

PRACTICES EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

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YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: University of the Southwest

The **University of the Southwest** (NM) is a charter member of the Yes We Must Coalition and one of only two private, four-year institutions of higher education in New Mexico. Located in the southeast corner of the state in Hobbs, USW is a faith-based, private Christian university that enrolls approximately 1000 students. The 330 undergraduates are highly diverse, with 65% identifying as Hispanic, 20% as Anglo, and 15% as African-American. Seventy percent are Pell-eligible. USW's educational mission includes a core emphasis on the development of men and women for a lifetime of servant leadership through individual faith, responsibility and initiative.



Each new student at USW takes at least one class on the Principles of Servant Leadership, accompanied later by an internship that cements knowledge with experience. Volunteer service with local non-profit organizations allows students to become highly productive members of society while contributing to the growth of the organizations and the communities they serve. This past year USW was recognized by the National Association of Intercollegiate

Athletics (NAIA) as the Champion of Charity, a national award given to the college or university that delivers the greatest impact helping out in their community.

Athletics is a pathway to academic success at USW. Ninety-five percent of the student body receive institutional support to play a sport while in pursuit of an undergraduate degree. USW participates in the Red River Athletic Conference, and for the past three years its scholar-athletes from its 18 varsity sports teams have reigned as the academic champions, achieving the highest overall GPA in the Conference.

Students enrolled at USW earn degrees in business, education, and the social sciences, including programs that are offered online at the masters and doctoral level. Academic offerings distinct to USW include the "NexT" program that equips teacher's aides to complete requirements for teacher certification. USW also is one of a



handful of institutions in the U.S. to provide access to higher education for incarcerated inmates, and one of the few that has elected to do so free of charge. Currently, 40 residents of the Lea County Correctional Facility in Hobbs are pursuing a BA degree in Christian Ministry with the hope of helping to serve as cultural change agents within the walls of prisons throughout the state.

USW is one of the most affordable private institutions of higher education in the southwestern United States. Annual scholarship awards at USW for full-time attendance for undergraduate students, when combined with federal Pell Grants that are available to almost every USW student, reduce the annual, full-time cost of tuition to less than \$5000 per year. When athletic scholarships are able to be combined with Pell awards, students pay on average less than \$3000 annually in tuition costs. Books for almost every class are included in the current tuition price for both undergraduate and graduate students. Also included are new notebook computers that are issued free of charge to each new student in their first term.

Institutional Resources/Practices

Work College Program: Student Management Model

Blackburn College (IL) is one of eight federally recognized Work Colleges in the United States and has the distinction of being the only one whose work program is managed by student leaders who oversee all student labor. Student department managers hire other students as assistant managers and crew heads in varying numbers depending upon individual department needs.

Residential Blackburn students are required to work a minimum of 160 hours each semester and are employed in a range of campus services, including administrative resources, athletic support, building maintenance, cleaning services, educational assistance, financial management, business and retail management, safety and security, counseling services, food and catering services, graphic design, marketing and communications resources, and research. They also provide services to local businesses, regional nonprofit organizations, sports clubs, law enforcement departments, and virtually every school in the Macoupin County District.

The student management team (the Work Committee), with the advice and support of the Dean of the Work Program, is responsible for the overall administration of the Work Program including the development, implementation, and monitoring of Work Program policies. This past fall, the student management team was comprised of more than 85 students (almost a fifth of Work Program participants), who were each responsible to organize, hire, train, motivate, supervise, and evaluate the student work force in their departments. This type of management experience means that Blackburn graduates acquire direct appreciation for the importance of teamwork, cooperation, and leadership.

For further information contact: Angie Morenz, Dean of Work,
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Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. Send brief descriptions to Nia Lane Chester, YWMC Program Manager. niachester@gmail.com.