



### Regional Director's Message

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Dear NASPA Region VI Colleagues,

Happy Belated New Year and Kung Hee Fat Choy! I hope this message finds you well and that your 2015 is off to a wonderful start.

As I reflect on all that transpired at the close of 2014, I want to thank several leaders for their service and involvement with Region VI. I would like to begin with **Andi Fejeran Sims** for serving as conference chair of our 2014 Western Regional Conference, Imagine. The record-breaking conference drew over 900 attendees to Anaheim, California, where we imagined and actualized a hugely successful conference. I also want to express my deep appreciation to our **Region VI Advisory Board** for their hard work and dedication to ensure the success of our region.

Thank you, also, to all who took the time to read and comment on the NASPA Strategic Plan. Region VI was well represented in providing comments to this important document that will help to guide the future of our beloved organization.

Since our last newsletter, there have been many accomplishments, events and initiatives that have occurred in our region that we are highlighting. All that we do



throughout our region plays a significant part in the changing landscape of student affairs. Members like you create differences on campuses every day and I am so honoured and humbled to serve alongside of you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [ldeta@hawaii.edu](mailto:ldeta@hawaii.edu) should you have any questions or suggestions on how we can continue to move Region VI forward. I look forward to seeing you in New Orleans in a few weeks and grabbing a beignet together!

May your Year of the Ram be filled with prosperity, good health, love, and peace.

With humility,



Lori Ideta, Ed.D.  
Region VI Director  
Interim Vice Chancellor for Students  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Already have ideas or submissions for our next newsletter? It's never too early to submit!

Email submissions to [NaspaRegion6@gmail.com](mailto:NaspaRegion6@gmail.com) or email the Newsletter Editor directly at [richard.mizusawa@hawaii.edu](mailto:richard.mizusawa@hawaii.edu).

2015 Summer Edition Timeline:  
Call for Articles: Thursday, June 18th & July 2nd  
Submission Deadline: Friday, July 24th by 5pm  
Newsletter Distribution: Thursday, July 30th

# Opportunities and Upcoming Events



## ***Register for the APAHE 2015 Conference today!***

Currently, the Southern California Executive Committee is promoting the APAHE 2015 National Conference on April 9 and 10 at the Hilton, San Francisco Financial District. Click [here](#) to register.

## **2015 Building Healthy Academic Communities National Summit**

April 23 and 24 at UC Irvine

This Summit will convene leaders and nationally recognized authorities in health and wellness to highlight and share best practices in promoting and sustaining wellness. Click [here](#) for more information.



## **2015 Summit Speakers**



David B. Agus, MD; Bernadette M. Melnyk, PhD, RN, CPNP/PMHNP; Dan M. Cooper, MD; Peter S. Jensen, MD; Sonja Lyubomirsky, PhD; Marion Nestle, PhD, MPH; Judd Allen, PhD; Michael R. Mantell, PhD



Do you work with Graduate and Professional School Students?

- Are you a student affairs officer in an academic department that serves master's and Ph.D. students?
- Or, maybe you work in a law, business, medical, nursing, pharmacy, or other school that offers professional degrees?

If so, the AGAPSS KC needs your help!

We are looking for someone to serve as the corepresentative for AGAPSS for Region VI. If you are interested in this volunteer opportunity, please contact the current Region VI representative, Valerie Shepard, at [vshepard@saonet.ucla.edu](mailto:vshepard@saonet.ucla.edu).

AGAPSS: Administrators in Graduate and Professional Student Services is a knowledge community for all administrators who serve graduate and professional students, including those in general student affairs positions, advisors in academic departments (serving master's and doctoral students) and advisors in professional schools (law, medicine, business, etc.).

## 2015 NASPA Western Regional Conference



November 08 - November 10, 2015  
Oakland, CA



## **Grab Those Professional Development Opportunities**

Marianne Link, Assistant Director, Health Promotion, Klotz Student Health Center, California State University, Northridge

Professional development opportunities help you to re-inspire your enthusiasm and motivation, and remember why you chose to work in higher education. Have you been thinking about attending a conference? We'd like to offer two recommendations.

### ***NASPA Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Conference***

Each January, NASPA offers the Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Conference, which runs concurrently with NASPA's Mental Health and Violence Prevention Conferences. This past year's conference was held in National Harbor, Maryland, in a beautiful, all-inclusive resort, and provided opportunities for cutting-edge learning and mindful rejuvenation.

The conference themes included:

- Infrastructure and policy development
- Effective and innovative prevention strategies
- Environmental management by campus-based leadership
- Strategic prevention
- Campus and community partnerships
- Mental health, violence prevention, and substance abuse

Conference offerings included:

- Six pre-conference workshops (half- or full-day programs and events, each concentrating on a specific topic)
- Panel discussions
- Plenary sessions
- Mini-institutes
- A plethora of concurrent sessions
- Poster sessions
- Vendor exhibits

### ***Coming Soon!***

#### ***The California State University Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Educational Conference***

This year's conference will be hosted by Humboldt State University and CSU Monterey Bay on April 16-17, in scenic Monterey, CA. The conference, which is themed Exploring Best Practices, will bring together administrators, faculty, staff and students in an environment conducive to learning from colleagues and experts within and outside of the CSU. The conference will highlight innovative thinking and research that is leading to changes in prevention, education, and intervention.

To support emerging student needs and current system-wide efforts, the conference will focus on programs and resources related to Exploring Best Practices in the following theme areas:

- Harm Reduction
- Violence Prevention and Accountability
- Innovative Research
- Student Initiatives
- Abuse, Addiction, and Recovery

Last year's professional and student led sessions included the following topics:

- Implementing a smoke-free campus policy
- Data-driven prevention strategies
- Recovery on campus
- Bystander intervention
- Prescription drugs
- Peer education
- Smoking cessation

After returning from a stimulating conference, how often have you been happy you made the time in your schedule? With packed schedules of exciting presentations, seminars and workshops, we guarantee that you'll return from these conferences brimming with new skills, knowledge and a suitcase filled with great ideas and best practices.

Professional development, grab it and go!

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# People of Student Affairs

## Getting to Know Your Region VI Director: An Interview with Dr. Lori M. Ideta

Brent Fujinaka, Career Counselor, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

In 2014 Dr. Lori M. Ideta was elected as NASPA Region VI Director. She currently serves as the Interim Vice Chancellor for Students at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. The following interview was conducted via email in September 2014. —Brent Fujinaka, NASPA Hawai'i Newsletter Editor



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### How long have you been in student affairs and what kinds of roles have you taken on?

Twenty-one years! I have served as a TRIO Acting Director/Counselor (at Kapi'olani Community College), Assistant to the Dean of Students, Assistant Dean of Students, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Students, Vice Chancellor for Students (University of Hawai'i, West Oahu), Assistant Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students, and Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students.

### Why did you choose this career path?

I carry the identity of being an educator. I began my career planning thinking that I would be a second grade teacher for the State of Hawai'i Department of Education forever. I love learning; I am committed to the continuous development of myself and others, and I find joy in interacting with students, regardless of age. I also believe strongly that learning does not just occur within the four walls of a classroom.

### What do you like best about being in student affairs? Conversely, what do you find most challenging?

My greatest joy is watching and guiding our students to become productive, contributing members of our society. I also deeply appreciate working with student affairs colleagues—the most committed, dedicated, and selfless group of professionals in the world.

The unfortunate reality that student affairs is considered ancillary to academic affairs is a challenge. We still need to justify, argue for, and defend the student affairs profession. During times of tough resource restrictions, student affairs is always seen as secondary or tertiary to the mission of a university. We never seem to have enough resources to actualize all the great visions and ideas that we possess.



## **How does being located in Hawaii shape your perspective and goals for your current undertaking as NASPA Region VI Director?**

I am *yonsei*, fourth generation Japanese American, blessed to have been born and raised in Hawai'i. I am a proud local girl who chooses to live here and nowhere else in the world. Every fiber of my being was developed in the deep cultural context of Hawai'i. The Hawaiian archipelago is the most isolated set of islands in the world. While we celebrate our locale, we work hard to ensure our connections to regional, national, and international perspectives. Thus, I am committed to active participation by Hawai'i colleagues in NASPA local, regional, and national endeavors.

## **What do you see in the future for student affairs?**

Our work is bound to become more complex, more difficult, and more multi-layered. We are already dealing with issues of mental health, violence, disruption, etc. I am sure that the future will continue to be laden with tough issues. But I am also confident that we, as student affairs professionals, can continue to rise and meet the challenges ahead of us. As individuals and as a collective, we are resilient, brilliant, and responsive. We will continue to grow and develop with our profession.

## **What are some “fun facts about Lori Ideta” that folks might not know?**

Favorite color: Purple

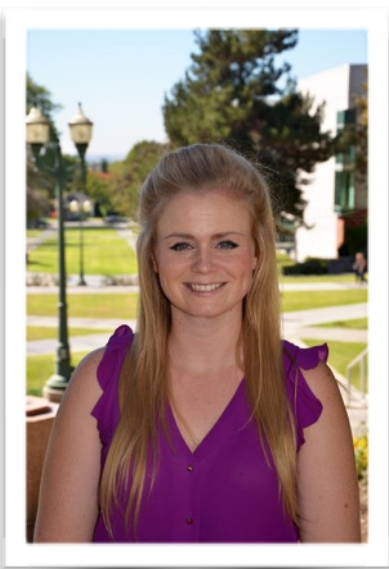
Obsession: Hello Kitty

Favorite Movies: The Sound of Music, The Godfather

Favorite Travel Memories: Offering handmade lei to Loch Ness in Scotland, exploring Angkor Wat in Cambodia, crawling through the Chu Chi tunnels in VietNam.

## **Finally, what tips do you have for aspiring, growing professionals in student affairs?**

Get involved in every opportunity presented to you, and seek out more. Student affairs, as a profession, is hugely diverse. The only way to truly realize which area you want to focus your career is by being exposed to many different departments and roles—even those you may not have any interest in. Seek the advice and counsel of elders in the field, but in the end do not listen to any of us! Do what makes sense for your own life. Be intentional, purposeful, and reflective with your inner self and your career. Follow the advice of Socrates: do not live the unexamined life.



## **Debbie Allison joins Whittier College**

**Debbie Allison, M.S.**, started at Whittier College in July 2014. She oversees the student organization recognition and registration processes, advising the Inter-Club Club Council, Media Council and Campus Media & Publication Groups in addition to being one of the coordinators for events such as SportsFest and the Student Activities Fair and being one of the instructors in the Poet LEAD Certificate Program.

Debbie has previously worked at Pomona College and Azusa Pacific University and comes to us with experience with advising clubs and organizations, planning large-scale events, budgeting, as well as assessment.



## **“Words of Wisdom”**

### **Interview with Kendal Washington White, The University of Arizona Dean of Students and Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs**

Mandy Cheromiah

Masters in Higher Education, The University of Arizona

Kendal Washington White has worked in student affairs for over 20 years at The University of Arizona in Tucson. This interview highlights some of her experiences working in student affairs and she provides helpful pieces of advice for practitioners at any experience level.

#### **What does your job entail?**

Essentially the Dean of Students Office is responsible for ensuring to the best of our ability that we have a campus environment where students in particular faculty, staff, and visitors can participate and engage in our campus community in peace without interruption or disruption, feeling safe and feeling confident about being on campus. We help to frame policies and procedures in a way that students, faculty, and staff can understand.

