

Student Affairs Today

Best Practices and Strategies for Student Affairs Professionals

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LEADERS & INNOVATORS

Berenecea Eanes, vice president for student affairs at California State University, Fullerton, shares advice for becoming a successful change agent for your unit. **Page 12**



MENTAL HEALTH

Help students cope with stress

By Claudine McCarthy, Editor

BALTIMORE, Md. — Many presidents are clueless about what goes on in student affairs, admitted one university president.

“That’s something that happens after I go home,” said Harvey G. Stenger, president of Binghamton University, during a presentation at the annual conference of NASPA — Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

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STUDENT SUCCESS

Effectively address globalization, by establishing on-campus Global Union

By Claudine McCarthy, Editor

BALTIMORE, Md. — U.S. college campuses continue to experience increases in diversity, globalization and internationalization.

But many student affairs professionals don’t know the best ways to ensure those areas of growth will lead to the best positive outcomes for the entire campus community.

You can prepare your students for globalization by implementing best practices and effective strategies for raising awareness of different cultures and religions represented on your campus, while also breaking down stereotypes. You can start by empowering the student organizations you probably already have on your campus.

And you can quickly, efficiently and inexpensively accomplish those goals by establishing an on-campus Global Union modeled after the ones in place at Lehigh University and the Rochester Institute of Technology. That’s according to Bill Hunter, Lehigh’s director of international outreach.

Representatives from both institutions shared tips for following their lead during the annual conference for NASPA — Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

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Continued from page 1**Lehigh Global Union**

Founded in 1997 by a small group of international and American students to strengthen the international voice and perspective on campus, Lehigh's Global Union is a student-run umbrella organization incorporating 43 student organizations. Housed under the Office of International Affairs, the Global Union's volunteer executive board designates VPs for specific areas, including: internal programming, member clubs relations and graduate student outreach, said Carolina Mattsson and Savannah Boylan, president and vice president of the Global Union. A grad student, an intern and university staff provide additional support.

The executive board meets weekly to review organizations' funding requests and plan events. An international programming committee, made up of undergrad and graduate students, plans more than 60 events per year. International student organizations, such as Chinese Students and Scholars and Indian Students Association, as well as American student-based organizations, are required to attend biweekly Global Union meetings.

To qualify for funding and publicity help from the Global Union, events must be: free, open to all students, educational, cultural and social — all with an international focus. For example, Culture Night featured a Ukrainian student sharing her experiences and perspective. And other events featured discussions of human trafficking and global warming.

RIT Global Union

The RIT Global Union was founded in 1997 to represent international students and address their needs, said Andrew Skrzyniarz and Aksa Asgher, president and vice president of the Global Union.

The Global Union has grown to become an umbrella organization for various international student

groups, while also helping international students find housing, providing them with transportation from the airport, and serving as a central, accessible place where they can feel safe and comfortable on campus. The Global Union also advocates for international students by representing them during Student Government Senate meetings.

The Global Union provides guidance and support to student clubs and runs large-scale events to raise awareness of different cultures and religions, address and break down stereotypes, and give a voice to global and international interests and concerns.

And the Global Union also puts together student organizations who express interest in the same issue so they can collaborate on a program that's more successful than an individual program would've been. For example, Muslim and Latino students collaborated on an interpretive presentation about Islamic issues.

The Global Union president, VP and secretary campaign as a team to serve as the executive level of the board for a year. Election campaigns include debates, meet-and-greets and discussions to find out the needs of international student groups.

Campus life provides funding, which covers student-worker stipends for elected board members, transportation, office supplies and programming. Private donors provide about 5 percent of funding to cover supplemental needs, such as T-shirts for promoting awareness and a relief concert for the Philippines.

The Global Union provides promotional support and funding only to cultural groups with at least 10 or more active members and at least one culturally focused event per semester. But most groups run 5 to 10 cultural events per year. No discrimination is permitted, meaning that the German Club can't turn away a Malaysian student.

Go to Facebook and enter "RIT Global Union" or "Lehigh Global Union," or contact Bill Hunter at wdh3@lehigh.edu. ■

Global Union prepares students for globalization

Lehigh University's Global Union started out as just a hangout place for international students. And international programming kept drawing the same students.

The student leaders of the Global Union and Bill Hunter, director of international outreach, recognized the need to diversify and integrate. Hunter and his student team reached out to fraternities, sororities, and other non-culture-based student organizations. "We told them, you need to prepare yourselves for the global workforce, and learn how to interact with, understand and work with people different from you — people who pray differently, dress differently and eat differently. If you can sit across

from an employer and say you're comfortable working with people who are different from you — that is going to be an asset to you," he said. "And that helped bring them in."

Membership and events expanded, making the Global Union one of the largest and most active student organizations on campus.

And students who participate in the Global Union wind up with leadership skills and become comfortable interacting with and presenting in front of different groups and cultures, he said. In addition, Hunter has seen a regular stream of students being hired for global jobs, especially among executive board members. ■