

Presidents' Reports

Chadron State College January 2020 Cultural Enrichment

In the spring of 2015, 292 Chadron State College students participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In response to the inquiry, "How often do students interact with others who have different viewpoints or who come from different backgrounds," 75% of first year students reported that they frequently had discussions with people from a different race or ethnicity (Institutional Research Fact Book, 2015-2016). That same assessment, however, revealed that students across the board felt like there were not as many opportunities as they would like to meet and have discussions with students who represented diversity. To address this concern, the Student Engagement Committee was formed, which functions as a sub-committee of the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee. This sub-committee developed three areas of focus regarding student engagement for the 2018-2019 school year, one of which is a goal to increase opportunities for "traditional" students to engage in dialogue with students who represent diversity.

Student engagement remains a top priority of the Master Academic Plan for 2020, which has four signature themes—Connections, Learner-Centered Environment, Strategic Growth and Retention, Evidence-Based Improvement (Per 2020 Chadron State). Chadron State 2020 retains the priorities of the previous MAP's which includes recruitment and retention as fundamental to the success of the college. Included in this plan, then, will be the recruitment and retention of students representing all forms of diversity.

Along with promoting appreciation of diversity in general, the Diversity Committee emphasizes and targets specific categories of diversity with designated months devoted to each, although events related to any of the categories can occur at any time during the school year:

Hispanic Heritage—September
Differently-Abled Awareness—October
LGBT Pride—October
Native American Heritage—November
Martin Luther King, Jr.—January
African American/Black History—February
Women and Leadership—March
Asian-Pacific-American Heritage—April

During each of the months specified above, the Diversity Committee encourages committee members to actively involve the Committee in a diversity-inspired event that will reach out to the campus and the community. The Diversity Committee cannot be successful without the support of the campus. It cannot be the purpose of the Committee to simply offer diversity events; success can only come when the Committee asks for involvement from the campus and the community. The more the campus and the community are involved in the production of diversity events, working in unison with the Committee, the more likely it is that appreciation of diversity will be shared among all. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the Diversity Committee to ensure that diversity is an integral component of the campus conversation.

Numerous speakers and diversity-related events provided many opportunities for students through the Residence Life Association Diversity Program, open to the campus and the community to enjoy diversity awareness, some examples of which are listed below, September 2018 through April 2019:

- In someone else's shoes—living with dementia, dyslexia, schizophrenia
- Bringing light and awareness to disabilities—vision, hearing, learning
- Awareness of domestic violence
- Awareness of the LGBT community
- Experiencing western culture
- Diversity perspectives from other countries
- Perspectives on depression and suicide
- Education on economic diversity and life after college
- Living with food insecurity
- Reading books that address cultural, ethnic, economical, age, religious diversity
- Meditation and mindfulness
- Human trafficking
- Helping students express what makes them unique
- Promoting diverse characteristics and inclusive environments
- Experiencing southern culture
- Experiencing food, dress, and culture
- Perspectives on a variety of countries/economic diversity
- Experiencing Indian culture

During the Fall 2018 semester the following people spoke to campus audiences:

- September 27 – Eric and Shauna Golembiewski spoke about their trip around the world. They traveled for one year and explored many different countries and places.
- October 25 – Dr. Thomas Smith spoke about the Cuba Study Abroad trips that he has taken many students on.
- November 29 – Renae Kueter and Samantha Merrill spoke about their Study Abroad trip that they took to London and their experiences about study abroad.

During the Spring 2019 semester the following people spoke to campus audiences:

- January 22 – Siphosenkosi Mpofu from Zimbabwe spoke about her life and family in Zimbabwe and also about the educational system in Zimbabwe.
- February 19 – Nicole Lartey from Ghana spoke about her life and family in Ghana.
- March 19 – Clinton Albertus from Curacao spoke about his life and family in Curacao.
- April 16 – Jeff Mugongo from Rwanda spoke about his life in Rwanda and how he ended up in Refugee camps and how he finally arrived to the United States and everything he went through.

