

DIVERSITY OF INTERACTION WITHIN ACTIVE CLUBS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA: A PRESENTATION AND PROPOSAL FOR ASUA

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BACKGROUND

The A ED 403 Collaborative Leadership class offered by the University of Arizona gives students an opportunity to explore themselves as leaders and utilize their leadership skills by creating positive change on campus. Collaborative leadership is an interactive class offered by Dr. Nancy Huber with intentions of spreading leadership throughout our campus. In the spring semester of 2003 we, as a class, have been exposed to many different leadership concepts. We have been challenged to create our own personal philosophy of leadership and reflect weekly on different leadership concepts. In addition, we have learned to come together as a group while working on our class project. As a class we decided the focus of our project would be increasing the interaction between student clubs and organizations. We distributed a survey to all registered student clubs and organizations, the results have shown that there is a need and want for increased interaction of diverse clubs.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The University of Arizona offers many opportunities for students to become involved on campus. There are over 400 clubs sponsored by the ASUA that range from social Greek letter organizations to religious clubs to athletic teams to academic honoraries and many more. Our class has recognized the need for these organizations to form relationships in hopes of creating a more cohesive campus community. We hope to promote more diverse interaction between clubs and positive collaboration to create a stronger sense of campus community. At such a large campus it is easy to feel disconnected or lost. It is our hope that we can help generate excitement about linking clubs together. Our purpose is to break old patterns and create new kinds of relationships.

DATA

Survey was conducted electronically. 46 Club Presidents responded to the eight-question survey. Prize incentives were offered to those who completed the survey.

DATA ANALYSIS:

Survey data profiles the lack of interaction between clubs. Almost half (43%) of club presidents surveyed say their organization does not participate in "collaborative ventures" with other clubs. This statistic not only outlines the isolation that limits the number of cooperative projects on campus and the lack of communication that prevents the healthy exchange of ideas between clubs, but demonstrates a more shocking problem. According to the statistic collected in this survey, many ethnic clubs are

isolating student members from the rest of the UA Student body.

Presidents recognize that clubs and club members are isolated. 76% of the club presidents surveyed admit their organizations only interact with organizations of similar religious, philanthropic, and social backgrounds. For whatever reason however, the presidents are unable to promote interactions to prevent isolation as 81% responded that they are interested in collaborating on projects that promote diversity. Presidents recognize that their members are isolated and admit to an interest in diversifying their interactions with other clubs, but they are unable to do so. We are speculating that lack of opportunity for communication between clubs is the root cause of the isolation.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

After analyzing the data from the survey our class created we have found that there is a definite need and desire for more club interaction. Since our class is only one semester long and has a few graduating seniors it is not feasible to continue our project into the next semester. We have decided to present and work with the student clubs sector of the ASUA. We plan to show them that there is a need for increased interaction of clubs and collaborate our ideas with them. We propose that within that position, the student in charge should encourage clubs on campus to interact with other clubs that are different in nature. For example, religious clubs could invite philanthropic organizations to hear speakers, Greek letter organizations could invite cultural clubs to participate in a philanthropy, or an academic honorary could sponsor a dinner exchange with an athletic club. The possibilities are endless. Clubs need to be made aware of the opportunities on campus and encouraged to diversify participation with other groups.