Civic Ethos in Student Leadership Development

Civic Ethos:
The infusion of democratic values into the customs and habits of everyday practices, structures, and interactions; the defining character of the institution and those in it that emphasizes open-mindedness, civility, the worth of each person, ethical behaviors, and concern for the well-being of others; a spirit of public-mindedness that influences the goals of the institution and its engagement with local and global communities.

(A Crucible Moment, 2012, p.15)

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Session Objectives

Participants will gain an understanding of:

• Our framework of civic engagement
• Tools to create civic ethos within student government
• Purposeful assessment of student development using learning outcomes
NASPA's Lead Initiative on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (Lead Initiative) is committed to encouraging and highlighting the work of student affairs in making civic learning and democratic engagement a part of every student’s college education.
The University of Nevada, Reno

- Current Enrollment- 21,500 students
- Projected Enrollment in 5 years – 24,806 students
  - Majority minority in 5-10 years
  - First Year classes have already hit 43%
- Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution – 19.2%
- Currently 30% of our students are Pell eligible
- Estimate 45% of students are first generation
- 70% of students are on some form of financial aid
- Estimate 90% will be on financial aid by 2025
- Access, persistence and graduation an imperative
- Graduating citizen students is a necessity
Center for Student Engagement

• Works collaboratively with the Associated Students of the University of Nevada (ASUN) and The Office of the Associate Vice President for Student Life Services under the Division of Student Services.

• Purpose is to engage, educate and empower undergraduate students to take action in the best interest of the student body, the University, as well as the local, state, and national, and global communities.
Civic Engagement

Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivations to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. (Ehrlich, 2000, p. vi)
Our Guiding Principles

• Human dignity
• Asset based understanding of community
• Multidirectional flow of knowledge
• Understanding the larger ecosystem
• Co-Creation of Knowledge
Our Civic Engagement Focus:

• Community Service
• Volunteerism
• Engaged Scholarship
• Activism
• Philanthropy
• Self-Governance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N = 16,875</th>
<th>n = 69</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age in years (SD)</td>
<td>22.17 (5.37)</td>
<td>20.88 (1.07)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>14 - 84</td>
<td>18 - 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% UG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8870</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8004</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16875</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Level BOT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% UG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>3238</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>3432</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>4003</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>5594</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second degree</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-degree</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16875</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Distribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% UG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9807</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3395</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1342</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amer. Indian/Alaskan</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Ethnic</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## College Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Undergraduates</th>
<th>ASUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1194 7%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>2782 16%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1097 7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>2422 14%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>2512 15%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary</td>
<td>902 5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>491 3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
<td>2954 18%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>220 1%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1701 10%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-degree</td>
<td>391 2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAC</td>
<td>209 1%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16875 100%</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Academic Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduates</th>
<th>ASUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2016 Cumulative GPA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.03 0.63</td>
<td>3.37 0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.12 0.67</td>
<td>3.41 0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Credit Load Passed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit Load Passed</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% UG</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% ASUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 credits or more</td>
<td>7649</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14 credits</td>
<td>4624</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 credits or less</td>
<td>4602</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16875</strong></td>
<td><strong>73%</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Average Credit Load (SD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit Load Passed</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% UG</th>
<th>Average Credit Load (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 credits or more</td>
<td>12273</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>12.36 (4.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.52 (2.73)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Method

• Post-Service Survey
  • 7 Retrospective questions:
    • Students rate their skills and abilities before and after being an officer
  • 7 Open-ended questions:
    • Students to reflect on their experiences

• Participation:
  • 2017 N = 46
  • 2018 N = 33
Learning outcomes assessed statistically

• By participating in student government officers will increase their views on the importance of civic engagement

• By participating in student government officers will increase their participation in civic engagement

• By participating in student government officers will increase their perception of their leadership skills

• By participating in student government officers will increase their perception of their ability to organize group tasks to accomplish a goal

• By participating in student government officers will increase their perception of their ability to take initiative to improve conditions in their organization

