

Spotlight on Student Affairs

Portland State University
2007 April Student Affairs Newsletter
www.pdx.edu/studentaffairs

What's Inside

**SPRING 2007
COMMENCEMENT**

**SUICIDE PREVENTION:
A COMMUNITY AFFAIR**

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION
ASSISTANCE**

**EEPS TEAM AWARDED
FELLOWSHIP**

**NATIONAL STUDENT
EMPLOYMENT WEEK**

CALENDAR

Next issue:
Week of May 7, 2007

*For your comments about
this newsletter email
Ebru Korbek-Erdogmus at
ebruk@pdx.edu*



2006 Spring Commencement: Rose Garden Arena

Spring 2007 Commencement

The Commencement ceremony presents a unique opportunity for our students to say goodbye to an important chapter of their lives as they walk to their future endeavors. It's also our chance to recognize their accomplishments and wish them good luck in their journey!

At the Spring 2006 Commencement, 1,747 (39%) of the 4,528 total graduates participated in the ceremony. Further breakdown of their degree levels shows that 45% of Bachelors, 17% of Masters, and 46% of Doctoral graduates attended the ceremony in the Rose Garden Arena.

Faculty participation makes this ritual meaningful for our students, reflecting back their time spent in classrooms and bringing closure to their experience with the institution. Last year, 28% of 737 full-time instructional faculty participated in the ceremony. For Spring 2007, the

Faculty Senate Graduation Program Board is working to increase participation to 40% of all tenure and tenure-track faculty. **Commencement would be best served if 300 faculty registered to walk or serve as a Marshal.**

The Spring 2007 Commencement ceremony will be held on Saturday, June 16, at 10am, in the Rose Garden Arena. We are expecting to host 2,000 graduates and prospective graduates and more than 12,000 family and friends. The ceremony will last about three hours. OPB will broadcast live capturing the moments as students walk across the stage.

Faculty members are requested to register at
www.pdx.edu/commencement/faculty.html.

SPOTLIGHT: STUDENT ISSUES

Suicide Prevention: A Community Affair

*“Any man’s death diminishes me
Because I am involved in mankind;
And therefore never send to know
For whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee”
John Donne, 1624*

In any given quarter, approximately 10% of our student are seriously contemplating suicide¹ and 1% will actually make an attempt. Although chances for success are limited (one in 88 attempts results in a completed suicide)², that’s a lot of students in serious distress. Only about 25% of those distressed students will seek mental health help on their own³. Those students who get effective help following an attempt are significantly more likely to live a normal life span. Those who don’t are more likely to attempt again and to succeed⁴. Finally, several studies have reported that a serious, respectful conversation with a peer, faculty or staff member who asks directly and without judgment about suicidal feelings or plans results in most students’ feeling less suicidal and more inclined to seek treatment⁵.

Over the past year, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) within the Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) has been contemplating these and many other findings and recommendations in the implementation of an OUS institution-wide grant to raise awareness of suicide risk on campus and to assist at-risk students in receiving appropriate help.

A Suicide Awareness Task Force co-chaired by Michele Toppe (DOS) and Layton Borkan (SHAC) has been established to identify and implement best practices for helping students, faculty, and staff to increase skills and confidence in intervening with emotionally distressed students, to reduce the stigma of help-seeking, and to clarify Portland State’s policies and procedures in response to suicidal behaviors. The Task Force includes Mike Soto (CPSO), Paulette Watanabe (EEPS), Christina Luther (ISS), Mary Beth Collins (SHAC), Sukhwant Singh Jhaj, (UNST), Corey Ray, (RES), and Arsalan Darbandi, student member. Your questions and thoughts about this difficult subject can be addressed to any of the members of the Task Force.

CAPS is also offering customized suicide intervention training to groups of faculty, students, and staff who would like to learn about identifying risk factors, having those difficult conversations with emotionally distressed students, making referrals for help, etc. Contact Carla Riedlinger or Tim Hagge at 725-2800 for more information.

1 American College Health Association, National College Health Assessment (NCHA), 2006.

2 CDC WISQARS: Fatal and Non-Fatal, 2001

3 NCHA, 2006.

4 Richard Seiden, “Where Are They Now? A Follow-up Study of Suicide Attempters from the Golden Gate Bridge,” *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, Volume 8, Winter 1978.

5 For example, The Consumer’s Experience of Suicide Risk Assessment: A Pilot Study presented at the 32nd Annual Conference of the American Association of Suicidology, Houston, 1999.



*Information provided by Mary Beth Collins
Director, Center for Student Health and Counseling Center
www.shac.pdx.edu
503-725-2800*

STUDENT AFFAIRS

OUR MISSION:

- To provide programs that facilitate and enhance student learning through intentionally connecting parts of student experience into a meaningful whole through collaborative partnerships with faculty and other institutional agents by bridging organizational boundaries.
- To enrich and complement student learning by providing opportunities for involvement in meaningful activities within the University community and the larger urban community.
- To provide services that facilitate student transition to the University and remove barriers to student success



SPOTLIGHT: RESOURCES

Conflict Resolution Assistance

In interpersonal conflict situations we often react with “fight or flight,” which makes it difficult to successfully resolve the problem. We can develop conflict resolution skills, enabling us to handle conflict more effectively, and we can seek assistance from conflict resolution experts. Assistance comes in many forms, formal and informal, but the most common form is mediation.