We are the moral compass of the University of Arizona because there are so many people who have different roles on campus and sometimes they don't always understand or recognizes each other's roles. A saying that I use frequently is that the Dean of Students Office is the “voice of reason” when there is chaos happening on campus. We do get to have a tremendous impact on the student experience and helping them to be engaged citizens throughout the time they are here on campus and then preparing them for the real world. It's multifaceted and it is different every single day.

#### **How did you get to where you are at now?**

Originally my dream was to be a physical therapist. Let's just say that math and myself didn't get along very well [laugh]. So I had to reconsider my major and what field I wanted to pursue. I attended Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia and worked at Cary Street Gym as a facility supervisor. In that job, it was the first time that I had to actually confront a difficult situation. There was a really smelly guy, who was a faculty member, in a weight room and the room would clear out because it smelled that bad. I had to be the one, the little undergraduate student, sharing in a sensitive way, “hey you know why the room is empty?” I think back to that moment often because it was the first time that I had to take on a difficult task and having to step into that leadership role and that role of responsibility.

My first professional job was at Emory University in Atlanta, even though I was in a campus recreation type of position, the students of color at Emory University would often come to me and ask me advice about financial aid and all kinds of things that undergraduate students have questions about. That started becoming more important to me about that advising and helping students to succeed because I am a first-generation college student. I was the first person in my family and I understood that I needed that kind of advice and encouragement. It was great to provide that for the students.

I never expected to be here for 21 years. The University of Arizona has been terrific for me because each time I have thought its time to move, a new opportunity presented itself to me. I have had great supervisors, great opportunities and in an institution like ours, there are so many things you can do and ways to enhance your skill sets and build relationships. That's been the best part is building relationships with other student affairs professionals, but even more so with faculty. Those relationships are really rewarding and of course the students. That's a no brainer!

### **What do you most enjoy about your position?**

I have to be very versed in law. Whether it's Title 9, Violence Against Woman's Act or FERPA, there are so many laws you have to know your state, the federal law, and the first amendment because we are a public institution. Just having that broad knowledge base is amazing and makes the work really interesting.

The second thing I enjoy the most is in a leadership position you have access to information and people that help you to understand, "Oh, that's why the institution has to do X, Y, and Z." I like being able to help students understand why the University runs the way it does.

### **Compare and contrast "traditional DOS units compared to our unique division."**

Every campus is unique. For example, in my Assistant Vice President role, I not only have the Dean of Students Office, but the Disability Resource Center, Office of Sustainability, Arizona Student Media, and Campus Health. Some people would say, "Wow. Arizona Public Media, Campus Health? Shouldn't those be under auxiliaries?" What I appreciated about Melissa Vito, our Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, is her leadership. She thinks outside of the box and she recognizes that the Disability Resource Center is a cultural group as much as it is an auxiliary. As the Dean of Student, the larger picture of what my portfolio includes really does impact beyond just students. It's faculty, staff, their parents, and visitors.

### **What are the pros and cons to our progressive approach?**

The pros is that it's always fresh in that we are willing to make changes and we are willing to make changes that make sense. I think the pros are that we are not afraid to make changes. We don't wait to get directions from someone else. We do that and make those decisions internally.

The cons, because we are very progressive, it's difficult sometimes to benchmark. When you try to compare yourself to another institution what we end up doing is breaking down the individual areas within the office versus the overall office. I'll take that con any day. It just means that we are super unique.



## What advice do you have for creating a positive work/life balance?

That's a tremendous challenge because I am married and I have two teenage boys that are active. They both are in high school and play sports. This role that I am in requires a lot of time. It's not an 8-5 kind of position. You often have to work in the evenings to attend events and participate in events and show your support for your staff and your students. I have to be visible. Inclusion is important to me and I recognize because I am one of the few leaders of color on our campus and it's really important for me to be visible. That's tough to balance sometimes because I really want to be at everything, especially for our students of color and first-generation students so that they can see someone who may understand their background.

## What advice do you have for aspiring or new student affairs practitioners?

That's a great question. I would say flexibility is so important. Again, when I think about my career, I thought I was going to be a physical therapist, then I thought I would stay in campus rec, but because I was open to new experiences and different opportunities and doing that self evaluation, I never imagined that I would be an Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, I never imagined that. But it happened because of hard work, remaining open, and being flexible. I would also say to brand new or young student affairs professionals to be patient. Sometimes folks think I have been here a year, I am supposed to get a title, an increase in a salary. You know it doesn't always work that way. When I talk about being patient and flexible, be willing to move around and try different experiences.

Yavapai College alumna **Tania Sheldahl** has been appointed dean of student development for the college. In Dean Sheldahl's new position, she will be responsible for all student development and enrollment functions including residence life, financial aid, counseling, advising, veterans services, disability services, TRIO programs, testing and learning centers, and the student development aspects of the First Year Experience.

YC Vice President Stuart Blacklaw said that Sheldahl's work as the interim dean "allowed me to see what she would do with the position. I was seeing in Interim Dean Sheldahl the creativity, passion, collegiality, and leadership I was seeking. It was clear to me that I need look no further." Dean Sheldahl has been with Yavapai College since 1986. For the past seven years she has served as director of academic and career advising, counseling, high school programs and testing services. Her previous YC positions include academic advisor/retention specialist and financial aid advisor.



Dean Sheldahl holds a Master of Education degree in human relations counseling and a bachelor's degree in business administration-management from Northern Arizona University, and an associate degree in business administration from Yavapai College.



The Rio Hondo College family congratulates former Dean of Student Services, **Dr. Dyrell Foster**, on his new position as the Vice President of Student Services at Moreno Valley College in the Riverside Community College District.

Serving as the the Dean of Student Affairs since September of 2011 at Rio Hondo College, Dr. Foster oversaw various departments including Financial Aid, Veterans Services, Student Health and Psychological Services, Disabled Student Programs and Services, and Student Conduct. Dr. Foster also served as the Title IX Coordinator & Compliance Officer for the district.

His leadership, collaborative spirit, and wisdom are missed at Rio Hondo College, but we know that he will bring that and more to his new role to the students and staff at Moreno Valley College.

## 2015 TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH, ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION INNOVATION AWARD

Beth Poling, Lisa Endersby, & Josie Ahlquist

Technology moves at a very rapid pace, with higher education struggling to keep up with emerging platforms and college student usage and needs. Research, assessment and evaluation of technology tools, strategies and impact are crucial to root our practices into institutional culture.

The Technology Research, Assessment, and Evaluation Innovation Award was created to recognize high quality research that has aimed to shine light on understanding technology in higher education and student affairs, as well as painting a clearer picture for effective practices. This award will recognize and honor our NASPA colleagues who are innovators in the field of Student Affairs through the application of research, assessment and evaluation of technology related tools and practices.

The Technology Knowledge Community is pleased to announce our inaugural Technology Research, Assessment, and Evaluation Innovation Award winner, Josie Ahlquist.



Josie Ahlquist, a doctoral candidate at California Lutheran University, completed a research study titled Exploring the Social Media Utilization of Senior Level Student Affairs Officers to investigate “senior level student affairs administrator’s online leadership styles and tactics to engage directly with students and colleagues with the use of social media” by using a qualitative case study methodology to answer the research question, “What leadership characteristics are shared by senior level student affairs officers who participate in social media?”

Josie's research resulted in a four-part leadership framework that "extends beyond participants social media activity, accounting for how they view their leadership position as it relates to students, the campus community and the field of higher education." The framework includes the following leadership characteristics: Strategic Communication, Value Added Approach, Positive Engagement and Embracing Change.

For example looking at the value added approach to social media; one philosophical value shared by many of the participants was defined as whole life leadership online. This personal approach to social media was seen in examples such as posting pictures of their kids, live tweeting about pop culture or updating followers on their fitness goals.

An example of this personal touch by including family members was described by a vice president in the south,

*"At campus events my daughter has become quite the [university name] athletic fan. And so we were at a volleyball game and she was cheering on the women's volleyball team, so I took a picture like oh, it's [daughter's name], you know cheering on the women's volleyball game. For me my job is me and my family, we have agreements around that."*

Josie was then able to use this framework to create a Digital Decision Making Model which represents the approach they used to integrating social media to their leadership positions: Digital Tools and Strategy, User Engagement, Digital Contribution, and Intended Purpose.

According to Josie, this model "provides all student affairs professionals, faculty and graduate students a full picture how digital activity can be strategic, personal and meaningful."

This type of research also gives weight to professionals exploring digital communication tools such as Twitter in their work, especially with students. As one senior vice president in the study stated,

*"From being on Twitter I have better and more significant engagement with students. The number of students I impact and reach has significantly grown as well. I personally feel more connected to them."*

Josie will be featuring the results of her research at three presentations at the National Conference. Please join us at one of these sessions to find out even more about this groundbreaking research!

- High Touch & High Tech: A Panel on the Future of Deans & Vice Presidents on Social Media, Monday March 23rd, 1:15 PM - 2:05 PM
- #SAspeaks: Digital Leadership, March 24th 2:30 PM – 3:45 PM.
- A Leadership Framework for Social Media in Student Affairs, Wednesday March 25th, 3:30 PM - 4:20 PM

Great work, Josie! No other research has look at Student Affairs Professionals use of social media. We cannot wait to see how this scholarship impacts our understanding of students, colleagues, and ourselves!



*Josie Ahlquist is a doctoral candidate at California Lutheran University in the Higher Education Leadership program. She is an emerging scholar on social media in education, exploring how leadership and social media are intertwined. Her dissertation is on college student leaders and their perception and experiences with social media. Through a mixed methodology she is seeking out an understanding and definition of digital student leadership. She blogs at [www.josieahlquist.com](http://www.josieahlquist.com), connecting scholarly research to best practices for students and educational leaders. She received her Masters in Education from Northern Arizona University and majored in sociology and human development at South Dakota State University. She has over a decade in Higher Education including areas of student activities, campus recreation, student unions, residence life, judicial affairs, student leadership and new student orientation. As a speaker she has trained thousands of student leaders, recently providing a digital remix on how to develop digital student leaders of the 21st century. She is a co-author in the Handbook of Student Affairs Administration textbook, writing the chapter on Computer-Mediated Communication and Social Media and is published in The Journal of Leadership Studies, exploring Digital Leadership Education using Social Media and the Social Change Model. She is a co-editor and author of an upcoming volume of New Directions in Student Affairs called Engaging the Digital Generation. Follow Josie on Twitter at @josieahlquist.*

## **News on Whittier College NUFP Fellows**

Laurie Silver, Interim Vice President & Dean of Students, Whittier College

Senior Elizabeth Sanchez (NUFP 2014-2015) has been accepted into the College Counseling and Student Development graduate program at Azusa Pacific University.

Senior David Jasso (NUFP 2014-2015) received the level two NASPA Annual conference stipend of \$750.00 generously funded by Sodexo. David is interested in an internship for the next year and will be researching graduate programs for 2016, so look for this talented young man in New Orleans .

Junior Tekara (Teekay) Jones was selected as a NUFP Fellow for 2015-2016. Teekay is eager to learn about the genesis of the Student Affairs profession and the variety of career options in the field.

The Division of Student Life at Whittier College is very proud of our stellar students and future Student Affairs professionals!