• By participating in student government officers will increase their perception of their ability to work well with a team on group projects

-Adapted from the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale
Importance of Civic Engagement, \( p<0.00 \)

In both years, officers were significantly more likely to rate civic engagement as important after serving as an officer.
Participation in Civic Engagement, $p<0.00$

In both years, officers were significantly more likely to have participated in civic engagement after serving as an officer.
In both years, officers were significantly more likely to report they had taken the initiative to change conditions in an organization or group they were a part of, after serving as an officer.
In both years, officers were significantly more likely to report greater ability to organize group tasks to accomplish a goal after being an officer.
The greatest change occurred in terms of leadership ability. In both years, officers were significantly more likely to report gains in leadership ability after being an officer.
Qualitative Responses

• 7 students were officers for consecutive years.
• These students had insightful comments about their time as officers.
Learning outcomes assessed qualitatively

1. Officers will gain a basic understanding delegates vs. trustees
2. Officers will gain a basic understanding of morals vs. ethics
3. Officers will be able to identify a way that they can use their privilege as a public servant for the greater good of their constituents
4. Officers will gain an understanding of what it means to be a public servant
5. Officers will gain an understanding of the difference between power and influence

“I learned that to be a public servant is to serve the people I come in contact with. Not to see them as a problem that needs to be fixed...[but] find out how to better the community and the people in it. Being a public servant also means that I lead by example and engage myself in the activities or service opportunities.”
In a paragraph, please describe the most important lesson you have learned about being a public servant during your time in student government:

Four Major Themes Emerged

- Learning to listen and advocate for and/or on behalf of diverse constituents
- Importance of building strong relationships with one another
- Taking action and working to improve the campus community
- Managing conflict and failures

“From being a public servant the most important lesson I learned was that people come from all different backgrounds and when making decisions on a large scale it’s important to think about every one of those groups that may have felt left out by others...Serving as senator has really taught me to think about these things in all aspects of my life...”

“...I have gotten to experience the power of being able to learn from my mistakes. These experiences have helped me reframe the way that I view failure, and have ultimately made me more courageous, confident, and resilient...Mistakes are really just an opportunity to learn and become better...”
How have you used your privilege status as an Asun student government officer for the greater good of your constituents and all students at Nevada?

**Four Major Themes Emerged**

- *Help with Inclusivity*
- *Inform and Educate Constituents*
- *Create Engagement and/or College Retention*
- *Create Democratic/Civic Engagement*
- *Create a better campus through Service*

“I have had the opportunity to partner with diverse and cultural clubs to bring awareness to individuals in marginalized communities and issues within them. Some of the events we have put on through event programming have been Laverne Cox, Drag Show with QSU, Take Back the Night with Vox, Holi with DOSA, etc.

“I have hosted events year round to promote civic engagement and educate students on issues facing the community. I have registered many hundreds of people to vote. I helped people get engaged where they wanted to...”
Describe a time as an ASUN officer when you had to choose between being a delegate and being a Trustee, what did you choose and why?

Three categories:

- Did not ever have to make a choice or N/A
- Did not exhibit knowledge or unclear answer
- Exhibited knowledge

"After the Charlottesville rally, there was a lot of pressure for the Senate to pass a resolution in support of expelling the student involved. Personally, I knew that was not legal, and in my opinion, not the best course of action. I could have acted as a trustee in that situation and written a resolution to uphold the decision of the University. On the other hand, we could have done what people were telling us to do and acted as delegates. However, we were able to find a compromise. In the end, we chose to be delegates, but in a different way. We had an open meeting where students were invited to speak. We gathered qualitative data from over 50 students that spoke in public comment, and published their sentiments through a resolution to be sent to University administration. We chose this option because it was important to us to let the students speak and express what they felt, and truly be part of the process?"
Was there a time in Student Government when your ethical standards and your moral standards came into conflict? If so, how did you resolve this conflict?