The United Club had a diversity-related Valentine Movie Night that highlighted the trials, tribulations, and other challenges of a teenager experiencing his first year of high school. The film depicted the student's episodes of depression and anxiety as a first year student.

Sandoz Center exhibits:

- Native American exhibit that focused on Chief Red Cloud
- Photo Show highlighting Faye Guest for Women's History Month

Chadron State College faculty incorporate multicultural perspectives into classroom curriculum through the selection of textbooks, required readings, class discussions, classroom activities, debates, speakers, and video presentations. Whenever possible, faculty also include field trips to regional and international locations as a way to incorporate diverse topics into the educational experience.

This report does not mean to represent in totality all the diversity-related events or experiences that occurred on the CSC campus during the 2018-2019 school year. There were certainly many others, but the import of this report is perhaps less about the specific events and more about the overall evidence of the spirit of welcoming diversity that exists as an obvious strength of this college. As mentioned previously, specific details concerning the Diversity Committee meetings are available in the meeting minutes which are available for review on the Chadron State College Diversity Committee website, available through the Chadron State College main webpage.

Peru State College January 2020

At Peru State College, the goal is that all students have the support they need to be successful and the challenges they need to develop leadership skills in a diverse world. Peru State's strategic plan, Engaging the Future, was developed through campus conversations. Many of these conversations espoused the values of Pride, Excellence, Resilience and Unity. To describe the value of Unity, the plan states:

"We embrace unity as a diverse and inclusive community. We believe in creating a culture of mutual support, acceptance and respect. We embrace the College's role to lead and model this culture on campus, in the region and in the world."

This past year a variety of events and activities supported this value strengthening our culture of mutual support, acceptance and respect.

Nebraska State College System Leadership Conference

Peru State hosted the 2019 Nebraska State College System Leadership Conference. Students representing the Student Senate organizations of Peru State, Wayne State and Chadron State all attended this annual event.

The theme for the conference this year was "Leading Through Adversity" with a goal to provide a great opportunity for all students to collaborate and grow as student leaders. All leaders are faced with good times and bad times. It is easy to lead in the good times, but it is in the bad times that a leader shows who they are and how they handle adversity.

Thomas Veleba (Pawnee City, NE), Vice President of Peru State's Student Senate, said, "We were fortunate to have such a great lineup of speakers for students, faculty, and community members to collaborate with throughout the day. It was a great day for everybody to learn and experience some of the many values it takes to be a leader in all areas of life."

A wide-variety of speakers presented at the conference representing diverse backgrounds:

- Shawna Bindle, Mayor of Falls City, "Leadership and Influence."
- Dr. Greg Galardi, Professor of Business, Peru State College, "Lumps and Bumps on the Road to Leadership."
- Crystal Hutson, Director of Student Activities and Programs, Peru State College, "How to Fuel Motivation."
- Kayla Meyers (Sidney, IA) and Kristin Sanford (Lincoln, NE), Student Leaders, Peru State College, "Leadership Styles."
- Dr. Kristi Nies, Professor of English, Peru State College, "Well, That Was a Train Wreck."
- Dr. Kyle Ryan, Professor of Kinesiology, Peru State College, "Developing Resilience through Self-Assessment."
- Julie Slama, Senator, Nebraska's First District, "Stepping up to the Plate."
- Aaron Thomas, Motivational Speaker and Author, Keynote Speaker: "Opportunities and Platform: Overcoming Adversity."
- Ivan Wineglass, National Alumni Association Board of Directors, Peru State College, "Being Intentional for Life."

Black Student Union

Black Student Union, which was selected a few years back to receive the Governor's Points of Light award for service, is in its eleventh year at Peru State College.