# Reflections

## **NASPA 2014 Western Regional Conference: Imagine: Inspire Dreams. Transform Communities**

### ***2014 Western Regional Conference Reflection***

Greetings NASPA Region VI Family. It is hard to believe that almost four months have passed since our November 2014 25th Family Reunion. What we accomplished together was the largest regional conference in NASPA history with over 200 of our 900 attendees being our undergraduate and graduate students who aspire to be student affairs educators. I hope that although you have returned to your campuses, you continue to reflect on the renewal experiences shared and the commitments made to yourself, your colleagues, and your students. As we move along in our daily lives let us keep central to our core the meaning of community. Let us reflect on the power we yield to shape the lives of not only our students, but our mentors, colleagues, and mentees. Let us be reminded that being a champion for others is our purpose; this means we believe in and push others to do what they think not



possible, to gauge their potential, and to help them reach it. This is how we inspire dreams, this is how we transform communities! As your personal journeys continue and life's challenges take their toll, look forward to our 2015 Western Regional Conference in Oakland, CA where we will reconnect and renew again.



In solidarity,

Andi Fejeran Sims

*Photo Credit: Edward B. Salas (photos on pages 15-17)*











# A Graduate Student Reflection on the 2014 WRC

May Kou Yang, Fresno State, @MaykYang

As a first year graduate student attending my initial semester, I wasn't sure why my professors kept promoting "NASPA," this association that didn't have an appropriate acronym and didn't seem to be something I would be interested in. I knew I was preparing for a career in student affairs, kind of, at least I thought I knew, but I didn't think I had enough professional credibility to join a national association yet. I chose my program because I knew I wanted to make a difference in students' lives, but I didn't fully understand what that entailed or what I needed other than my degree and some "experiences."

It's okay not to know. And at times like these I've found, an open heart, a willing mind, fearless ignorance, and a bit of good timing are all you need to have some of the greatest adventures.

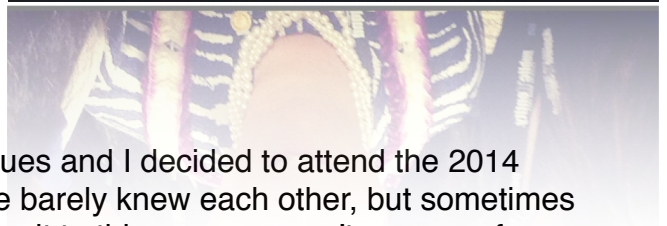
And by great, I mean transformative.

## *An Open Heart*

Swept up in the fervor of discussion, some colleagues and I decided to attend the 2014 Western Regional Conference in Anaheim, CA. We barely knew each other, but sometimes you get caught up in excitement and suddenly commit to things you weren't so sure of a moment ago. And once I say I'm going to do something, I don't back down. They were the same. You're supposed to find kindred spirits in graduate school, right? So there I was, a fresh graduate student, joining a professional association for the first time, attending a regional conference that included countries I had never even dreamed of working with, and packing my belongings to meet with professionals, faculty, administrators, staff, directors, board members, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students at the most highly attended regional conference of 2014. I had no idea what I was getting myself into and I was fearless!

## *A Willing Mind*

Learning and reading about student engagement strategies, politics and leadership theories, functional area research and organizational history was fascinating, but if we practice what we preach- co-curricular learning opportunities are what makes us great leaders- we need to get out there and have some "experiences." In challenging me to acknowledge my roles as a scholar-practitioner, my professors, Dr. Ignacio Hernández and Dr. Susana Hernández, recommended my colleagues and I develop learning outcomes prior to the conference. I scribbled some down in my journal the night before my trip: I wanted to meet other graduate students and hear about their experiences in their programs, I wanted to learn as much about NASPA as possible so I could become an active member (I'd already paid so I might as well get involved, no backing down, remember?), and I wanted to find additional mentors and role models to help me discover my place in the field of student affairs.



### *Fearless Ignorance*

The moment my colleagues and I stepped into the Marriot Hotel, in Anaheim, CA I felt a buzz. That familiar conference excitement you feel coming from the collective heart and minds of over a thousand individuals in one building who are united for one common purpose: students. It was heady and inspiring. Then William Allen Young, our opening speaker, put words to these emotions and passions I felt, he validated my educational experiences and turned loose the beliefs that I often dismissed as the naïve musings of an inner child that wanted everyone to succeed despite the odds. From that point on, every interaction was with a kindred spirit on a united front, with very few inhibitions. I met inspiring and inspired individuals within sessions and outside in reception areas, professionals who were willing to share their knowledge, who did not hide their success strategies. It was refreshing; it was like being part of a loving, nurturing community that cared for your individual development. I felt so comfortable within the first day that I boldly approached Dr. Lori Ideta, our Region VI Director, at a reception later that evening and told her I admired her work and wanted to become involved with Region VI, and that why yes, I would also love some cake! It was unlike anything I'd ever been a part of.

### *Good Timing*

Not everyone in my cohort could attend the conference for many of the usual reasons: work, family, finances- and I could have quickly fallen into one of those categories. But with some luck, I happened to have just enough funds for registration and travel costs, my colleagues happened to have some professional development opportunities that paid for our hotel stay and car rental, and my professors were attending the conference to present, speak, and serve in meetings. My professors provided countless meaningful experiences while Dr. Lamas, the NASPA Board Chair, who serves as Fresno State's newest Vice President of Student Affairs, spent hours one night validating what it means to remain engaged with passionate leaders. It was as if all the right minds came together at the right time to impart some important wisdom at a time when I needed it.

### *Transformative Adventures*

Despite the sea of voices and faces over those four days, I had authentic conversations with people throughout the conference that revealed important truths about the profession and about myself. As I frantically typed my Philosophy Statement assignment that was due on the second day of the conference (we're still graduate students, aren't we?), I realized I was able to incorporate many of the ideals and realities I had encountered there. In that moment, sitting at a Starbucks with slow Wi-Fi and a troupe of hungry colleagues waiting for me to submit, I was becoming who I wanted to be. My philosophy was changing and taking on a shape I didn't know it could. I was opening up to important tenets and lessons in the profession and as Dr. Ronni Sanlo, our closing speaker, modeled for us- I now knew with certainty that I wanted to lead with courage, that I wanted to transform others with my story too.

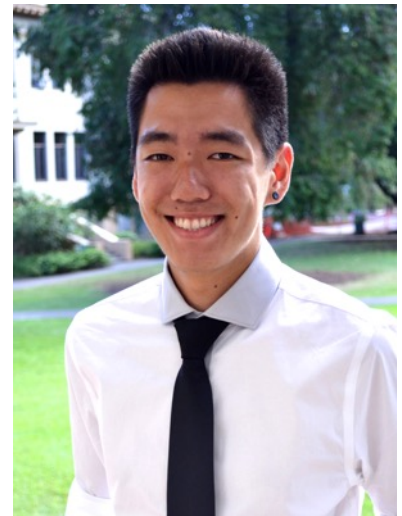
Not only was the Western Regional Conference important in transforming my understanding of how I feel about student affairs, how I want to lead, and how I engage with others, but it solidified important relationships for me that were not possible in the classroom: I built important and lasting connections with my faculty and staff, with my colleagues, and with many others throughout the region. Needless to say, I will be attending the 2015 NASPA Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA this spring and hope to share many more transformative adventures with all of you. As my school motto intones, Be Bold! Take a chance and join me. #BeBold.

## Moving Forward: Perspectives from First-time NASPA Conference Attendees

Brent Fujinaka, Career Counselor, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Do you remember your first NASPA conference? What were the lasting effects and impact it had on you and your work in student affairs? The following narratives are from first-time NASPA conference attendees, collected shortly after the 2014 NASPA Western Regional Conference that took place in Anaheim, California, November 9 through 12.

“The 2014 NASPA Western Regional Conference was an amazing experience and my first NASPA conference away from home. I was eager to go to the west coast and meet other student affairs professionals from our region who came together to learn and grow from each other. My favorite part of the conference was the closing speaker, Dr. Ronni Sanlo, and her message that she articulated to the 900 conference attendees in the audience. Of course, I also enjoyed the workshops and opportunities to connect with other student affairs professionals and fellow graduate students, as those components are part of what we take back to our home institutions to improve what we do in student affairs every day. I wish I could go back and relive the experience and get more out of my time there, but there are so many other opportunities and future conferences I, along with my fellow colleagues, can and should take advantage of in the coming years. Overall I truly enjoyed attending the conference and getting to experience a week on the west coast with new and old friends and colleagues.”



—Richard Mizusawa, Graduate Assistant for the College of Education Senate, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa



“Aloha! My name is Marie Guillermo, a peer mentor of Sulong Aral at Leeward Community College and a full-time undergraduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Sulong Aral is a Tagalog phrase, which translates to “Moving Forward in Education.” Sulong Aral is a federally funded program that supports students of Filipino ancestry in completing their programs of study, and assists with transferring to any of the four-year universities within the UH System to obtain a bachelor's degree and pursue graduate education. Our program had the privilege to send all Sulong Aral peer mentors, including myself, to attend the 2014 NASPA Western Regional Conference.

When I first walked through the doors of the ballrooms and saw all the men and women in their business attire, I immediately felt anxious and intimidated. My out-of-control excitement that had been building since our team learned we would be traveling disappeared. I didn't know what to expect. I thought, "Wow, I'm an undergraduate student from Hawai'i. How do I even compare?" Fortunately, I've learned that age, degrees you have or don't have, or job title really don't matter. As long as you have the intention and drive to learn and grow, you'll be all right.

From this conference, I was able to take away different approaches in serving our college communities and development of networking and communication skills. Most importantly, however, I gained a better understanding of myself. Traveling away from the islands and attending the conference with fellow Peer Mentors has benefited us in so many ways. Our relationships with each other have strengthened and solidified from our time in Anaheim. Sulong Aral has been revamped this past year and the ideas shared in the conference sessions have enhanced our own programming. Words are not enough to describe my first time at a NASPA conference. If you ever have the opportunity to attend, I say don't second-guess it, just do it!"

—Marie Guillermo, Sulong Aral, Leeward Community College

"During my experience at the NASPA conference it was nerve-racking but very exciting. To be honest, I felt very intimidated with all the high-level student affairs officers around. What really helped the experience was that we had people watching over us. Our group wasn't alone: we had volunteers and colleagues showing us the way. During the conference we learned very useful information. I received many tips that I can use in our program here at Leeward Community College.

What I enjoyed the most during this experience is that no matter what age or position you were, it didn't matter. Everyone who went to the conference was there to gain knowledge of how to help students. I really appreciated how people shared their real experiences—successes or failures, it didn't matter. Overall the conference experience was very exciting and I'm glad I had the chance to be part of it."

—Librado Dumanjug, Sulong Aral Peer Mentor, Leeward Community College





“I had great time at the NASPA Western Regional Conference. The Pre-Conference Institute for Mid-Level Professionals with Jahmad Canley was awesome, and his follow-up webinars and resources are great tools that can be used at work and in personal relationships. My most positive takeaway from the conference was learning to better equip students with skill sets so they can contribute to their communities, setting them up for success.”

—Māhealani Nishimura, Native Hawaiian Student Services, Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

“The 2014 Western Regional Conference was my first NASPA conference. I had just recently become a member, with encouragement from student affairs colleagues on my campus. It’s fair to say I wasn’t sure what to expect. Would the conference be relevant to my work? How would it cover the broad range of disciplines in student affairs? Would the conference feel welcoming?