Three different types of answers

• Never came into conflict or N/A
• Did not exhibit a clear understanding of the concept
• Exhibited Knowledge
Components of High Impact Practices
National Survey of Student Engagement, Experiences that Matter: Enhancing Student Learning and Success

• Students:
  • Devote considerable amounts of time and effort to a purposeful task
  • Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters – collaboration over time
  • Are exposed to diversity
  • Receive frequent feedback both through formal and informal mechanisms
  • Practice learning in different contexts – testing learning in unfamiliar or real-world situations
  • Have chances to foster self-awareness

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):
Components of High Impact Practices

• Devote considerable amounts of time and effort to a purposeful task
  • Individual platforms
  • Departmental Goals
  • Committee Goals

• Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters – collaboration over time
  • Shared Governance model
  • Constant contact with advisors (CSE Admin) with purposeful dialogue
  • Encouraged to partner with academic and administrative faculty – pack internship grant program
  • Individual departments
  • Cross departmental collaborations
  • Collaborations with clubs and organizations
  • National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):
Components of High Impact Practices

- **Are exposed to diversity**
  - Diversity trainings at multiple annual retreats
  - Department of Diversity
  - Collaborations with Clubs and Organizations comprised of underrepresented students
  - Sponsorship and presence at Northern Nevada pride, outreach to offices that serve underrepresented populations

- **Receive frequent feedback both through formal and informal mechanisms**
  - Formal advising at open meetings
  - Formal advising one on one
  - Informal conversations in Pack Place
  - Informal conversations during the development and implementation of events
  - Students supervisors provide formal feedback
Components of High Impact Practices

• **Practice learning in different contexts – testing learning in unfamiliar or real-world situations**
  • Various administrators
  • Research
  • Collaborations
  • Programming Events
  • Attending the Nevada State Legislature

• **Have chances to foster self-awareness**
  • Animal Exercise
  • How I see Myself inventory, How others see me
  • Strength finder
  • Privilege status exercises
  • Feedback after meetings from advisors
  • Myers-Briggs
# Examples of Trainings and Initiatives

## Training Examples
- Foundation of Government
- Sexual Assault on College Campuses
- Panels comprised of local and state public officials
- Strength finder, how I see myself, animal exercises, myers-briggs
- Diversity trainings
- History the organization
- Five things article
- Green Dot training
- Socialization/Social Construction or reality
- Public Deliberation Initiatives
  - *All* the People
  - Voter Registration/Turbovote

## Example of Initiatives
- Vote Power: HS Voter Registration Initiative
- Hydration Stations
- Gender Inclusive Bathrooms
- Charlottesville open forum/safety
- Pizza with the Police
- Drag Shows
- Adopt a park
- Service Palooza
- Reading week
- Pack Internship Program
- Pack Pantry
- Department Civic Engagement days
- Veterans Lunch, Constitution Day, etc...
Foundations of Government – purposeful messaging

“The legitimate object of government is "to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they can not, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves."

• What is public service
• Creating public value
• What are the branches and their various roles?
• What is important about tax based funding?
  • Create public value
  • Solving community issues
  • Allocating resources
Foundations of Government

Engaging in critical discourse/dialogue

- Power versus Influence
- Spirit of the law versus the letter of the law
- Is discussion data driven, passion driven, or justice driven, or is it self driven.
- Balance at the table – everyone speaking, everyone listening and sometimes holding back
- Does the body value critical questions?
Future Steps

• Adjust assessment so that we can track growth for officers who have served over multiple years
• Follow up regarding Ethics versus Morals in focus groups to tease out what is actually occurring
• Become more purposeful and systematic in training for all officers
• Increase treatments throughout the year
• Expand the breadth and depth of assessment
References

- Dugan, J.P., Komives, S.R., (2010), *Influences on College Students’ Capacities for Socially Responsible Leadership*
- National Survey of Student Engagement, *Experiences that Matter: Enhancing Student Learning and Success Annual Report 2007*