There is nothing like a dream to create the future.
~Victor Hugo

Celebrating 35 Years of Youth Programs

In the last three decades thousands of students have been inspired by the things they discovered and people they met through a Youth Programs experience. Whether a student was in an Exploration in the summer or participated in programming during the academic year, they were exposed to something new. These experiences led student after student back to Michigan Tech to pursue higher education. These photos are a tribute to 35 years of excellence challenging young minds to create the future.

Students Can Charge Books and Supplies

For those students who do not want to wait for their credit balance check to buy their books, they have the option of charging them at the Campus Store against their financial aid. The Financial Aid Office in conjunction with the Accounts Receivable Office and the Campus Store offer students with a credit balance on their account the opportunity to charge their books and supplies. To be eligible for this service, students must have a credit balance, confirm their full-time enrollment, and complete a Title IV authorization card. Students can begin charging up to one week prior to the start of classes.

Since this service was first offered to students, the number of students who have taken advantage of the opportunity has grown tremendously from 24 students during the summer of 2004 to 939 this past spring semester.
**My Summer as a Learner**

By Jason Bergeron, Student Life

As we are all asked to wear many hats throughout the academic year, sometimes understanding the work we do and the impact it has can be overshadowed. For each of us, it is important to find a time where we can step back and reflect on how we are having an impact not only on our campus, but in the overall education and growth of college students. For me, that time is the summer. This summer, I had the opportunity to facilitate two programs that are truly helping to make a difference in the lives of college students: the LeaderShape® Institute, and the Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute, or UIFI. With each of these experiences, I worked with a group of 11 students in both small and large group sessions, helping them to connect a meaningful curriculum to their lives as student organization leaders, as fraternity men and sorority women, and as college students. And while I endured late nights playing catch phrase and mafia, a weight gain due to the mass amounts of food, and more ice-breakers than any sane person can handle (and I love ice-breakers), the opportunity to spend a week with students who have come to open their minds and absorb the curriculum continually recharges my “professional batteries”.

While the facilitator role by nature helps to further understanding and development for the student participants, I would be remiss if I did not recognize my own growth and development that occurs during these experiences. Each experience helps me to create a new understanding about my work with students, my personal life, and the values (fraternal, professional, and personal) that I hold. And, while keeping in line with the theme of understanding, I’d like to share with you some of the things that were reinforced throughout my facilitation experiences this summer:

Never underestimate a student’s ability to “get it” - I am continually amazed at students’ ability to what we call in the field, “Get It”, or to understand their place and role in creating change in their lives and communities. As we say in both the LeaderShape and UIFI worlds, it is important that we “trust the process”. If we are creating experiences that are designed to challenge students, we must recognize that that can happen at many different times (whether that is tomorrow or two years in the future), and have faith that they will one day understand.

One-on-one conversations with students can be a powerful venue for change and understanding - We in student affairs have become program planners by nature. While planning programs can sometimes become the “easy solution” to student education and development, we cannot always ensure its impactfulness. One-on-one time with students allows us to create meaningful relationships and challenge long-held values that help students look at life through different lenses and understand the “big picture”.

Providing challenge and support for students is an “art” - Now this statement may seem abstract, but the meaning behind it is that we must strive to understand students if we are to challenge them in meaningful ways. We must always be developing an understanding of the nuances in the ways they speak, think, and behave. While concentrated experiences such as LeaderShape and UIFI help to accelerate this process, interaction and involvement with students on campus is one of the most effective ways to develop your “art”.

It is important that we have integrity in our lives as professionals - One of the most meaningful pieces that is continually reinforced for me through these experiences is the importance of being a person of integrity or, in simpler terms, “doing what we say we will do”. Whether that be something as important as living fraternal values or as simple as returning a phone call, having the integrity to follow-through can be a powerful piece in modeling the way for our students. No one can doubt that having integrity is difficult. It is consistently challenged, and can often strain the relationships with those around us. But possessing integrity in your work serves as one of the key qualities in making positive change in the lives of students. And last but definitely not least, college students are some of the most fun people you will ever be around. I wish this last statement was more revolutionary, but I feel it is a simple truth. Their spontaneity, humor, and energy consistently help me to enjoy working in their environment. Now, this doesn’t mean you should run right out and spend five days surrounded by fraternity/sorority members in a large sorority house (although it does make for an interesting time), but I would challenge you to seek out environments in which you are surrounded by students. I am sure you will not be disappointed by the force they can be in cultivating a positive attitude.

Both LeaderShape and UIFI were experiences that I will carry with me as I continue my work with college students, and have taught me meaningful lessons about how to better myself personally and professionally. I encourage each of you to find a learning laboratory in which you can not only learn about students, but learn about yourself as well.

Here’s to a summer that’s never dull!
Match the Student Affairs staff member with the correct multiple choice answer

Send your guesses to Lynda at lheinone@mtu.edu. Correct responses will be entered in a drawing for a free large pizza.

1. Andre Bonen
2. Beth Pollins
3. Kerri Sleeman
4. Mary Ann Struthers

Answers:
A. Traveled to Bolivia as part of their Masters program.
B. Didn’t move far in the MUB when they changed positions.
C. Moved from the Physics department to Student Affairs.
D. The person to contact with questions regarding the Tri-Hall Weightlifting Club.