I’m happy to report that the conference did not disappoint. The guest speakers and conference sessions provided great information, discussion, and inspiration. I was struck by the honesty, generosity, and energy of both the speakers and audience. I realized we’re all working toward the same goals, that we’re not in this alone. It didn’t matter the size of the institution, the office we work in, or the roles we have in student affairs. The more I listened to colleagues’ accounts of their work, the more I learned about myself.

Going forward I’m hoping to apply the knowledge gained from the conference to my work—not just the work in my own area, but also the greater work of our student affairs unit and university. My inspiration began with a reminder: The work we do in student affairs is important. We support, educate, and provide opportunities for growing and learning that many students will carry deep into their lives. It’s a simple reminder, maybe an obvious one, but it is absolutely necessary. Thanks, NASPA.”

—Brent Fujinaka, Mānoa Career Center, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

“During my time here at Leeward Community College, I was fortunate to meet people that would eventually change my view of things I used to not care about.

Everything started when I took Dr. Raymund Liongson’s Asian Studies class. During my time in his class, I established a good student-mentor relationship with him. He then introduced me to the Sulong Aral Program here at Leeward CC. Sulong Aral program is a federally funded program that focuses on recruitment and retention of students at LCC, and eventually transfer to a four-year institution to work on a bachelor’s degree—preferably in the University of Hawai‘i system.



Through Sulong Aral, I realized that going to school is not just about learning to better ourselves, it's also about learning to help better others and our community. I have gained an understanding of how important it is to support students in higher education—the unappreciated job of student service professionals. Since then, I have come to realize my role in higher education. As a result, I started working for the program.



I had been with Sulong Aral for eight months when they selected me as part of the group to be sent to the 2014 NASPA Western Regional Conference for professional development. I never thought I would gain as much training and knowledge as I received during our time at the conference.

Attending the conference opened my eyes to issues of higher education among Filipinos as a systematic problem. It helped me to understand that I could not just be a healer for myself—I need to be a healer for my community. We need to solve higher education issues from a systematic approach. I cannot do it alone. Being part of the team that Sulong Aral sent to the NASPA conference gave me a profound understanding of the importance of being part of a movement and a team.”

—Geryll Anthony Agno, Sulong Aral Peer Mentor, Leeward Community College

## **NASPA RVI Southern California executes successful Drive-In Conference!**

Sumun Pendakur, Associate Dean for Institutional Diversity, Harvey Mudd College

On Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, over 110 graduate students and new professionals came together for the “Rise Above: Navigating the Job Search” Drive-In Conference, held at Chapman University’s Sandhu Conference Center. The conference was organized by the NASPA Southern California Executive Board, comprised of Co-Chairs Moya Carter and Sumun Pendakur and committee members Jean Bennett, Raja Bhattar, Martha Enciso, Alexandra Froehlich, Henan Joof, Lorena Márquez, Marie Paulo, Michelle Saldaña, Jennifer Tang, and Jonathan Wang.



“Rise Above” offered attendees a local, low-cost day of professional development and networking, with multiple concurrent sessions, as well as all-day mock interviews and resume reviews. Participants from San Luis Obispo to San Diego gained insight from experienced professionals on a variety of next step topics such as:

Identifying strategies for self-care during the job search process;  
The art of negotiation;  
Exploring the Ed.D. or Ph.D. route, including identifying when and why to pursue it;  
Tips for navigating the search process, as well as developing a quality resume and interview skills;  
Navigating one's identity in the professional setting;  
Identifying one's supervisory style and managing staff;  
Developing one's social media profile and online presence;  
Succeeding at The Placement Exchange.



The lunch plenary was titled, “Food for Thought: Resilience, Failure, and Staying Positive through the Job Search.”

Conference attendees said the following about the Drive-In Conference experience:

“I loved the intimacy and location of the event. It allowed for good relationship-building opportunities. The panel session at lunch was AMAZING!”

“As an introvert, I really loved the drive-in format because of the intimate nature. It was much easier to develop relationships than at the larger conferences.”

“The conference was well-rounded. It provided a great opportunity for interview preparation!”

“This was great! I feel ready for my job search.”

The NASPA Southern California Executive Board heartily thanks all of the wonderful professionals who volunteered their time, passion, and intellect as speakers, resume reviewers, mock interviewers, and general volunteers.

The Southern California Executive Committee is the voice of NASPA Region VI and NASPA National from Southern California (San Diego to Santa Barbara). In addition, the Southern California Executive Committee organizes networking and professional development opportunities for Student Affairs professionals throughout the region.

For more information, contact Sumun Pendakur at [spendakur@hmc.edu](mailto:spendakur@hmc.edu).

## **Student Organization Summit**

Clarissa Malhiot & Shauna Sobers

On Friday, January 16, 2015 Whittier College's Leadership Experience and Programs (LEAP) Office hosted the 4th Annual Southern California Student Organization Summit (SOS) where student affairs professional came together to share knowledge, learn about promising practices, and network with colleagues in similar functional areas of student life.

The summit was created in 2010 by Adam Ryen Daniels, Student Organization and Orientation Advisor at University of California, Riverside. The idea was to create an event in which student affairs professionals would have an opportunity to discuss and learn from one another in an effort to generate collaboration and overall success at each of respective campus.



Whittier College is the first small private school to host the SOS with University of California, Irvine (UCR), University of California, San Diego (UCSD), and University of California, Riverside (UCR) having hosted in previous years. This year's SOS garnered the highest participation thus far with 43 participants from 14 different institutions: Biola University, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona), California State University, San Bernardino, California State University, Fullerton, Chapman University, Concordia University Irvine, La Sierra University, San Diego State University (SDSU), University of California, Irvine (UCI), University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), University of California, Riverside (UCR), University of California, San Diego (UCSD), University of Redlands, and University of San Diego (USD).

Vast assemblages of topics were discussed during the roundtable sessions such as free speech/ student activism, event management, student leadership development, budgeting, clubs/ organizations, assessments, and policies and procedures to name a few. Michael Keyser from Chapman University commented, "I enjoyed the networking and exchanging of stories and ideas. It's amazing to meet so many passionate people who want to make higher education work!" Overall the event was a tremendous success and participants walked away with an amazing experience and wealth of shared knowledge. Derek Gutierrez from Biola University shared, "Any professional who has involvement in or oversight of clubs and organizations on their campus would benefit from the wisdom and knowledge shared at SOS!" Next year the summit will be on December 11, 2015 at San Diego State University.

## Transitions

Jade Silva, AzNASPA

The Arizona NASPA co-chairs, Nick Sweeton and Rhea Duncan, had the passion and drive to reinvigorate the AzNASPA board. In the fall of 2014 they put a call out to NASPA members in Arizona to gain interest in members wanting to serve on the board. Their call was met with much enthusiasm and in November 2014 the group officially met to begin the journey towards bringing a stronger NASPA presence in Arizona. The members in attendance were: Nick Sweeton (University of Arizona), Rhea Duncan (Arizona State University), Wendy Bruun (Northern Arizona University), Melissa Welker (Northern Arizona University), Jade Silva (Arizona State University), David Ward (University of Arizona), and Matthew Tombaugh (Northern Arizona University).



The first board meeting created ideation for board positions, priorities of the group and outlining ways to involve more NASPA members around Arizona. Prior to the meeting and after, the group sent out an on-line assessment to all Arizona NASPA members and student affairs professionals to understand the needs of these professionals. This assessment helped in driving the upcoming priorities of the board in offering professional development opportunities in the areas of: law, policy & governance, assessment, equity, diversity & inclusion, research and best practices. The decision was made to host a professional development drive-in conference for fall 2015 to be hosted at Arizona State University-West campus.



The group wanted to celebrate and reconnect NASPA members to each other by offering three area social events in January and February 2015. The first AzNASPA Social was held in Flagstaff with much success and connecting with faculty and staff from Northern Arizona University and Coconino Community College. The Tucson Social boasted a large attendance with members from University of Arizona. In Phoenix, the group co-hosted with the Higher Education Student Associate at Arizona State University and saw a great turn out

of members from all over the valley.

In January 2015 the board appointed the following positions to lead the AzNASPA efforts:

Co-Chairs: Nick Sweeton & Rhea Duncan  
Professional Development Coordinator: Melissa Welker  
Communications Coordinator: Jade Silva  
Socials Coordinator: Rena Gore  
Arizona KC Rep: David Ward  
Recognition Coordinator: Cynthia Anderson  
Membership Coordinator: Wendy Bruun  
Secretary: Matthew Tombaugh

The Arizona NASPA board is excited to connect with higher education professionals across the state and at all institutions. If you are interested in getting involved with AzNASPA, please contact either Nick Sweeton, [sweeton@life.arizona.edu](mailto:sweeton@life.arizona.edu), or Rhea Duncan, [rhea.duncan@asu.edu](mailto:rhea.duncan@asu.edu), for more information.

## **NASPA Hawai'i Graduate Associates hosts first Brown Bag Lunch with Senior Student Affairs Officers**

Richard Mizusawa, Graduate Associate Program, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

On January 28, 2015, graduate students, faculty, staff, and members of NASPA Hawai'i attended the first Brown Bag Lunch with Senior Student Affairs Officers (SSAOs) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH-Mānoa) campus. This was the first event of many as a part of the NASPA Graduate Associate Program (GAP) and was coordinated by UH-Mānoa's graduate associates, Richard Mizusawa and Miles Trudo. Approximately 25 people attended the event.



The event featured SSAOs from institutes of higher education throughout Hawai'i, including those from the UH System and Chaminade University. The SSAOs in attendance were Dr. Franciso Hernandez, past Vice Chancellor for Students, UH-Mānoa; Dr. Lori Ideta, Interim Vice Chancellor for Students, UH-Mānoa; Brenda Ivelisse, Vice Chancellor for Student Services, Kapi'olani Community College; Laurie Lawrence, Interim Dean for Student Services, Leeward Community College; Dr. Jan Javinar, Interim Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, UH System; and Allison Jerome, Associate Dean of Students, Chaminade University.

The event was successful by sparking interests in graduate students to the work of student affairs that happens every day on campuses. "Dr. Hernandez's remark of the importance of our work as administrative professionals moved me: we meet students are their best days, their worst days, and sometimes their last days; therefore, we must help all students to the best of our abilities," said Amy McKee, who is a graduate student in the Department of Educational Administration at UH-Mānoa. "All the speakers inspired me with their words of wisdom and I aspire to be like them. This was the first time I ever met many of these professionals and I enjoyed hearing about their life experiences and how they were led into the field of higher education. The speakers were warm and inspiring, and I hope I get the chance to work with them someday."

Another purpose of the program was to encouraging potential members to join NASPA. "I was able to engage with other students and also prestigious university administrators. Listening to each one's story and connecting specifically with the female administrators, I now see the importance of groups like NASPA," said Ashley Morehouse, who is also a first year graduate student in the Department of Educational Administration at UH-Mānoa. "I look forward to all of the professional possibilities that will come with being a member of NASPA and to the next NASPA chapter event on our campus."

The NASPA Graduate Associate Program is an initiative to increase leadership opportunities of graduate students within NASPA. For more information, please visit the GAP website at <https://www.naspa.org/constituent-groups/professionals/gap>.