Mediation is a process that enables people in conflict to resolve their differences with the assistance of a trained mediator, an impartial third party who helps people in a dispute work together to find solutions and build mutually satisfactory agreements. Typically, a mediator will meet separately with the parties in conflict and help them determine how to proceed, which may include a joint meeting if both parties agree. Mediators are not fact-finders, judges or decision-makers. They are facilitators of a constructive problem-solving process. Mediation is a voluntary process and all discussions with the mediator are confidential. Mediation also helps student retention and enhances academic success.

Portland State University offers free mediation services to students, staff and faculty. **Student Legal and Mediation Services**, the **Ombuds Office**, and the **Student Center for Dispute Resolution** all provide mediation services for different types of conflict.

Student Legal and Mediation Services (SLMS)

www.slms.pdx.edu
slms@pdx.edu
503-725-4556

Students carrying at least four undergraduate credits or three graduate credits are eligible for free mediation services at SLMS. This mediation program focuses on conflicts where there is a legal issue to be resolved. If both parties agree to mediate, SLMS can assist in resolving issues related to divorce, custody, adoption, and contracts, among other issues. At least one party to the mediation must be a Portland State student and both parties must clearly indicate that

they are seeking mediation services from SLMS during the initial contact with SLMS or inquiry about the service. Once SLMS has rendered legal advice or assistance to a student on a particular matter, SLMS is no longer able to mediate the conflict.

Similarly, if mediation is provided by SLMS, the office will not be able to provide legal assistance to either participant. SLMS has almost 200 active cases open. Highlights of recent accomplishments include:

- *several recoveries including a recovery of \$1200 for the unlawful actions of a landlord;*
- *successfully negotiated a settlement with an airline for the mishandled luggage belonging to a student;*
- *successfully had a judgment against a student establishing custody of his child set aside to be re-litigated;*
- *assisted a student in obtaining dismissal on a case in which the student was not the correct person identified as a defendant.*

Ombuds Office

www.ombuds.pdx.edu
ombuds@pdx.edu
503-725-5901

Members of the campus community who feel that they are not being treated fairly can safely initiate discussion in the Ombuds Office on any university-related topic. The Ombuds staff will pursue quiet avenues of diplomacy, negotiation, and mediation in an effort to find conciliatory solutions to situations that seem to involve unfairness to students, staff, faculty, and administrators.

Student Center for Dispute Resolution (SCDR)

scdr@pdx.edu
503-725-SCDR

This Organization of trained Conflict Resolution graduate students and their faculty advisors, offers free and productive strategies for students who are facing interpersonal conflict. SCDR students provide individual conflict coaching, mediation, conflict resolution training, and meeting facilitation to the campus community.

*Information provided by Lissa Kaufman
Student Legal and Mediation Services*

SPOTLIGHT: FYI

EEPS Team Awarded Fellowship

A team of EEPS professionals has been selected to participate in the Healthy Native Communities Fellowship, a major component of the Indian Health Services National Health Promotion Initiative. The group is the only urban Native team to be chosen for the program; it is also the first team from the Pacific Northwest. Tabitha Whitefoot, Assistant Director of EEPS and Coordinator of the Native American Student and Community Center, leads the team of three: Dean Azule, Coordinator of Native American Student Support Services and Paulette Watanabe, Director of EEPS.

The year-long fellowship supports “community change agents working directly with Native community members” to build the capacity of members to create health and wellness in their communities. The team will use strategies and skills learned through the fellowship to work with Native student groups (UISHE and AISES) and other interested students on developing and implementing the “Healing Feathers” program, a small sub-grant of a larger SAMHSA grant awarded to NARA (Native American Rehabilitation Association), a comprehensive social and health services organization in Portland.

The SAMHSA grant is part of the Garrett Smith Memorial Suicide Prevention Act established to create programs for suicide awareness, prevention and intervention for youth and young adults. The team is working on a NASCC wellness program and also intends to partner with the campus and metro Native communities to expand existing efforts that promote health and wellness – all with the guiding principle that “transformation... must be based on the traditions, values, cultural and spiritual assets found in the same communities.”

The fellowship is an intense, year-long learning opportunity that consists of four, week-long retreats, an online learning community, peer-coaching and mentorship, and the creation of a “fellow space” (action learning process in the team’s home community). For more information about the fellowship visit www.healthynativecommunities.org, or call Tabitha Whitefoot at 725-9696, Dean Azule at 725-5348, or Paulette Watanabe at 725-5347.

*Information provided by Paulette Watanabe
Director, Educational Equity Programs and Services
www.eeps.pdx.edu
503-725-4457*

National Student Employment Week

The Career Center, Office of the Dean of Students and Human Resources collaborated to sponsor Portland State's celebration of National Student Employment Week. At a reception on April 12 all student employees were celebrated, 60 student employee nominees were recognized, and the following students received awards:

Outstanding Honorees:
Lydia Beyoud, *Middle East Studies Center*
Eden Isenstein, *Women's Resource Center*
Christine Smith, *Business Affairs*
Katy Zilverberg, *Student Leaders for Service*



2007 Student Employee of the Year:
Tatsuki Kawaguchi, *International Special Programs*

SPOTLIGHT: CALENDAR

Multicultural Center Open House

Wednesday, April 18, in SMSU 228 from 11am-3 pm. For information contact MCC at 503-725-5344.

Black Bag Speaker Series

“History of Black Panther Parties in Portland, OR” featuring Ken Ford, Founder of Black Panther.
Wednesday, April 25, 12 pm-1:30 pm in the Multicultural Center, 288 SMSU. For information contact MCC at 503-725-5344.

Blood Drive

Monday, April 30, 11 am-4 pm, in SMSU Ballroom. For information contact Gwyn Ashcom by phone at 503-725-5123 or by email at gwyn@pdx.edu to schedule a donation appointment.