Black Student Union continues to be an active and productive group on campus:

- Co-hosting Black History and Diversity Awareness programs in February and throughout the year
- Hosting open mic nights
- Hosting stress relief events
- Contributing to campus conversations, including a recent panel on community service
- Collecting campus recycling
- Collaborating with the Campus Activities Board to bring a barber to campus

Black Student Union also engages in community service throughout the region, including:

- assisting with Feeding 44
- volunteering at the Good Samaritan Soup Supper in Auburn
- helping the Peru Community Impact Group fill Easter eggs for the community Easter Egg Hunt
- speaking to high school students visiting campus from the NorthStart Foundation
- Participating in Peru State's Giving Day where they delivered notes of encouragement for the Auburn Backpack Program, Good Samaritan nursing home and Long's Creek assisted living facility

New this year, the BSU Faculty Advisor, Kristi Nies, helped coordinate a freshman football-mentoring program. Under the program, Elton Edmond, a Peru State alumnus, meets once a month with all the freshman football players.

Hispanic Latino Student Association

In its fourth year, the Hispanic Latino Student Association has been active on campus and in the community. This group provides support for a growing population on campus and in southeast Nebraska. Members organized an on-campus food and toy drive.

- Los Valientes, The Courageous Ones - This is a new chamber music theater work for solo actor and music trio (cello, piano, & percussion) performed by Core Ensemble. The work explores the artistic & political passions of Mexican painter Diego Rivera, the unwavering commitment to human Rights of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero, and the pursuit of social justice by Mexican American desperado Juakin Murrieta aka Zorro.

Speakers and Events

Being home to a population more diverse than the southeast Nebraska general public is an important aspect of the Peru State College experience. The College also continues to provide opportunities for its students and residents of southeast Nebraska to discover new perspectives and engage with men and women of national importance. In a world where diversity includes more than the color of your skin, Peru State students continue to seek new experiences and better understanding.

- Megan Phelps-Roper – In April, Peru State College hosted Megan Phelps-Roper who grew up as a member of the Westboro Baptist Church, a group infamous for its intolerance. She shared her observations about the hateful and intolerant ideas she was immersed in as a child, how she decided to leave her family, and her new perspectives focused on compassion, empathy, and understanding. Her story is captured in her memoir titled, *This Above All*.

- Of Ebony Embers – Returning to Peru State College and the newly remodeled Performing Arts Center, the Core Ensemble presented *Of Ebony Embers – Vignettes of the Harlem Renaissance* in a free concert. The rescheduled performance featured actor Dracyn Blount in multiple roles, as Aaron Douglas, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes. The Core Ensemble writes, “Celebrating the music and poetry of the Harlem Renaissance era in New York City, *Of Ebony Embers* examines the lives of three outstanding but very different African American poets – Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen and Claude McKay – as seen through the eyes of the great painter and muralist Aaron Douglas.”
- Forever Free: Walk into History –Barry Jurgensen’s presentation was co-sponsored by Peru State’s Black Student Union and Phi Alpha Theta/Social Science Club in conjunction with the Mayhew Cabin of Nebraska City. Jurgensen recounted the attempts made by those looking to escape slavery in the Midwest via the Underground Railroad. Jurgensen discussed the two walks he did from Nebraska City to Chicago to retrace the route of two of these slaves: Eliza and Celia.
- #whileIstayed - The Peru State College Art Gallery hosted, #whileIstayed, by Miranda Pollock, Assistant Professor of Art at Peru State College. “#whileIstayed embodies the story of living in domestic violence. The question often asked in a domestic violence situation is, ‘why does she stay?’ Pollock writes, “The reasons that a person may stay can vary due to the situation, support structure, economics, and a variety of other issues specific to the victim. However, every person’s story is a story of survival. Because talking about violence can bring shame and fear to the survivor—whether the abuse is recent or decades in the past—it is important for those who are able to, to use their own voice in written, oral, or visual language.”
- First Generation Students - Student Success Services, a part of TRiO, provided Peru State a way to celebrate first generation students, and to recognize faculty and staff who are also first-generation college graduates. Student Success Services provided “Proud to Be a First Gen Bobcat” buttons to wear the week of November 8. Peru State’s Student Intervention Coordinator, Michelle Kaiser, oversaw the program and adds, “I think it’s so important for first generation students to feel a sense of community when they come to college. Providing a way for students to easily identify other First Gen students enables them to make connections with their peers. We’ve had a tremendous amount of staff and faculty support, and that is also so important as First Gen students are able to identify possible mentors and role models with life experiences similar to their own.”
- A Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Brunch will be held Monday, January 20 at 11:30 a.m. in the Student Center. The event will celebrate the life of Dr. King and his vision of equal rights for all. The event will host presentations and performances by Peru State students as well as a performance by the Hoyt Street Jazz Ensemble.