## **California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) - Building T.R.U.S.T.**

Yvonne Garcia, California State University

A total of 156 staff who work at Associated Students, Inc. (ASI) Titan Recreation at CSUF attended a day long training known as T.R.U.S.T. (Titan Recreation Unified Staff Training). Of the 156 staff who work for Titan Recreation, only seven are full-time staff, the remaining 149 are students. Included in the professional staff is Director, Keith Fonseca who joined the ASI Titan Family in September 2014. One of Keith's first priorities was to assess the needs of the department and its staff. As a result of formal and informal assessments Keith and professional staff realized a need to build a unified team amongst 156 staff members. Specifically, there were two barriers Titan Recreation identified in terms of building trust and team; 1) Staff do not understand the jobs duties of others outside their area at Titan Recreation and 2) staff have very specific jobs that do not always allow them to work as closely with each other, so they don't know their fellow employees as well.

Student and professional staff developed a Titan Recreation Unified Staff Training (TRUST)-a day long training that is interactive, informative, and meaningful. The goals of this training were to unify the department, review safety procedures, and further develop profession skills. While Titan Recreation annually implements a NIRSA recognized safety training, WRECKAGE, to re-fresh staff of safety procedures, professional staff believed they could expand this training to go beyond safety training to build community, trust, and staff bonding.

Realizing that getting 156 staff available for 8 hours, on one day all at the same time, is a major challenge, Titan Recreation asked Titan Student Centers Governing Board to allow a one-day closure at the Student Recreation Center, Titan Bowl & Billiards, and CSUF Irvine Fitness Facility, so that all staff could attend and not need to work. TSC governing board unanimously approved, and was excited to hear about the multiple financial co-sponsors for this training day.

A total of 126 student staff attended T.R.U.S.T. During the training, partners from around the campus community were invited to speak about how the work that is being done at Titan Recreation contributes to the overall mission and goals of the university, as well as connected them to resources that relate to their work. Thereafter, safety training was conducted to ensure that staff reviewed CPR under stress, and learned about handling an active shooter. The second half of the day was conference style where professional staff facilitated sessions on critical thinking, professionalism, confidentiality, customer service, advancement, and risk management.

Lastly, all participated in the Battle for the Rec Cup where students competed in a variety of sports, culminating in a competition of throw dodgeballs at professional staff. Keith commented, "We did this to humanize professional staff, and let students know we're part of the fun too."

While the training was intended to be informative and entertaining, one of the most important components was building trust and unifying everyone. Assessment results show that staff felt a strong sense of connectedness to Titan Recreation ( $M = 3.98^*$ ) and felt valued by their organization and department (ASI/Titan Recreation) ( $M = 4.079^*$ ).

Moreover, student staff discussed the benefits of a training day like T.R.U.S.T. and how professional staff has contributed to their learning and growth:

The goal of ASI is for professional growth, they are not here to just make a profit, we are student ran. So professional staff are pretty good about giving students the opportunity to grow, or work in aspects that you wouldn't work in a normal job or you'd have to wait many years before you'd even get the chance to look at scheduling or the budget. Professional staff here are really good at helping facilitate that growth

- Walter, 4 years at Titan Recreation, senior at CSUF

I thought [TRUST] was extremely helpful because the groups were very diverse like in terms of departments and where we worked, they made those really well. And when we got into our small groups with our professional staff they had us state our majors, where we worked, a little about ourselves so we can put what do to a face. Especially, over here we don't see a lot of people because we walk up right up the stairs. So it was nice to know where people work and what they do.

- Katelyn, 1 semester at Titan Recreation, sophomore at CSUF

He is always doing something for us to take something with us for the future. Always professional growth, he knows we are not going to be working in recreation in the future. He is always giving us resources, mentorship, so we can succeed, not only in school but in our future professions. That is what I really appreciate and what I really love about my job.

- Jennifer, 3 years at Titan Recreation, senior at CSUF



*Professional staff and students end an 8 hour-day training by taking a picture together where they spell out TRUST. Pictured in the front is Keith Fonseca, Director of Titan Recreation.*

# **The Titan Dreamers Resource Center: Supporting Undocumented Students on Campus**

Henoc M. Preciado, Coordinator of the Titan Dreamers Resource Center  
Dr. Lea M. Jarnagin, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs  
California State University, Fullerton

## **INTRODUCTION**

At the submission of this article during the final week of February 2015, the Titan Dreamers Resource Center (TDRC) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), has had 6,276 individuals visit the Center since August 25, 2014 (the first day of the fall 2014 semester). The majority of these individuals have been students, many of whom are undocumented, allies, advocates, or thirsty for knowledge. Also included in this figure are CSUF faculty, staff, and administrative leaders, as well as students, faculty, staff, and administrative leaders from other campuses in California—individuals who seek to establish similar centers on their respective campus.

The TDRC is the first center in the CSU system designed to serve undocumented students. Since its opening on April 23, 2014, the Center continues to provide undocumented students with academic and emotional support, referrals to financial assistance, information on programs and services designed to improve retention and graduation rates, and a comforting environment where students can connect with one another.

As part of Diversity Initiatives & Resource Centers—a new department on campus—the TDRC works collaboratively with the African American Resource Center, Asian Pacific American Resource Center, and Chicana/o Resource Center to explore intersections of identity. The Department also partners with all the identity-based resource centers on campus, academic departments, and off-campus partners to create and implement diversity initiatives and educational programs.

## **FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

Since 2001, Congress has repeatedly introduced and debated the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act). This Act is designed to permit undocumented young individuals who were brought to the United States as children to obtain legal permanent residency if they remain in school through their high school graduation and enroll in college or the military. Unfortunately, the DREAM Act has still not been able to garner enough support in either the United States Senate or House of Representatives.

The most recent attempt at federal legislation aimed at addressing the needs of undocumented youth occurred summer 2013, when the US Senate passed “The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act,” a bipartisan bill aimed at comprehensive immigration policy reform. Among many of the items that it aimed to accomplish, one of its primary purposes was to lay a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented individuals living in the US. Furthermore, it incorporated portions of past versions of the DREAM Act, and detailed a pathway to citizenship for undocumented individuals brought to the US as children. Although this bill was passed by the Senate, the likelihood of it becoming law is grim due to key members of the House of Representatives refusing to bring it to the table for discussion.

## STATE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Lack of federal immigration policies and regulations have permitted states to implement their own. Currently, at least 20 states have provisions allowing eligible undocumented students to enroll at public colleges and universities while paying in-state tuition rates—16 of these states have passed these provisions through state legislative action, and the remaining four states have done so by state university system action. These states include California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington. Five states—California, Minnesota, New Mexico, Texas, and Washington—allow eligible undocumented students to receive state financial aid.

In California, the passage of Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540) in 2001 has allowed eligible undocumented students to pay in-state tuition. Eligibility requirements include attending a California high school for at least three years and graduating from a California high school (in addition to completing and submitting the AB 540 Affidavit). With the passage of AB 130 and AB 131 in 2011 (and implementation of these in January 2012 and January 2013, respectively), AB 540 undocumented students gained access to public and private funds to financially support their higher education. AB 130 grants undocumented students access to state and non-state funded resources, and AB 131 grants undocumented students access to state-funded financial aid funds (i.e. Cal Grants).

Most recently, during the last weekend in September 2014, California Governor Brown approved AB 2000, SB 1159, and SB 1210. These bills specifically address the needs of undocumented students in California's higher education institutions. AB 2000 ensures that students who graduate early from high school are not deemed ineligible for AB 540 classification and benefits. SB 1159 eliminates existing barriers for undocumented individuals as they seek career and professional licenses (such as medicine and dentistry, among more). This Senate Bill requires all 40 licensing boards in the California Department of Consumer Affairs to consider all licensure applicants regardless of immigration status by 2016. SB 1210 establishes the "California Dream Loan Program," which will permit eligible undocumented students enrolled at public higher education institutions in California to apply for and receive an educational loan of up to \$4,000 per semester (and no more than a total of \$20,000 from any one institution). This is extraordinarily important, as it would provide eligible undocumented students the opportunity to close the monetary gap in funding their education.

## UNDOCUMENTED STUDENT SUPPORT ON CAMPUS

State legislation continues to increase access and affordability of a higher education for undocumented students. CSUF became the first campus in the CSU system (and one of the first institutions in the nation) to establish the Titan Dreamers Resource Center in April 2014.

At CSUF, there has been an organic, dedicated, and passionate group of staff and faculty that for more than 30 years have provided assistance to undocumented students' daily pursuit of a higher education. In spring 2008, then Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Robert L. Palmer, and then Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Ephraim Smith, created an AB 540 Student Services Committee in response to concerns involving undocumented CSUF students. This committee was comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, and matriculated students who were familiar with the challenges facing undocumented and AB 540 students. The committee examined a host of critical issues including the admissions process, access to programs and services, and retention and

graduation to name a few, and developed a set of recommendations to improve the campus climate. Since then, the committee was renamed the AB 540 Task Force, and has continued to meet to evaluate campus policies and disseminate information to the campus community when working with and serving undocumented students.

Shortly after her arrival in July 2012, Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Berenecea Johnson Eanes began meeting with student groups to facilitate a campus-wide discussion around the role of resource centers in supporting student success. The development of a center for undocumented students was one of many needs articulated by students during these conversations. The resulting Titan Dreamers Resource Center is one of many on-going efforts in the reinvigoration of all the resource centers on campus. A Vision Committee was created and began meeting in November 2013 to draft a vision, mission, and multi-year goals, and in April, 2014, the Titan Dreamers Resource Center officially opened its doors.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CENTERS TO SUPPORT UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

At one point in time, the Titan Dreamers Resource Center was a dream in the minds of undocumented students, their allies, and their advocates. However, that dream became a reality as administrative leaders on campus prioritized the creation of a safe space for undocumented students. One fundamental commonality between undocumented students and all other students on campus is that they are students and deserve an equitable educational experience.

In the absence of federal legislation addressing the needs of undocumented students, the State of California continues to draft and pass legislation to make it possible for undocumented students to pursue higher education. Most recently, on February 18, 2015, California Senator Lara introduced SB 247: “Dream Centers: Educational Support Services.” This bill encourages California high school districts, the California Community College Districts, the California State University System, and the University of California to establish Dream Centers to provide information and resources to undocumented students. As such, it is clear that public institutions of higher education are not only mandated to accept and enroll undocumented students, but it is also critical to support them—support them through the application process, enrollment, persistence and graduation.

As institutions discuss the possibility of creating centers to support undocumented students—and to take a public stance in a very political climate—it is important to recognize the great work done by long-standing allies at the institution. Allies have supportive networks, and understand where barriers exist on campuses. Therefore, it is critical to engage them in the decision-making process and incorporate them in all working groups—such as the vision group tasked with imagining the resource space, the group tasked with grand opening preparations, and the search committee for professional full-time staff. As Student Affairs professionals, we must remember to foster faculty relationships (and thus the support of Academic Affairs). Faculty in ethnic studies programs and faculty who conduct research on the undocumented student experience are integral to successful working groups. And, most importantly, is the student voice—the voice of the undocumented students who themselves are navigating the institution.

