



Student Affairs

Co-Curricular Connections

Summer 2014

Welcome to the Summer 2014 edition of Co-Curricular Connections!



It's hard to believe that we are almost two years and eight issues into Co-Curricular Connections! We had considered the idea of a quarterly newsletter for faculty and staff for some time before we finally determined that it would be a worthwhile endeavor, and worthwhile it has been. It has not only served to help the university community get to know Student Affairs a little bit better, but it has helped our own staff members think about how we tell the story of Student Affairs and the work we do to support student engagement and learning at DePaul. As I look back on the previous seven issues, I can't help but feel immense pride in the wonderful contributions that our dedicated staff members make to DePaul's vibrant community.

Two years ago also happens to be the same time that Jim Doyle, Vice President for Student Affairs for 30 years, retired from DePaul, and I became the interim vice president for Student Affairs. I am so honored for having had the opportunity to serve the division and the university for the past two years in this capacity, and I am thrilled to hand over the reins to our new vice president, Dr. Eugene Zdziarski, who will begin his tenure on July 1.

Dr. Zdziarski comes to us from Roanoke College in Virginia, and has many years of outstanding work and service in the profession of Student Affairs. I know I speak for all of the members of the division when I say that we are looking forward to his arrival and to entering into a new era of Student Affairs at DePaul. You can learn a little bit more about Dr. Zdziarski in the 'Get to Know our Team' section of this edition of Co-Curricular Connections.

I hope you have had a chance to read some, or maybe even all, of the first seven issues of Co-Curricular Connections, and have found value in the news and information we have shared. We look forward to continuing to tell the story of Student Affairs through this newsletter, and are excited about some of the possibilities for its development in the future.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Summers
Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

Points of Interest

- Most DePaul students report feeling "exhausted" and "overwhelmed," survey says. 2
- New team focuses on students in crisis. 3
- Springboard to Success helps disabled students beyond college. 3
- Student Affairs wraps up three-year strategic plan. 4
- Power of storytelling combined with digital tools to support student learning. 6

Inside this Issue

- Student Affairs News 2
- Data Points 2
- Student Learning and Engagement 6
- Get to Know Our Team 7
- Important Dates 7

Most DePaul students report feeling “exhausted” and “overwhelmed,” survey shows

Eighty-six percent of DePaul students reported feeling overwhelmed by all they have to do, 58 percent felt overwhelming anxiety and 81 percent felt exhausted, according to the 2013 American College Health Association’s (ACHA) National College Health Assessment (NCHA). Although DePaul’s numbers mirror those nationally, and other data show some wins for health promotion and education on campus, it’s clear that we still face some challenges when it comes to DePaul student health and wellness.

College students are a diverse yet distinct population that present with specific health risks and requirements. The ACHA has conducted the NCHA since 2000 in order to gather information about this population and help colleges and universities better understand their students and provide appropriate and adequate health education, promotion and services. The assessment is conducted every three years, and DePaul has participated in the last two, with the most recent one completed in the spring of 2013.

“The spring 2013 numbers around exhaustion and anxiety align with what we and our colleagues are seeing in our day to day interactions with students,” said Shannon Suffoletto, Director of Health Promotion and Wellness. Suffoletto’s office is responsible for administering the National College Health Assessment at DePaul, and then communicating the findings to the university community.

“Although we’re not surprised by the NCHA data, the university community needs to ask itself why students feel this way, and what can be done about it, because although some exhaustion and anxiety is expected in college, overwhelming amounts of it can be detrimental to student success,” Suffoletto said.

Part of the strategy for addressing some of the more alarming statistics has been to raise awareness of the numbers, and then raise awareness among faculty and staff of the support services available to students who are dealing with mental, physical and emotional health issues. “While raising awareness is important,

we’d like to shift the focus to prevention, and engage in more conversations with the university community on how to keep students from feeling so overwhelmed and anxious in the first place,” Suffoletto said.

And while some of the numbers have caused a shift in strategies, other data from the assessment seem to support the use of the harm reduction strategies that Health Promotion and Wellness, the Dean of Students Office and Residential Education consistently use. The strategies focus on reducing the harms associated with alcohol use, and include pacing drinking, having a set number of drinks for the night, choosing not to drink and enlisting friends to monitor drinking.

The percentages of students engaging in harm reduction behaviors at DePaul have gone up by one to four percent since the last assessment in 2010. “We’ll be looking to see these numbers grow in the next administration of the assessment as we continue to teach harm reduction, which is a relatively new strategy for us,” Suffoletto noted.