Council for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (CDEI)

The Council for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (CDEI) is composed of faculty, student affairs staff, and students. Its goal is to create a campus environment that is responsive, respectful, and inclusive of the various backgrounds and identities represented at Peru. They plan a variety of events each year. A few of the last year’s events are as follows:

- Descendants of DeWitty – Descendants of the families from the original African-American settlers of the community of DeWitty, Nebraska, spoke about the African-American experience in early 20th Century Nebraska. This was their second trip to Peru State College.

- Naturalization Ceremony – Working with the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, a naturalization ceremony will be held in the College's new Performing Arts Center. This celebratory event is the culmination of the naturalization process. The hosting opportunity at Peru State College was cancelled in 2019 by the district courts, but holding the event in 2020 is being examined.
- We Are All Bobcats – A student contest using visual imagery and photography to highlight diversity in our campus community.
- On-campus Workshops – a variety of topics were addressed through on-campus workshops including emotional support animals, teaching ESL students and a presentation from Nebraska immigrant legal center.

Conclusion:

As initiatives evolve on campus, they advance the services and programming available to all students. Peru State is better able to meet the everyday needs of students and engage them in new experiences outside their everyday understanding of the world. As our students come to a better understanding of each other and the world in which we live, they learn to interact with and respect others from different backgrounds and gain the leadership skills needed to succeed in this diverse world.

Wayne State College January 2020

Cultural enrichment at Wayne State College begins with the recruitment process and extends through course curriculum, student activities, and engagement opportunities that make up the fabric of the educational experience at the college. The college's four schools, Office of Student Activities, student clubs and organizations, and strategic work within Admissions, the college's Multicultural Center, and the President's Council for Diversity all contribute to an environment that increases opportunities for cultural understanding and enrichment. These opportunities, combined with curricular exposure to the wide varieties of the human experience, the sciences, global economies and societies, educational pedagogy, literature, psychology, art, music, and theater, present students with constant points of contact with cultural differences that challenge and enhance their understanding of the world.

For the third year, Wayne State has offered "Spanish Visit Day: Dia de Familia" as part of the annual series of visit days geared toward high school juniors and seniors and their families. The Spanish Visit Day provides information about admissions, scholarships, and financial aid processes guided by a bilingual admissions counselor. Participation in this unique visit opportunity has doubled in just three years and is part of a five-year growth trend among Hispanic students that has moved from 235 in Fall 2015 to 334 in Fall 2019.

In addition to the Spanish visit day for students in our region, Kevin Halle, Director of Admissions, and Leah Keino, Director of Multicultural and International Programs, traveled to the Islands of Curacao and Aruba on November 10-20. While on the island of Curacao, several individual high school visits were conducted to introduce students to Wayne State. They also attended a two-day study fair, which had several hundred students attend. An evening open house was held to allow students and family members to receive more information about the college and were provided the opportunity to apply for admission with assistance from our staff members. Meetings were also held with current student family members as a time to visit and share about the college and how their students are doing in the U.S. and at Wayne State.

On the Island of Aruba, Wayne State representatives met with school counselors, made several class presentations, met with a representative from the Aruba Ministry of Education, and held an evening open house to conduct informational presentations for students and their family members. In addition to high school visits, important connections were made with decision makers with the student financing organizations for the Curacao and Aruban governments.

Relationships are important in all new student recruitment, especially in international efforts. The travel to the islands helps build those relationships, leaving positive impressions upon students and their influencers. Wayne State currently has about 35 students from the Island of Curacao and one student from Aruba. These visits have been an important part of the growth in our international populations overall.

