to maintain connections with the students and address their needs.

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<tr>
<th>Counseling</th>
<th>Cultural &amp; Community Centers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Virtual anxiety and depression workshops</td>
<td>208 Virtual programs, including the Around the World series and the Internship Excursion.</td>
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<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Student Athlete Success</th>
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<td>2,009 online contacts; virtual programming during spring</td>
<td>Transitioned to online tutor training &amp; summer bridge programming</td>
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<th>Health &amp; Well-Being</th>
<th>Adult &amp; Commuter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative multi-departmental online newsletters detailing available virtual services and programs</td>
<td>Via Microsoft Teams; Online question of the day; Daily chat sessions; Friday night game nights</td>
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<th>Activities</th>
<th>Parent/Family</th>
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<td>Social media programming; Daily average of 100 interactions with posts</td>
<td>Virtual content and online articles written by family ambassadors</td>
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I’m not quite sure if I am able to share just one story that encompasses my experiences working for Parent Family Programs. Instead, I will relay a brief overview of the positive impact this department made on my first year of college and the importance of two beautiful women, Sharon Brownlow and Chelsea Craig. No matter who you are, beginning a new chapter of your life is stressful and many times complicated. As an out-of-state student from Massachusetts, I felt this heavily. Whether it was fate or coincidence, I happened to meet Sharon and Chelsea during orientation. Immediately, they both radiated kindness, authenticity, and good energy. A job opportunity happened to arise, and I found myself watching things slowly fall into place for me. The opportunity to work for the school gave me a standing ground, which helped provide consistency. It helped me begin to find my wings.

Working for Parent Family Programs has helped me grow in numerous aspects. First and foremost, I learned new qualities and characteristics to expand my work experience. It tested my creativity, adaptability, flexibility, openness, understanding. I learned about generational differences and how to manage different types of people. I learned how to start and finish new projects strongly. Additionally, through this job, I was given the freedom to create and design based off not just the given information, but my own thoughts and ideas. The work ethic and skills I gained from this job are qualities I will cherish and embed throughout the rest of my working life. For this, I am eternally thankful.

Although I learned immensely from the work portion of this job, I think there was a piece that helped me find myself more. Something that goes beyond work. Connection. There were times when days would feel too difficult, where mental and physical exhaustion got the best of me. Times where I needed support and love, not routine and work. Sharon and Chelsea were more than willing to be more than bosses in moments like these. I always knew I was safe, cherished, valued, worthy, wanted, accepted, supported, and understood while at work. This is a department that cares about every single individual. It doesn’t matter who you are, they are willing to support and help always. This is something I felt the moment I met Sharon and Chelsea; something that never faded throughout my year with them. Yes, the work experience taught me so much. But it was the relationship I made that ultimately helped me find my wings. This is just the beginning of my journey, but I know I couldn’t have done it without the support of Parent Family Programs. I am forever grateful.
Student respondents believe HPW programs are a good investment because they improve student health (97.5%) and academic success (94.8%).

Student Affairs
2019-2020 Highlights

Health Promotion & Wellness

Student respondents believe HPW programs are a good investment because they improve student health (97.5%) and academic success (94.8%).

CARE
Campus Awareness, Resource, & Empowerment Center added nine full-time Vista positions dedicated to KSU for 2019-2020. Equivalent cost savings of $237,050.

CYAAR
Center for Young Adult Addiction & Recovery research lab submitted and published 12 peer-reviewed articles in 2019.

Leadership & Service
Gold Star Designation/Voter-Friendly Campus due to voter registration efforts.

Sports & Recreation
28 Intramural Sports leagues & tournaments. Nearly 12,000 participants across both campuses.

Student Activities
Increased readership of the Sentinel and the Peak after moving to online platform.