Staff members in the office of Health Promotion and Wellness have delivered a number of NCHA presentations to various faculty and staff groups across the university, and will continue to do so into the fall of 2014. If you would like to learn more about ACHA/NCHA, or would like to have Health Promotion and Wellness staff present to your area, contact [Shannon Suffoletto](#) at 773.325.5653.

Data Points

- 20.5 percent of DePaul students reported using alcohol in the 10-29 days prior to the 2013 NCHA survey, compared to 14.2 percent nationally
- 13.9 percent of DePaul students do not have health insurance, compared to 7.4 percent nationally
- The number of DePaul students who reported being diagnosed or treated for anxiety was 17.2 percent, and 13.8 percent of DePaul students reported being diagnosed with or treated for depression.

New team focuses on students in crisis

There's a narrow window between the moment a student is visibly in crisis to the moment that student does something that affects himself or others. Few people at DePaul understand this as well as the members of the Student Care Team.

Charged with helping students navigate the university, particularly during difficult situations, the Dean of Student's office recently led the effort to reconfigure the 25-year old Student Welfare Taskforce, a group of faculty and staff from across the university that come together to share information to streamline services, to proactively reach out to students in crisis, and to provide the most appropriate care for students.

Part of the reconfiguration was to create the Student Care Team, and almost one year and

countless weekly meetings later, the Student Care Team can definitely be called a success: it makes weekly discussions about students in crisis among key university staff mandatory, and improves the timing and coordination of the response over the previous format.

"The Student Care Team has been a success largely

continued on page 4



image from the UCSF website

Springboard to Success helps disabled students beyond graduation

The job search for the average college graduate in this day and age is fraught with the challenges and disappointments that a competitive job market naturally brings: now imagine if that college student has a disability.

Understanding the unique challenges that students with

"When the Western Union Grant became available, I said 'this is it--I can now move [a workplace transition pilot program] forward.'"

disabilities face, Western Union/Barr Management awarded a \$50,000 grant to the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) during the 2013-14 academic year, allowing CSD to create Springboard to Success, a multi-level program approach that supports students with disabilities' transition into the workplace.

The Center's work has always included workplace skills development, but staff constraints prevented a targeted program to assist students' transition into the workplace, as well as a

program to work with employers who would be receiving them. "When the Western Union grant became available, I said 'this is it—I can now move [a workplace transition pilot program] forward,'" said Judith Kolar, Director of the Center for Students with Disabilities.

"A unique component of the program is employer involvement, and the Center's efforts to help employers understand students with disabilities, particularly students

continued on page 4

Student Affairs wraps up three-year strategic plan

The division of Student Affairs recently wrapped up its strategic plan, “Stronger Partnerships for Engagement and Learning,” which covered the period from 2010-2013. Three broad goals that focused on collaboration, student engagement, and organizational efficiency and effectiveness were outlined, with 65 activities planned for that time period. Eighty-five percent of the activities were completed, and the division looks significantly different now, as compared to 2010.

To make departmental functions more transparent to students, faculty and staff, departmental name changes were some of the early, and easier, changes made. For example, the Office of Academic Enhancement became the Office of New Student and Family Engagement and the Community Service Office became the Vincentian Community Service Office. The PLoS Program and the Office for Students with Disabilities were combined to form the Center for Students with Disabilities, and the Office of Diversity Education and the Cultural Center were integrated to form the Center for Intercultural Programs. In addition, the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness was established.

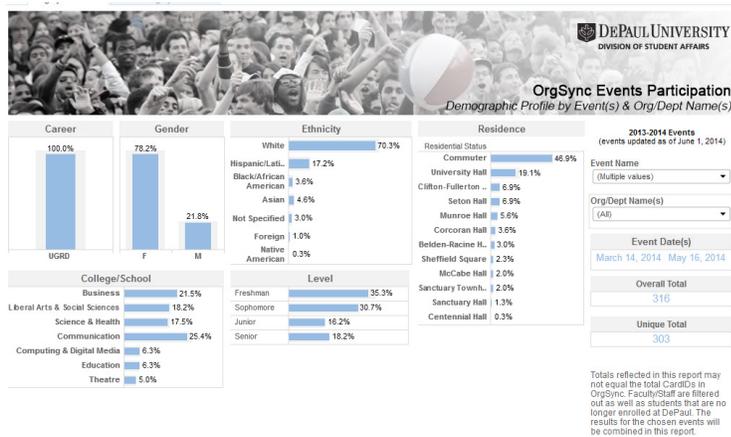
Assessment of learning is a hot topic in higher education in general, and the division of Student Affairs made that part of their strategic plan. In order to improve the assessment of co-curricular learning, divisional, departmental and program level learning outcomes were developed through a series of workshops conducted from 2010 to 2012. While the division has been engaged in assessment since 2004, now each department is expected to focus their annual assessment project on one or more of the newly developed learning outcomes.