At CSUF, the arrival of dynamic and bold institutional leaders provided a window of opportunity to create a center designed to serve our undocumented students. At other institutions, the same is happening today. As Student Affairs professionals who strive to serve all students regardless of background, we are committed to doing so by creating innovative programs and services. Together, we can continue to positively impact our



*students' lives.* As Karen, a Titan who transferred to CSUF this semester has stated: "The opening of the TDRC played a huge role in my decision to enroll at CSUF. As an undocumented student, I knew I wanted to attend a school that would support me, and I was looking not just to be admitted but to also be included. That is exactly what the TDRC made me feel: a sense of inclusion and a great feeling that I matter." And Karen is correct: all students matter.

## **The Power of Storytelling as a Leadership Practice**

Dr. Maruth Figueroa, Loyola Marymount University

Since 2010, Loyola Marymount University (LMU) and the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School have partnered for the Harvard Latino Leadership Initiative (LLI), a program that offers rising seniors with demonstrated interest in serving the Latino community an opportunity to further develop their leadership capacity. Each year, Harvard in collaboration with LMU, selects five LMU students whose academic achievement and involvement will be complemented by the intensive weeklong leadership development program that brings together students from across the country.

The program that has gained recognition among LMU students generates a lot excitement as the application period begins in early spring. This year's applicants anxiously waited to get the call that would ask them "Are you ready to change the world?" Each member of the 2014-15 cohort immediately stepped up to the challenge with a resounding "YES!" As they each arrived at the LAX Southwest terminal ready to embark on this journey, little did they know what was to come. The excitement and nervousness was visible on their faces. They had a lot of unanswered questions, the pre-trip meeting that was held the week prior did not even begin to tell them how much they would be transformed. And that they did, during the week spent at Texas A&M International (TAMU) this year's host campus each of the LMU students was transformed.

Unlike many of the leadership development programs that are offered across the country the Harvard LLI asks students to begin with their story. The week begins with Professor Marshall Ganz' two-day workshop on public narrative as a leadership practice. They learn to use narrative as a tool to access moral resources, such as courage, to make choices that shape their identities as individuals, groups and communities. It reminds us of how we use storytelling throughout our lives to connect with others. As individuals we have stories about challenge and success and often time these stories are tied to our communities. These shared stories are often about overcoming obstacles and hope. As such, stories have the power to move people to action. Through this workshop Professor Ganz challenges students to see leadership from a perspective of engaging the "head" and the "heart" to engage the "hands." As the first day ended, some of the students shared that they had never thought about leadership in this way. Some were even hesitant to accept this new way of thinking. The students went off that night to meet with their mentors and to work on their own story of self. At the start of the second day Professor Ganz asked the group why they were there, why had they chosen to apply to the Harvard LLI. As the room grew still I could hear nervous giggles. A young woman stepped up to the call and shared her reason. This is when the week took a turn, as this young lady shared, Professor Ganz kept pressing her to dig deeper into her "Why."

The tension in the room began to rise as I could see the other students looking at her with compassion as she shared that the reason for her was her mother. Immediately I could see in the faces of our students that they could relate to that story and one by one they shared similar stories of struggle, community and family. From this moment on the entire group became one as the Harvard LLI cohort at TAMU.

Many of the young men and women sitting in that room shared similar stories that are often prevalent in the Latino community. These stories were of struggles such of migrant communities, single-parent households, low-achieving schools, and low SES to name a few. These stories also shared many triumphs such as high school valedictorians, first-generation college student, and first to travel outside of their communities. Many of these students were hopeful that circumstances in their communities could be changed so that more could have the opportunities they were now experiencing. As they noted the power in each of their stories, they realized that these stories had united them and called them to action. I could see in their eyes that they began to see leadership practice in a new way. Each campus cohort began to work on their story of us to identify the need in their community. And as this emotional second day ended, I could see each of them walking slightly taller than the previous day.

The institute continues with workshops on other practical leadership skills such as public speaking, negotiation, ethical leadership and networking. Right before the conclusion of the program, students are presented with the components of the community action project that they will be required to complete in the coming year. Everything that they have learned throughout the week will be put to practice as they identify a community need and engage in an action project to make an impact.

The Harvard LLI approach reminds me of Rendon's validation theory. When students have the ability to share their stories and see how others may share in those stories, they are more confident and encouraged. Expanding this theory as a tool for not only faculty and staff to use but to also help students validate each other's stories can be a powerful tool. Their "Story of Self" empowers student leaders and allows for others to share and find commonalities. These shared stories will propel our student leaders into action.

For more information about the LMU Harvard Latino Leadership Initiative please visit [www.lmu.edu/clss](http://www.lmu.edu/clss) and click on Harvard Latino Leadership Initiative from the menu on the left-hand side.



*2014-2015 Cohort: From left to right Makar Grevokian, Sofia Espinoza, Miriam Vega, Jessica Lopez, Alejandro Parra*



*2014-15 Harvard LLI participants  
with Professor Marshall Ganz*



*2014-15 Harvard LLI participants  
in the classroom*



*2014-15 LMU Harvard LLI final  
presentation*

## Revisiting the GI Bill

Dominica J. Scibetta, Graduate Student, California State University, Long Beach

Beginning with the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862, the government has enabled colleges and universities to train and educate military personnel and veterans. The Morrill Act shifted academic focus from classical studies to practical professional training, expanded educational access and opportunity, and established ongoing government support for institutions of higher learning, particularly when partnering with the U.S. Military (Neiberg, 2000). Consequently, colleges became the centers of training and preparation for service members. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, aided World War II (WWII) veterans and unintentionally transformed post-secondary education. Creators of the Readjustment Act did not expect veterans to take advantage of the educational benefits and enroll into college at such unprecedented rates. Most recently, Congress passed the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act to assist individuals serving during the "war on terror" (Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom). The GI Bill expanded the previous 1985 Montgomery GI Bill benefit package, by covering all resident tuition/fees for public schools, and providing the national maximum per academic year for private schools; therefore making college attendance more accessible and affordable.

## Emerging Policy

Since the passage of the GI Bill in 2008, more than 2 million service members and their families have become eligible for educational benefits (American Council on Education, 2013). According to the U.S. Department of Education, approximately four percent (657,000) of undergraduates identified as veterans, and another 215,000 identified as active military members (Radford, 2011). The renewed interest in veterans has initiated conversation about the best ways to improve student services on college campuses and increase access to education.

In response to cases of forceful and misleading targeting of veterans and their families by colleges and universities, President Obama signed the Executive Order, [Principles of Excellence](#) to strengthen the oversight, enforcement, and accountability of military education benefits. Participating schools commit to providing military students with an education plan, pre-enrollment costs, debt estimates, financial aid options, points of contact, military transfer credit processes, and other tools needed when selecting a school. Although more than 6,000 schools have since agreed, without uniform standards of assessment, interagency collaboration, or centralized systems for complaints, the level of institutional commitment to providing student veterans quality education varies across the country.

Providing in-state tuition for veterans and their families is another approach to making college going more affordable. For veterans wanting to enroll into a public university, establishing residency and qualifying for in-state college tuition can be challenging. While specific schools may have an established in-state tuition policy, several states (California and Hawaii included) have no state law exempting residency requirements for student veterans. However, this



summer, the House and Senate passed the [Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014](#), requiring public universities to offer in-state tuition to any veteran within three years of the service member's active duty. While student veterans celebrate, public universities are concerned that the policy will reduce federal funding to their institutions, and require them to subsidize veterans' tuition without receiving additional money. Thus far, the in-state tuition policy does not change the Yellow Ribbon Program agreement that helps reduce the amount of out-of-pocket expense for veterans attending private institutions. Implementing the recommendations included in the Principles of Excellence and offering in-state tuition are two among many other practices colleges must consider when offering student veterans a quality educational experience.

## Challenges and Recommendations

Although establishing a fully staffed, one-stop-shop (typically a veterans resource center to assist students with benefits, counseling, advising, and support) is often unrealistic, there are several ways colleges can rethink their approach when creating a veteran-friendly campus. Recently, the American Council on Education (2013) and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2012) released documents and toolkits to assist institutions interested in becoming veteran-friendly. Below are ways institutions and student affairs professionals can positively impact student veterans' overall success.

- **Increase student veteran engagement outside of the class:** In 2013 the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) included veteran status, and produced never before seen data on military students. Results indicate that student veterans feel less supported on campus than nonveteran/civilian students. Although they actively participate in class, they often remain disengaged from student life. Developing veteran friendly programs and spaces may increase their willingness to connect with their peers.
- **Peer-to-peer support:** Student veterans clubs are one of the most valuable and cost-effective efforts institutions take when becoming veteran-friendly. Many veterans arriving on campus feel isolated and alienated, and receive the greatest validation, friendship, and support from other veterans (Elliot, Gonzalez, and Larson, 2011; Runman and Hamrick, 2010). Several colleges are beginning to use a veteran-to-veteran model when designing work-study programs, student clubs, peer counseling, and orientation sessions.
- **Veterans Resource Center:** Establishing a central place on campus where student veterans can interact with one another and obtain information and services leads to meaningful support when transitioning from military to college. If unable to secure a physical space, providing student veterans with points of contact for each service department is helpful.
- **Interdepartmental collaboration:** Administrators need to create awareness within already existing services and create multiple levels of collaboration among various departments. Student affairs staff should consider partnering with campus counseling/psychological services, career development, academic departments, community engagement, and disability services when planning programs and workshops.
- **Develop community partnerships:** Forming relationships with local veteran organizations when learning about military needs, designing transitional services, and streamlining referral processes can help colleges and universities connect their students with credible community agencies.

- **Revisit academic practice and policy:** Military affiliated students often face unexpected deployment orders that results in mid-semester withdrawals and re-enrollments, consequently impacting their academic success (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010). Most policy decisions occur at the state level; however campuses wanting to create a veteran-friendly culture must implement military leave policies, priority registration, specialized academic plans, tuition refund protections, credit transfer, and credit for prior learning.
- **Create Veteran-friendly in-classroom environments:** Student veterans experience alienation, insensitivity, isolation, judgment, and misunderstanding primarily within the classroom (Barnard-Brak, Bagby, Jones, and Sulak, 2011; Elliot et al., 2011). Facilitating dialogue among faculty, staff, students (military and non-military), creating veteran friendly syllabi, and pre-screening potentially triggering videos/readings increases sensitivity and awareness of military culture.
- **Use a Strength-based approach:** Although student veterans may arrive on campus with complex needs, it is important that institutions recognize and utilize the positive characteristics of military culture (i.e. resilience, resourcefulness, discipline, structure, camaraderie, and responsibility) rather than the challenges (i.e. PTSD, trauma, injury... etc.) in their programming and approach.
- **Assessment:** Perhaps the most difficult, yet necessary step when creating a veteran-friendly campus is developing a comprehensive assessment and evaluation plan to determine the outcomes of programs and initiatives. Sharing best practices among like-minded schools and joining veteran specific consortia can provide valuable information about ways to track successes, and areas of need among student veteran populations.

Institutions of higher learning play an important role throughout a service member's reintegration into civilian life. The list above includes ways colleges and universities can aid student veterans' retention, persistence, engagement, and achievement. Improving campus culture, academic environment, student interactions, and institutional policy for student veterans requires a multilevel and holistic approach guided by clear direction and support. If effective policies are developed that help enact the above-mentioned recommendations, student veterans will continue to have the opportunities intended by the GI Bill.

