Notes from the Chair

Hello Commission for Wellness and welcome to 2010!

A new year provides motivation to tackle goals you may have been putting off. Whether you call it a resolution, a goal, or just something you want to do this year, we hope that you take the time to reflect on what you want from 2010. Make "you" a priority!

Hopefully, part of that priority is to continue to develop as a healthy student affairs professional, which remains part of this commissions' mission. We encourage you to tell us how this commission can better serve you by filling out our online survey. There's an easy link off the ACPA Commission for Wellness website and you're always welcome to email any of your directorate with ideas or thoughts on how to improve. In addition, we have lots of ways to get involved on a variety of projects and initiatives! Please contact me or another representative if you have any interest in serving your commission.

With thanks for all of your work in 2009 and wishes of the very best of years ahead in 2010,

Your Chair,
Sara Stahlman
Program Spotlight – B.R.I.D.G.E.S. LLC @ Mason

The following article was written by Amber Kosik based on information provided by George Mason University’s Ric Chollar. Additional information about the program is available on Mason’s LGBTQ Resources website: http://lgbtq.gmu.edu/programs/bridges.php

Building Respect for Identities, Diverse Gender Expressions, and Sexualities is a Living Learning Community in the seedling phase at George Mason University. The community is focused on the awareness, exploration, respect, and study of all sexual orientations and gender identities as they are socially, academically, and personally constructed and developed.

Community Design -
BRIDGES is one community component of ten LLC sections in a residence hall in which first-year residents participate in the University 100 freshman transition courses with other members of their community. The community is open to any individual regardless of sexual orientation, gender identification, or gender expression who wish to explore LGBTQ issues academically as well as in their personal development. In addition to completing the University 100 course in the fall semester, students will enroll in "Introduction to LGBTQ Studies" in the following spring semester.

Programming/Education -
All the students in the program participate in Safe Zone sessions so that all members of the BRIDGES community are educated about the needs of various populations within the LGBTQ community. Trained Faculty Advisors and Peer Advisers work with the community to build relationships and facilitate opportunities for education and involvement within the community. The BRIDGES community is also committed to involvement in the greater George Mason community and requires that its residents participate in campus activities, academic seminars, and community service projects.

A Cooperative Effort –
BRIDGES was developed out of a long planning process that included Residence Life, Academic Advising, the Freshman Center, Pride Alliance, and the LGBTQ Resources Office. Now that the community is underway, administrative faculty from the LGBTQ Resources Office, Academic Advising and Freshman Center work with RA’s from Residence Life to provide resources to the community.

Current State of the LLC –
In its first year, the community fielded 7 participants who were mostly First Year students. In the second year, 8 students are participating in the program with one returning from the previous year. In its first two years, BRIDGES residents have included students who identify as gay, lesbian, bi- or pansexual, trans, queer, questioning, as straight allies, as having same-sex parents, as well as students who choose not to identify. Programming within the community has been received enthusiastically by the residents and many have become involved in Pride Alliance at George Mason. The administrators of BRIDGES are still working on developing further resources for the community as well as effectively marketing the program to both incoming and returning students. According to Chollar, “it is far too early and at this point too small in scope for us to claim it as fully successful.” George Mason is still working to develop assessment methods for the program to evaluate how the program can continue to be modified to best serve the University’s student population.

Looking to improve the climate for LGBTQ students on your campus? Visit the Campus Climate Index website for more information and resources: http://www.campusclimateindex.org/default.aspx.
Wellness Spotlight

In this edition, we are spotlighting the newly elected leadership of our Commission. These wonderful people will begin serving in their roles at the 2010 Convention in Boston.

Holly Deering – Vice Chair for Communication
Current Professional Position:
Residence Hall Director, Southern Methodist University
Summary of Professional Experience:
Holly has served two years as a Residence Hall Director at SMU. She oversees the Engineering Living Learning Community and is the Chair of the Department’s Assessment Committee.
Wellness Related Experience & Interests:
Holly was formally introduced to the wellness field during her graduate assistantship at the Center for Alcohol and Substance Education at UVA. While coordinating the NCAA APPLE Conferences, she developed a passion for alcohol, substance abuse, and hazing education. Holly has been an athlete all her life and was a starting member of the 1996 Virginia State Championship field hockey team. She works to develop her own personal wellness through education, physical challenge, and spiritual growth.

Jennifer Philips – Vice Chair for Outreach
Current Professional Position: Assistant Director for Health Professions, Duke University Career Center
Summary of Professional Experience:
After graduating with a degree in psychology, Jennifer moved to Southern California where she administered clinical programs in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry for 3.5 years. She then went back to graduate school for Higher Education Counseling at UCLA and completed her internship at UCLA’s Career Center. Jennifer has been a career counselor at Duke University since 2007 where she currently serves as the assistant director for health, science and research professions. Through this role she also directs a large internship program for students who are interested in health-related careers.
Wellness Related Experience & Interests:
Jennifer enjoys traveling, hiking, yoga, cooking and thinks that her monthly massage membership is the cure to almost anything.

Patty Witkowsky – Sponsored Programs Coordinator
Current Professional Position: Student Affairs Program Manager, Division of Student Life, Colorado State University-Pueblo
Summary of Professional Experience:
I currently serve as the Student Affairs Program Manager at Colorado State University-Pueblo where I am responsible for developing and implementing special projects and initiatives in the Dean of Student Life office. Prior to this, I worked in one or more of the following areas at one of four institutions (Occidental College, University of Maryland, Colorado College, and the University of Northern Colorado): graduate student affairs, academic advising, residence life, summer conferences, career services, drug and alcohol education, student conduct, international student services, and orientation. Before beginning my career in Student Affairs, I spent two years living in Japan teaching English to elementary and junior high school students.
Wellness Related Experience & Interests:
Beyond a personal interest in wellness, I have studied wellness extensively for my dissertation research which explored the experience of “well” doctoral students. I have presented sessions about the importance of being and strategies to become a well student affairs professional at both regional and national conferences. I enjoy running, hiking to waterfalls, and being active. I completed my first (and last!) marathon in Denver in October 2009 and continue to run half marathons.

Other Information


Remember Healthy Campus 2010? Well, now it IS 2010 and we've moved on to Healthy Campus 2020! See the overarching goals and two action model recommendations at http://www.csupomona.edu/~jvgrizzell/hc2020/.