To engage the campus in conversations about integrating curricular with co-curricular learning, a student learning speaker series was established, and noted higher education researchers in higher education, including George Kuh and Arthur Levine and Diane Dean, were invited to speak at DePaul. Students, faculty and staff from across the university were invited to attend the events.

Student engagement was also an important focus of the strategic plan. The division spent time defining

engagement and organizing current programs and events into categories of engagement in order to inform how the division can broaden, diversify and strengthen paths to engagement.

The strategic plan also called for improvements to data management. OrgSync, a powerful, student organization management tool, was implemented and its divisional uses expanded. OrgSync is now used to capture not only student involvement in student organizations, but also card swipe data that allows the division to track student attendance at events. In addition, student groups were created in PeopleSoft, so that information about specific student affairs student leader and scholar populations could be more easily captured and tracked.



Divisional communications were also targeted in the plan. Logo use was streamlined; photography, logo and social media guidelines and policies were developed or more intentionally communicated; a divisional graphic identity was implemented and this quarterly newsletter for faculty and staff was developed. In addition, communication with divisional staff, students and families was assessed and various improvements were made in each of those areas.

The division is now preparing to welcome the new vice president for Student Affairs on July 1, Dr. Eugene Zdziarski, and looks forward to beginning the development of the next strategic plan before the year's end.

Student Care Team, *continued from page 3*

because students get a more holistic response and more holistic care, right from the top,” said Art Munin, Dean of Students. The structured conversations bring together representatives from Public Safety, Residential Education, the Dean of Students Office and University Counseling Services weekly, and issues can be raised by any of the representatives.

“From the get-go, there’s wider buy-in for how an issue should be addressed, and everybody that needs to be in on the response is in the room and leaves the room knowing exactly what their role is in addressing an issue,” Munin continued. In addition, with more complex cases that bring a certain

degree of uncertainty in terms of decision-making, the group feels more confident in their decision and the quality of the response provided.

Munin also noted that the Student Care Team structure complies with the State of Illinois’ requirement for behavioral care teams at all Illinois institutions of higher education, and lowers the university’s liability, overall. “There’s more of a time commitment for everyone involved, but it’s well worth it,” Munin said.

For more information about the Student Welfare Task Force or the Student Care Team, contact [Art Munin](#) at 773.325.7290.



Springboard to Success, *continued from page 3*

with the ‘invisible’ disabilities, such as autism, learning disabilities, chronic illness and mental health disorders,” said Kolar. Kolar and Kerry Obrist, the Springboard to Success program coordinator, shared profiles and broad characteristics of the disabilities, implications for the workplace and strategies for a successful work environment with business professionals during an employers’ seminar. The seminar also provided an opportunity for employers to share with CSD the important skills they were seeking, as well as their priority needs, like recruiting and retaining people with disabilities.

Springboard to Success also created the Career Club, a series of five workshops for students with disabilities co-facilitated by Obrist and the Career Center’s Assistant Director Michael Elias, which focused on the development of key job search skills, such as resume review, interviewing, networking’ communication and other career management topics. CSD collaborated with the Career Center

during the planning stages of this initiative, and the Career Center shared their expertise in student career counseling and employer relationships. CSD also held workshops for Career Center advisors about the various disabilities and strategies for working with this population.

The program has recently been awarded an additional \$25,000 by Western Union for the 2014-15 academic year, and Kolar plans to add to the strong base that was developed last year. In addition to the components already in place for Springboard to Success, Kolar plans to expand the CSD website to include job/internship resources, the mentoring of students by business professionals and a possible career fair for students with disabilities with the involvement of regional businesses.

For more information about Springboard to Success or the Center for Students with Disabilities, contact [Judith Kolar](#) at 773.325.8656.

Student Learning and Engagement

Power of storytelling combined with digital tools to support student learning

When Sister Katie Norris' mother was diagnosed with cancer and decided not to seek treatment, Sister Norris became the point person among her eight siblings to liaise with her mother's hospice care. Norris, Daughter of Charity and Director of Catholic Campus Ministry, was used to being on the giving end of service and support during difficult times, but now she was on the receiving end of that care and concern.