Staff Focus:
Sharron Parris
Submitted by MaryAnn Struthers, Student Life
When asked, Sharron Paris said what she will miss most about her 30 year career here at Michigan Tech is the daily interaction with her staff. We are sure her staff feels the same! Sharron joined Michigan Tech’s Information Technology staff in 1978, and then transferred to Enrollment Management in 1991. In 1998 she was named Director of Student Records and Registration, and added the title of University Registrar in 1999. She will be retiring on May 9, 2008.

In 1968 Sharron married Dave Paris, a Michigan Tech graduate in civil engineering. Dave also worked in Michigan Tech’s Administrative Computing Services Department. Dave and Sharron were the recipients of the Clair M. Donovan Award for outstanding service in 2000, the first time in the 36-year history of the award that there had been co-recipients! They also received the Ken Hamar Award as true supporters of Tech athletics in 1989.

Sharron’s interests include crafts, and music (she is a former member of the Calumet Players and Copper Country Choral). Travel is in the picture for retirement - the goal is to visit the state capital of all 50 states (they have seen over 40 so far - very impressive!) An Inside Passage cruise in Alaska is also a possibility. Sharron and Dave are currently renovating their camp in White City, where they will spend the summers. They will escape the Houghton winters in San Diego. We wish Sharron the best as she enters her last year at Tech and heads towards retirement. She will be missed.

Sharron was the “Mystery Person” from the spring newsletter. Congratulations to Matt McCormick on guessing her identity correctly and winning a large pizza. See our new feature “Staff Match” above. Match all four staff members to their respective clues and win a large pizza from the MUB.

New Staff in Student Affairs
Welcome the new staff that have joined the Student Affairs team since our last newsletter.

Donna Armistead has joined International Programs and Services as an Office Assistant. She is the previous owner/director of the Superior School of Dance.

Beverly Schmitz has also joined IPS. She comes to Michigan Tech from the Western Upper Peninsula Heath District.

Lisa Wallace is a new member of the Office of Student Records and Registration as an Administrative Assistant. She previously worked at Dial Help.

Gary Smith moved from University Marketing and Communications to Enrollment Services as a Data Specialist.
Am I doing all I can to ensure that students feel like they are my point of focus?

How do I demonstrate the following in my daily interactions with students and colleagues:
- commitment to providing a diverse and inclusive community;
- valuing leadership, creativity and excellence;
- promoting trust, integrity and personal responsibility;
- including students in decisions which enhance their experience;
- being innovative in all we do;
- providing for students intellectual, professional and personal growth;
- and leading and supporting exemplary collegial relationships.

These questions encourage us to remember that the success of our students is essential to the success of the University. They also allow all of us, whether we are staff or faculty, to think about our roles and relations with students. They also provide us an opportunity to reflect on how we do what we do.

This fall Student Affairs will begin to define how we assess the learning that occurs as a result of students’ involvement with our programs, services and interactions. This concept is not new, however, nationally there is a renewed emphasis on creating conditions to enhance student learning and development. These conditions help to encourage greater student engagement, develop coherent values and ethics, and communicate high expectations for learning. Through our programs, services and interactions with students, Student Affairs is the ideal environment to reinforce transformational learning. We encourage students to take on a leadership role in the residence halls, to plan an event for their organization, join an enterprise, embark on a study abroad program or participate in a co-op. It is the nature of our work that we spend less time on concrete outcomes and more time on teaching students how to learn while also instilling a sense of passion, curiosity and connection to intuitive skills.

ALL of us are educators of whole human beings. As educators, we have an important role in helping to create, promote, understand, support and secure student success. We are fortunate to attract bright, motivated and adventurous students and to work on a college campus that is recognized throughout the world as a leader in science and technology. Through the work of all of us, I am confident we will continue to make a difference in the lives of those who will change the world and I look forward to another successful year at Michigan Tech.

With all good wishes,

Les

National Survey of Student Engagement Provides Insight Into Student Perspective

Submitted by Christine Erickson, Student Life

Michigan Tech has participated in The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) three times, in 2001, 2003, and 2006. The NSSE measures five benchmarks of effective educational practice; level of academic challenge; active and collaborative learning; student-faculty interaction; enriching educational experiences; and supportive campus environment. Compared to our peer institutions, in 2006 a higher percentage of Michigan Tech’s first-year students read more than 10 assigned books/ readings, wrote more than 10 papers or reports of fewer than five pages, worked with other students on projects during class, worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments, and completed foreign language coursework. Michigan Tech’s seniors spent more than 10 hours per week preparing for class (studying, etc.); did a practicum, internship, field experience, etc.; completed foreign language coursework; said the institution substantially encourages contacts among diverse peers; and positively rated their relationships with other students.

Some areas for Michigan Tech’s first-year students to work on include asking questions/contributing to class discussions and discussing grades or assignments with instructors. Three of the areas on which Michigan Tech’s seniors performed significantly lower than peer institutions include reading more than 10 assigned books/ readings, writing at least one paper or report of 20 pages or more, and making a class presentation. Some posit these results indicate an emphasis on synthesis and application of knowledge resulting in a culminating experience (in which 62% of Michigan Tech seniors participated and 14% still planned to do).

Another interesting finding is neither first-year students nor seniors had serious conversations with students of another race or ethnicity. Also, first-year students did not have serious conversations with students of other religion/politics/values.

The Summer Student Affairs Newsletter Committee is Lynda Heinonen, Mary Ann Struthers and Susan Liebau. Please send any comments or suggestions to lheinone@mtu.edu.