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## Closing the Assessment Loop

Marla A. Franco, Director, Divisional Research & Assessment, University of Arizona

The need and desire to build a culture of evidence in student affairs is certainly well documented and surrounded amidst good intentions by busy practitioners. In fact, NASPA recently published a guide for leaders and practitioners called *Building a Culture of Evidence in Student Affairs*, which offers professionals practical tools to critically examine their work and documenting with evidence the significant contributions made toward achieving an institution's mission and strategic goals (Gulp & Dungy, 2012). Despite knowing that we need to assess our work, the push and pull factors of one's day-to-day work responsibilities can pose challenges towards making a concerted effort to develop and administer meaningful assessment plans.



While student affairs professionals at the University of Arizona (UA) are extremely busy working to recruit, retain, graduate, and develop more than 30,000 career-ready or graduate school-ready students, a large majority of the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Academic Initiatives and Student Success conducts assessment of their program and services. How do we know this is happening? And what exactly do we know about their assessment efforts?

The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Academic Initiatives and Student Success at UA is able to make comparable claims, as evidenced by findings from its Closing the Assessment Loop survey. The survey is administered by Assessment & Research annually and distributed to representatives from each unit or department that provides student services and programs. Survey items are structured in a way that captures data related to a department's ability to close the assessment loop, which emphasizes the use of assessment evidence in meaningful and productive ways. Survey respondents, which represent about three-fourths of the division's units/departments, indicated they acted in the following ways based on their findings:

- Changed the existing program/service or created a new one (55%)
- Conducted/planned additional assessment (50%)
- Changed/created a process (50%)
- Changed/created a service (36%)
- Identified a new target group (32%)
- Reallocated staff funding or other resources (32%)
- Changed/created a new policy (9%).

Findings also provided insight regarding the types of assessment that were completed:

- Outcomes-based assessment (77%)
- Tracking (77%)
- Satisfaction (59%)
- Needs-based (41%)
- Benchmarking (22%)
- Cost effectiveness (18%)
- Student and campus cultures (18%);
- National standards assessment (9%).

Outcomes-based assessment increased by 18 percentage points and satisfaction-based decreased by 9 percentage points when comparing survey findings from Fall 2013 to Fall 2014. These data points provide evidence that the division's capacity to plan and conduct outcomes-based assessment has increased over the past year. Modeled after best practices in assessment identified by (Kuh et al., 2014), the survey also asked respondents to identify who and how they shared their assessment results. The majority of respondents indicated they shared results with leadership (62%), while others included internal staff (38%), external partners and funding sources (33%), the division and campus community (24%), national audiences (5%), and students served (5%). Examples of the mediums by which these departments shared their results included staff meetings and trainings, presentations, conferences, on-line reports, and divisional publications and reporting.

What matters gets measured and the UA's Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Academic Initiatives and Student Success not only measures student learning outcomes, but is increasingly cycling through all phases of the assessment loop. One of the criticisms of higher education is that limited information about student experiences, student learning outcomes, and institutional performance indicators are available to the campus community and the general public (Kuh et al., 2014), yet the UA is employing some of the best assessment practices established by our profession. To view the executive summary of the Fall 2014 Closing the Assessment Loop Survey, please visit the following link: <http://studentaffairs.arizona.edu/assessment/documents/Fall2014ClosingtheAssessmentLoopSurveyExecSummary.pdf>. Additionally, the survey instrument is available in the Community section of Campus Labs for participating institutions or can be made available upon request.

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# **The Promise of Praxis: Guiding Black Male Achievement Through Self-Actualization**

Nathan Sessoms, Interim Director, Black Student Services, Loyola Marymount University

In light of the relatively recent launch of President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Initiative, the relatively small yet burgeoning canon of research on Black Male Achievement has focused primarily upon at-risk youth, rather than college-going Black males. The reasoning here is quite obvious. If a young, Black male is able to achieve (both academically and socially) to the point that he is admitted to and attending college, then he is already successful and simply working to ensure the long-term sustainability of that success. While this logic is understandable, college-going Black males and, particularly, those attending Predominantly White Institutions, do face their share of significant barriers and are, therefore, worthy of our attention. Moreover, given the unstable nature of the economy, while a bachelor's degree might put young, college-educated Black males in a different category than their at-risk peers, it does little to ensure gainful employment and, therefore, as much success as it once did.

How do we provide the necessary support mechanisms in order to ensure academic and professional success for college-going Black males? Traditional models aimed at youth improvement and development are often predicated upon motivating or persuading young people to follow a particular program or series of exercises because it is in their best interest or because if they don't, they'll regret it. This is often the case with college-going Black males. Along these lines, given their underrepresented status on the vast majority of college campuses, achievement (most notably in the forms of academic and professional success) is emphasized, rather than their levels of preparedness for such accomplishments.

In contrast, a more effective approach would incorporate the act of assisting college-going Black males in the act of self-actualizing or discovering who they are, what they like or dislike, the ways in which they define success for themselves, and establishing attainable goals that lead to their long-term success in school and in life. This particular methodology, ultimately, requires a firm commitment on behalf of Student Affairs professionals and practitioners, who are compelled to serve this particular population to, first, meet Black males where they are by connecting with them in intentional and meaningful ways prior to offering academic assistance and inspiration with respect to a particular career or life pathway. Only after a meaningful connection and trust have been established, should such discussions take place.

The Praxis Academy, Loyola Marymount University's Black Male Achievement Initiative, was started during the 2013-2014 school year and focuses on the engagement, empowerment, and retention of Black male students through an intentional focus on identity development and meaningful connection, in addition to academic support and professional development. In doing so, it equips participants with a greater understanding of themselves, their true responsibilities, and their futures, while maximizing their potential for success in school and in life.

The Praxis Academy is well-positioned to challenge practitioners and other existing models of Black Male Achievement by demonstrating that Black Male Achievement truly resides within the mind of the Black male. Now, in its second year of existence, results are expected to articulate the cumulative effect(s) of self-actualization, meaningful connection, and intensive individual and group mentoring on the matriculation, retention, and graduation of participants. Along these lines, it stands to further scrutinize the science of developing and measuring individually tailored interventions for the purpose of replication.

# Preparing Students for a Global and Religiously Diverse Workplace

Sable Manson, Souljourners Program Director, University of Southern California

One of higher education primary goals is to prepare our students for the ever-changing workplace. Globalization and technology has brought more people in greater contact than any other time in history only increasing the need for skills related to engaging differences. While faculty and academic program provide the disciplinary knowledge needed to succeed in a student's chosen field it is often the co-curricular and extra curricular experiences, which provide students the additional soft skills needed thrive in an increasingly diverse society.

Souljourners is a co-curricular program sponsored by the University of Southern California's Joint Educational Project (service learning program) and Office of Religious life. This collaborative program partners with an upper division business education course to develop students' skills around religious diversity in professional spaces. Souljourners utilizes intentional interfaith experiences and reflective writing assignments to encourage students to consider the potential impact of religious diversity on their personal and professional development. Souljourners works with faculty members to identify specific intercultural/interfaith experiences most relevant to the goals of the class and tailor assignments to guide students' reflections. Students are also asked to research a professional company of their choosing and examine their policies on issues related to religious diversity. Souljourners stresses to students that as religious and spiritual issues become more salient in society it is important to move from mere awareness to true engagement.

Beyond the personal and professional benefits some of our students have experienced, Souljourners has also provided a great platform for examining how to assess interfaith skill development. Souljourners distributes a pre- and post program survey to assess the potential development of students' ecumenical worldview as a result of their participation (Astin, Astin, and Lindholm, 2011). We've also adapted the Pluralism and Worldview Engagement Rubric to evaluate students' written reflections and measure students' development over the course of the semester (Bringman Baxter, 2013).

Working as the Director of Souljourners has only strengthen my belief that there is a true need to develop future interfaith leaders, regardless of what profession they actually work. I am eager to share Souljourners' challenges and success as well the insights I've learned from my experiences encouraging interfaith engagement in higher education. Please join me at my session at 2015 NASPA annual conference this March in New Orleans. NASPA's Spirituality and Religion in Higher Education Knowledge Community will be sponsoring my session "Cultivating Interfaith Engagement in the classroom through Reflection" (Tuesday – March 24 – 10am – 10:50am) and we will be discussing the benefits and challenges of interfaith engagement on campus. I hope to share and learn from you all as we work to identify strategies and opportunities for cultivating students' ecumenical worldview on campus. Hope to see you there!

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# Examining Student Affairs in Taiwan

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This project is a comparative study of Taiwanese and American student affairs and student services structures at the university level. The researchers traveled to Taiwan to meet with student affairs leaders and staff at the Ministry of Education. Interviews and document analysis served as the main source of data collection. The researchers visited National Research University, National Normal University, Private Specialized University and Private Liberal Arts University (all pseudonyms). The researchers also met with a staff person in the Department of Student Affairs in the Taiwan Ministry of Education.

The research questions that guided this study were:

- 1) What services and departments comprise student affairs departments at public and private universities in Taiwan?
- 2) What theories of student development or engagement, or philosophies of personal or human development are used as part of the advisement process?
- 3) What are the goals of specialized services such as tutoring, disability services, or psychological counseling?
- 4) What are the respective roles of student affairs administrators and faculty in supporting student development?
- 5) How do student affairs staff and faculty envision the relationship between student learning, development, engagement with the university and degree completion?
- 6) What is the role of the Ministry of Education in determining standards, expectations and levels of accountability for student affairs departments at the universities?

## Statement of the Problem

Despite being the sixth most common place of origin for international students in the US, few studies have explored the experiences of Taiwanese students there, and none have examined student support structures in Taiwanese universities and how they are similar to or different from student affairs departments at American universities.

In 2012-13, there were over 22,000 students from Taiwan studying in the United States (US). Nearly one-half of those students were enrolled at the graduate level (Institute of International Education (IIE), 2013).

Research in the area of student success identifies specific ways in which students engage with peers, faculty and administrators to develop relationships, skills and knowledge that lead to a high quality of experience and degree completion (Kuh, 2009; Tinto, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). While American student affairs practitioners have a well researched understanding of the types of developmental needs and

challenges that domestic undergraduate and graduate students face in college, there is virtually no understanding of the secondary and postsecondary educational environments, student support services, and types of engagement that Taiwanese students experience prior to arriving for university study in the US.

### Significance of the Study

This research project has the potential to increase awareness and understanding of university personnel about the structures, expectations and systems at Taiwanese higher education institutions. Student affairs practitioners who are better informed may be stronger and more compassionate advocates for Taiwanese students. Long term outcomes may include better advisement and improved quality of experience for Taiwanese students and a greater understanding of educational system similarities and differences by American student affairs practitioners.

### Review of the Literature

#### Overview of the Taiwan Higher Education System

The Taiwanese higher education system is intricately tied to its historical and political past. Three defining periods shaped the current system of higher education: Japanese colonialism (1895-1945); Chinese restoration after World War II (1945-1949); and the current, post-Chinese Civil War (1950-present). Starting in 2014, the current system of education in Taiwan is compulsory until grade 12. Postsecondary education opportunities include universities and colleges, junior colleges, and technical and vocational schools.

During the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, the Japanese government established a more Western-style form of higher education. Prior to the Japanese occupation, Taiwan had no formal institutions of higher education. The Japanese colonial government established an educational system that included colleges focused on medicine, agriculture and forestry, commerce, and industry. However, the primary purpose of higher education in Taiwan, during this time period “was to provide research material or high-level manpower needed for Japan’s colonial policy, rather than to raise the quality of the people ruled” (Wu, Chen, & Wu, p. 123).

