

News Release

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Danielle Kleist awarded National Award from NASPA *Doris Michiko Ching Award for Excellence as a Student Affairs Professional*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Each year, NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, recognizes members who are doing outstanding work in the student affairs profession. Danielle Kleist, director of student life at Washington State University Tri-Cities in Richland, Wash, was selected as the recipient of the 2016 NASPA Doris Michiko Ching Award for Excellence as a Student Affairs Professional.

This national award recognizes mid-level student affairs professionals who demonstrate an outstanding commitment to the student affairs profession by creating environments that promote student learning and personal development. The award was renamed to honor NASPA's first minority female board of directors chairwoman last year.

In her role as Director of Student Life, Kleist has started living learning communities, club sports, graduate assistants, a recreation and outdoor program, a programmatic new student orientation, and a parent's program. Tri-Cities had been attempting to develop a robust student life climate, but didn't happen until her arrival.

"Upon her arrival, she has worked diligently to bring in some of our first out-of-state students," says Chris Meiers, vice chancellor for enrollment management and student services. "She has brought student together in terms of academics and interests and is creating a sense of belonging for these students."

Prior to her work at Tri-Cities, Kleist was the Assistant Director and Director of Orientation and Commuter Student Involvement at the University of Miami. Kleist was involved in NASPA there as she is now. She mentored three NASPA undergraduate fellows. She currently serves at the 2016 Western Regional Conference Chair, the Region V Membership Coordinator and a National Student Leadership Program Knowledge Community Co-Chair.

"She promotes student learning and personal development with enthusiasm, positivity, and a true sense that student success is at the heart of her work," says Román Lara, Kleist's graduate assistant. "Collaborating with different departments and student groups, she's offering an inclusive method of doing things, and most importantly, she does it with a smile on her face."

Kleist and the other National Award winners will be honored in March at the 2016 NASPA Annual Conference in Indianapolis, Ind.

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