Each year, the President's Council for Diversity conducts a campuswide survey to assess our environment of inclusion and make recommendations aimed at cultural enrichment at Wayne State. The most recent report notes that "Many of the courses we offer at Wayne State College address racial, sexual, economic, cultural, and religious diversity. Many focus on the way that race, class, gender, age, disability, language, and religion can lead to injustice or discrimination. Each department provides many examples of curriculum dedicated to addressing issues of diversity."

Each of the college's 15 academic departments provide a solid foundation of cultural enrichment. These efforts include an overarching respect for community and culture, recognition of distinct customs and religions, and discussion of the need for inclusion. Examples of cultural enrichment through curricular engagement include the WSC Anthropology Museum, which is an important educational opportunity for students and the community; business courses focused on how

diversity impacts employment, retention of workers, negotiation, and housing; education coursework focused on injustice related to equity in the classroom and learning opportunities; health and human performance material focused on the way that social and economic diversity impact health; life sciences curriculum addressing the biological interconnectedness of all organisms and the development of culture and how it has been shaped by disease and encroachments into native land; physical sciences coursework in astronomy that explores the historical, religious, and cultural practices, during the winter solstice, of people around the world; communication studies focused on intercultural communication and the representation of diversity in film and other media; music courses that expose students to the sounds and methods of composition of other cultures; language and literature coursework promoting understanding of cultural, linguistic, racial, religious, sexual, and economic diversity through the stories and ideas of diverse people; computer technology and information systems coursework modules that deal with international informational systems, international considerations, and various multicultural and cross-cultural themes related to projects; and art and design courses that enhance student awareness, knowledge, and appreciation for the visual arts in society by examining works from various cultures around the world.

Activities outside of the classroom also provide ample opportunities for students to engage with cultures outside of their own. Many of the engagement opportunities are sponsored by student clubs and organizations. Multicultural clubs on campus include Black Student Association, Interfaith Action Group, International Club, Latinos Uniting, Native American Student Alliance, and PRIDE (People Respecting Individuals, Diversity, and Equality). Events during the fall 2019 semester included:

- Students traveled to Sioux City, Iowa, to visit a synagogue to learn about the Jewish faith and see an authentic Torah and Hebrew prayer book.
- The college hosted a Hispanic Heritage Month presentation by Dr. Stacy L. Davis on Indianos and Spanish Migration to the Americas (1865-1945), that examined the Indianos of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Spain, the tens of thousands of emigrants that came to the Americas in search of fortune and a better life.
- Students who took advantage of WSC's Study Abroad opportunities and traveled to Costa Rica or Greece in the summer of 2019 gave a presentation about their experiences.
- Dr. Ron Holt, a 1989 graduate of WSC and a licensed, board-certified psychiatrist and a motivational speaker, author and facilitator who resides in San Francisco, Calif., spoke on campus about issues relevant to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities.
- Dr. Leigh Scruggs, assistant professor at Wayne State College in the Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership spoke about her experiences traveling to 10 countries in Eastern Europe while serving in the US Peace Corps in Ukraine this year.
- Todd Flynn, a farmer and lawyer from Ainsworth, Neb., provided an overview of his experiences with the USAID Farmer to Farmer program in East Africa. Flynn presented pictures and talked about his experiences working with the Farmer to Farmer program in Tanzania and Uganda.
- The Wayne State College chamber choir, women's choir, and concert choir presented a program that included music from the Broadway hit "Hamilton," selected Psalms, works by Robert Louis Stevenson, Ann Taylor, and Mark Twain, and spirituals, such as "Steal Away" and "Down in the River to Pray."

Cultural enrichment opportunities at Wayne State College contribute to a stimulating environment designed to provide students, staff, and faculty with a broad, inclusive view of the world. The college takes great pride in facilitating sustained encounters with a variety of cultures, customs, and beliefs that help ensure students engage with the world.