Following World War II, Taiwan was restored to China. The restoration of Taiwan included changes to the Japanese-influenced system of higher education. The Japanese system was reformed and existing institutions were modified to match the mainland Chinese system. With the restoration, renaming and reforming schools occurred until the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949.

After the Chinese Civil War, in which the Nationalist government established itself in Taiwan, the current Taiwanese system of higher education has been reformed a number of times to match the continued democratization and capitalist economy. As of 2013, there are 161 universities and colleges in Taiwan that the Ministry of Education oversees (MOE, 2014b).

#### Enrollment Data

According to the Taiwanese Ministry of Education (2014b), in 2012 there were 1,352,000 students enrolled in postsecondary education, split almost equally between males and females. Of these students, approximately 83% are pursuing a bachelor’s degree, 14% are pursuing a Master’s degree, and 3% are pursuing a doctoral degree (MOE, 2014c).

The MOE (2014b) reported in 2012 there were 309,000 undergraduate students who completed a bachelor’s degree. In that year, 64,500 students completed a master’s or doctoral degree.



## Student Mobility: Taiwanese Students Abroad

In 2013-14, there were 21,266 students from Taiwan studying in the United States (US) (Institute of International Education, 2014a). While Taiwan remains one of the top ten countries of origin, there has been a 27% decrease of Taiwanese international students coming to the US over the past 15 years (Institute of International Education, 2014b). Nearly one-half (47.9%) of Taiwanese students were enrolled at the graduate level, with only 27.7% travelling to the US for undergraduate studies (Institute of International Education (IIE), 2014a).

## The Role and Work of Student Affairs

The Taiwan Ministry of Education (MOE) (Ministry of Education, 2014) identifies several responsibilities for student affairs, including moral and personal development, oversight of support services for students, student safety and wellness, and supervision of programs such as counseling, gender equality and disability services. Goals for student affairs in the country's universities include:

1. Strengthen student affairs and counseling, and using professional specialties related to student affairs and educational counseling to assist the students' development of sound minds and bodies, actively cultivate the students' core competencies and mature personality and attitude, promote students' self-realization, and nurture the modern citizens' inner being.
2. Strengthen the special education support services in colleges and universities, construct integrated support systems, provide necessary assistance for special education students while attending school, and improve the accessible learning environment in colleges and universities in order to ensure the schooling rights and interests of the special education students at colleges and universities.
3. Strengthen campus security, provide quality learning environments, implement all-out defense education, and strengthen the defense awareness of students (MOE, 2014, par. 2).

The objectives for student affairs clearly state a commitment to student learning that is holistic, co-curricular and beyond a traditional focus on academic pursuits. The language "actively cultivate the students' core competencies and mature personality and attitude, promote students' self-realization" (MOE, 2014, par. 2) is similar to language found in the Student Learning Imperative (ACPA, 1997), which discussed the role of student affairs in increasing student learning and personal development.

A study (1999) by Huang examined frameworks for student development in Taiwanese students and developed a translated and applied model of Chickering's vectors. This study represented an early application of Western models of student identity development to students at universities in Taiwan. Subsequent studies related to student transition to a suburban university (Lin, 2011), perceptions of university life (Lin, 2010), academic and co-curricular involvement (Huang & Chang, 2004), and counseling and mental health services (Gau et. al., 2008; Lin, 2012) and utilized models, survey tools, and theoretical frameworks commonly found in studies with American students. The tools, models and frameworks are typically translated in Chinese, applied with care and discussed with limitations in the findings of the studies. The absence of non-Western student development models in published research in Taiwan raises questions about the applicability of those models and creates an opportunity for identifying or creating models that may reflect more traditional Asian perspectives.

Though access to English- language publications on student affairs and student development in Taiwan is limited, it is clear that student affairs has a well defined role on

university campuses. Student involvement in the co-curricular has been studied (Huang, 2003; Lin, 2010) and is accepted as part of the collegiate experience at Taiwanese universities. This study explores the extent to which student development theory influences the practice and administration of student affairs and student services in Taiwan, and the role of these support services in engaging students in university life.

## Findings

### Student Affairs Services and Departments

Visits to both private and public universities in Taipei revealed that student affairs and student services were comprised of the same kinds of departments that may be found on most American university campuses. Career services, counseling services, disability services, academic support, volunteer center, financial aid, and campus activities were found at the four universities visited. National Research University also had a student health center, which was affiliated with the university hospital, and an international student services office to support its relatively large population of international students.

The researchers learned that student housing was available on each campus, but was sometimes limited. National Research University had built new residence halls, with plans to add more buildings in the next several years. Though safety and security were discussed as a priority, there was no indication on any of the campuses that residential life was a component of the universities' commitment to student development and learning. This is in contrast to residential life programs at most American universities, which offer community events, programs, and a paraprofessional student staff (resident assistants).

Military service was a part of each student affairs division. Taiwan has a compulsory military service requirement for males which is typically completed after secondary schooling or college, and takes place over the course of just over one year. The military service department at the universities appeared to serve many different functions. Some men complete their military service at universities around the country, providing security or performing other functions. At National Research University the military service office conducted health and safety inspections at off campus housing sites for students. At Private Specialized University, military service members served as campus security members.

Each campus also had an office of student affairs, with a chief student affairs officer (typically at the vice president level) who was often a tenured faculty member with a full professor title. Though the vice president of student affairs on each campus was not trained or educated specifically in the field of higher education administration, the directors and most staff appeared to have training or preparation in their respective functional areas.

### Goals of Specialized Services

Disability services were available at each campus visited by the researchers. Each campus offered accommodations for students that ranged from extended time for assignments or exams to note-takers and tutoring. Each campus maintained documentation that categorized students' needs as physical or learning based. Accommodations for students with special needs are required by law in Taiwan. One counselor at National Research University said that funding for staff in disability services on that campus was provided by grant funding from the Ministry of Education, which covered 90% of personnel costs. The number of staff funded depended on the number of documented student cases.

## Counseling Services

Counselors on each campus discussed the increase in students seeking counseling services over the last decade. The most common problems student discussed were depression, anxiety, stress and personal relationships. The staff also noted an increase in the number of students taking medication to help manage their mental health needs. Services on each campus include individual and group counseling and workshops. National Research University utilized a peer training program to help increase the number of students talking about mental and health and to reduce the stigma that remains. In many ways, the services and challenges faced by counseling services staff in Taiwan mirrored the work of counseling centers in the US. American colleges and universities have seen a dramatic increase in demand for psychological services as well, and many campuses have struggled to meet that need through increased staffing and programs (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010).

All students starting college in Taiwan are required to take a mental health assessment. The results are used by the counseling services staff to reach out to students exhibiting early signs of mental health needs. This type of screening was discussed at each campus, both public and private. In the US there is no systematic screening of students' mental health needs, which sometimes results in advisors, faculty or administrators learning about student needs only after a student has reached a crisis point.

## Theories of Student Development and Engagement

The researchers found a mix of responses related to questions about student development related theories that support the work of student affairs staff in Taiwan. It was clear that all campuses had a strong commitment to supporting their students. Staff at Private Liberal Arts University quoted a university motto that was often used by the university's founder: "Your children are our children." Though the quote implies a strongly in loco parentis perspective, the researchers believe the intent was to signal the small and family-natured approach to caring for the student body. One staff person at this university highlighted their faculty advisement model, stating that "Our university is one of the top 3 to... help students."

At Private Specialized University, the director of the volunteer center spoke eloquently about her use of experiential learning theory in not only structuring the service learning curriculum, but also in shaping the experiences of students who are required to complete 80 hours of service before graduation. The director of the volunteer center has attended service learning conferences in the United States and attributed her understanding of experiential learning theory to this kind of exposure. It was also on this campus that staff discussed the value of campus activities and the potential for students to develop leadership skills through their involvement.

The researchers found many examples of good practices related to student affairs work at all the universities. Learning communities, clearly outlined and well documented disability services policies, robust career services, and a broad range of psychological counseling workshops and services were discussed. What was unclear was the source of much of this current knowledge of student affairs work. That question was addressed in the last meeting, at National Normal University. The researchers met with a faculty member and director of graduate programs in student affairs administration. An active member of ACPA, this faculty member has published work on applying student development theory to Taiwanese university students, conducted training at universities across the country, and examined National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) data collected from universities in Taiwan. However, this faculty member also mentioned that she was the only one in the country actively researching

student affairs practices. The administrator noted, "I think the big problem is that the administrators are not familiar with the theoretical concepts. They are doing a lot of the work without a theoretical background. It is a main problem, there is a long way to go for student affairs professionals."

#### Student Affairs Administrators and Faculty

Faculty advisors were identified as student support systems at several campuses. Staff at Private Liberal Arts University and National Research University spoke at length of the value of the relationship developed between faculty academic advisors and undergraduate students. All faculty are required to serve as advisors. At National Research University, each faculty member advises 20 to 30 students who are majoring in that department or school. This type of faculty involvement appeared to be the most substantial connection between the work of student affairs and faculty on each campus.

#### Role of the Ministry of Education

The Department of Student Affairs at the Ministry of Education (MOE) played both a large and small role in the administration of student affairs at the respective campuses. The MOE oversees many functions of all universities in Taiwan, both public and private, and administers laws related to a variety of issues, including domestic and international enrollment, finance, and faculty work. The researchers learned at their meeting with a Senior Executive Officer from the Department of Student Affairs that the actual oversight of many aspects of student affairs and student services at the universities lies not just with the Department of Student Affairs, but also the Department of Higher Education and the Youth Development Administration. The MOE oversees 13 special education centers housed at universities throughout the country that serve as regional resources and training centers for a variety of functional areas.

The representative from the Department of Student Affairs was not trained or educated in the field of higher education administration, and worked primarily as an education researcher previously. Special education and military service were mentioned as other components of this department. Gender equity and campus security were two additional topics identified by the Senior Executive as priorities in the future.

Despite the many laws and policies administered by the MOE, the Department of Student Affairs in many ways plays a small role in the daily work of student affairs departments at the universities. The MOE does not set standards for the services provided at each university, nor does it set standards for professional preparation or training for student affairs staff (aside from clinical counselors, who are licensed professionals).

#### Implications & Conclusion

The structures and services within Taiwanese student affairs divisions are similar to those of most US universities. Whereas most of the staff and faculty clearly had a passion for supporting their students to maximize their full potential, very few could articulate the rationale, theory, or research behind student affairs practices. At National Normal University, the singular faculty member who was actively researching and applying student affairs theories to Taiwanese students only had 2-3 doctoral students and 4-5 master's students every year in their higher education administration program. Specifically, she mentioned that the work she does is not nationally recognized, and that most student affairs staff seem to develop their practices on what they think is best for their university. Looking at the Taiwanese higher education system through a socio-historical lens, it appears that most of the student affairs structures exist as these colleges



and universities moved towards a more Westernized/American system of higher education and duplicated similar structures – and not necessarily with a strong theoretical foundation. Understanding these nuances of Taiwanese student affairs demonstrates the need to further develop American staff and faculty in recognizing how best to support students from Taiwan. Relating similar structures enables visiting students to recognize how various resources on campus can support their educational endeavors in the US.

