

## **2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report**

### **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT-SERVICE UNITS AY 2008-2009**

**Report Date:** July 10, 2009

**Division/Office:** University Life

**Department/Program:** International Student and Scholar Services

**Person completing the Report:** Belinda Yanda

**1. Overview Statement:** Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:

a. which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.

**1A.** Students will demonstrate awareness and understanding of dimensions of culture as related to intercultural exchange

**1B.** Students will exhibit ability to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds

b. who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes

Belinda Yanda, Namiko Ochi and Christina Sanchez

### **2. Please Answer the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:**

#### **a. What did you do?**

Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.). [please use bullet points to answer this question]

- Surveys
- Video
- Personal Interviews

#### **b. What did the staff in the department or program learn?**

Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this assessment.

Global Living Community

A total of 18 students participated in the 2008-2009 Global Living Community program. Initial response (n=6) indicates that 100% of the participants report cultural learning and engagement with people from different cultural backgrounds occurring through the program. Specific reference was made to different customs of various cultural groups. Two students reflected on their experience in different programs: one addresses political and environmental factors in Nicaragua and the other addresses cultural general principles:

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[Reflections on Nicaragua after a musical, interactive lecture/performance by singer-songwriter-activist-author, Paul Baker Hernandez] *Music in between discussions reinforced my hunger of learning more about the country [Nicaragua]. After learning about [its] history, I was amazed about Mr. Baker's [guest presenter from Nicaragua] sacrifices for Nicaragua. At the same time, he influences me to become more active internationally. It felt that we, as people living in a developed country, have the responsibility to "help" third world nations like Nicaragua where [the] majority of people live on a dollar per day. He made me feel fortunate to be living in the United States with its unlimited freedom and opportunities. [GLC participant, 2008-09]*

[Reflections on a simulation activity designed to expose students to different cultures and reflect upon their own values, beliefs, and worldviews] *We were introduced (or re-introduced) to the purpose of keeping a truly open mind: it is and will always be one of the most important ways for people to remain unharmed in a perpetual win-win situation, especially when confronted by unfamiliarity. . . . we learned that even within the United States, within the very meeting room we were sitting in, different subcultures exist and thrive. The influence of our families and our environment as we grew up affected each of our perceptions in a relatively subtle manner. This knowledge did not surprise us, but managed to catch us off-guard . . . which proves that we still have a lot more to learn as individuals and as a community. [GLC participant, 2008-09]*

### **International Networking Program**

Intercultural learning and engagement with people from different cultural backgrounds is an outcome of the International Network Program (INP) as well. INP participants meet twice a month to learn about U.S. domestic and international cultures through interactive programs (e.g., museum visits, cultural festivals, athletic events, etc.). Total participants for events in 2008-2009 was 202 up from 118 the previous year and an increase of 71%.

Based on feedback from 32 respondents, 93% reported that they "learned about a culture or cultures" other than their own. Eighty percent shared that they "felt more connected with other USF students". One student identified the interconnectivity with others as "my greatest learning experience". A different student noted that the program expanded learning about "the people and culture around the world".

The staff learned that activities such as the International Pot Luck party where members of INP and GLC came together for social received very positive feedback from both groups. Such events were enriching to GLC members who enjoyed meeting international students and learning about their culture heritage. Also, the international students commented that they appreciated meeting domestic students outside of the classroom.

Activities involving watching sports, especially football, were requested from INP students. Sports, such as football, basketball, and baseball are reflective of American culture, and during the games students are able to talk and build relationships with each other as well as learn about American culture.

**c. What will be done differently as a result of what was learned?**

Discuss how programs will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how staff will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

- Strengthening membership would create a more “official” group, and students would feel a higher level of responsibility to participate in activities and contribute to the group. To this end, ISSS will use facebook and other social networking media to promote our programs throughout campus and also send weekly updates with event details to heighten awareness. Coordinating events in which students are building close relationships would create an environment where students can trust each other, learn from each other, and feel more connected with each other. To address this goal, ISSS will include structured activities and games where students are expected to engage with each other in meaningful ways.
- Utilizing other on-campus groups and resources with similar missions, such as the Center for Global Education, International Student Association, Pedro Arrupe Hall to enrich and expand INP programs. Coordinating events with other departments and organizations would give INP members the chance to network and learn about other resources and opportunities that USF offers and it would also allow ISSS to broaden the scope of offerings.
- ISSS will ensure that at least one sports event is included in the program per semester. In Fall 2009, INP will coordinate a Giants game, with Koret. This will give INP students the opportunity to enjoy a culturally-rich event, while getting to know other domestic students as well. In the Spring semester, INP will plan a recreational event through Koret so that students are able to partake in a sports event with other USF students.