Her experience during her mother's illness served to drastically change how she interacted with people in need in her day-to-day work, and her story became a tool to help train her staff and students on how to recognize a person's humanity and perspective while providing service.

Storytelling can be a powerful tool for bringing people together around universal experiences and helping build community, and Mission and Values' digital storytelling program formally embraces the concept and gets DePaul faculty, staff and students talking. Sister Norris' story is only one of many stories told and recorded through Mission and Value's digital storytelling program.

Initially implemented in 2009 to share faculty and staff experiences around the Vincentian Heritage Tours, the program underwent a format shift in 2011, and now, three-day workshops help attendees develop and record stories around social justice and other Vincentian tenets.

"People have these wonderful, transformational experiences that give them a new outlook on life, and they naturally want to share the impact of that experience," said Brian Cicirello, Instructional Technology Consultant in the Office of Mission and Values. Cicirello is responsible for Mission and Values' digital storytelling program, and facilitates the office's three-day storytelling workshop.

During the workshop, participants are asked to reflect on transformational events or moments of change in their lives, which often relate to the founding principles of DePaul: charity and social justice. They then select a story, write and receive peer feedback on a script, audio record the story, select pictures and music to accompany the story, and then use software to put it all together. The digital stories are then made available for viewing on YouTube.

"Taking part in digital storytelling is about taking a transformative experience and exploring it and thinking about how that experience has impacted other parts of your life," said Sister Norris. She and other Student Affairs staff members in Catholic Campus Ministry, Religious Diversity and the Vincentian Community Service Office, participated in Mission and Values' three-day workshop.

Staff attended the workshop so that they could consider how to use digital stories as a learning tool with students. The Vincentian Community Service Office now shows students' recorded stories about service immersion trips to parents during parent orientation, so that families better understand the learning that occurs through the trips. Staff members have also used their own stories with student leaders in the three departments to help set the tone before giving very practical information on how to interact with students, families and community partners.

For more information about the Mission and Values digital storytelling program, contact Brian Cicirello at 312.362.7139

Get to Know Our Team

In this edition of Co-Curricular Connections we are profiling the new vice president for Student Affairs, Dr. Eugene Zdziarski, who will assume the role on July 1, 2014.



Dr. Eugene Zdziarski, Vice President for Student Affairs

Dr. Eugene Zdziarski will be joining DePaul on July 1 as the new vice president for Student Affairs, and brings with him more than 25 years of experience in higher education. His wife, Catherine, will be joining him in Chicago.

Dr. Zdziarski comes to us from Roanoke College in Salem, Va., a private liberal arts college with approximately 2,000 full-time students, where he served as vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students for over five years. Before that, he served as assistant vice president and dean of students for seven years at the University of Florida, with a student body of 50,000. He also served as associate director of student life at Texas A&M University, where he worked for 15 years in various roles serving nearly 50,000 students.

Gene is a graduate of Oklahoma State University, earned his master's degree in education from the University of Tennessee and received his Ph.D. in educational administration from Texas A&M. He is a nationally recognized expert on campus safety issues and has co-authored a book on crisis management.

Gene was recently named a 2014 Pillar of the Profession by Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), and received the John Koldus Award for Distinguished Service to NASPA in 2008. He is known for his commitment to collaboration and fostering students' academic achievement.

Important Dates

Summer and Fall events presented by the Division of Student Affairs and our partners

Transition and Premiere DePaul new student orientation sessions
1-day and 2-day, overnight sessions throughout the summer from May 31 to September 9, 2014.

Premiere DePaul is the orientation program for freshmen and **Transition DePaul** is the orientation program for new transfer students. Premiere DePaul is 2 days and Transition DePaul is 1 day.

Welcome Week, presented by New Student and Family Engagement
Wednesday, August 27 to Tuesday, September 16, 2014.

Welcome Week is series of free events that welcome new and returning students back to campus. The events are open to all new, returning, and transfer students. Some events to be aware of:

New Student Service Day and Service, Faith and Justice Fair
Tuesday, September 9, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Various locations, Fair is on the Lincoln Park Campus Quad.

Real Life Involvement Fairs

The involvement fairs allow students to meet members of DePaul's active student organizations, join student organizations and get more information about upcoming campus events.

Lincoln Park, Sunday, September 13, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Loop, Wednesday, September 18, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Locations TBA



Co-Curricular Connections is a publication of the Division of Student Affairs at DePaul University. Inquiries and comments are welcome. Please contact us at 25 E. Jackson Blvd, Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60604 or via e-mail at depaulsnews@depaul.edu. Please take a moment to tell us how we are doing.