

March 13 2016

Conversations on University Student Activism around the world:

The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) began a series of conversations in 2012 about what it means to serve in student affairs and services roles across various regions of the world. The findings of the original conversations have now led to the creation of new conversations, this time focused on student activism and how we, as educators, can respond to this emerging trend.

In the hope of creating a truly international conversation, IASAS seeks willing partners who will take initiative in convening conversations throughout the world during in 2016. These conversations could be included as programs within existing conferences or the conversations could be meetings called for colleagues who are interested in and could contribute to this topic. The conversations will be simple and straight-forward, responding to the following questions:

- What is happening at your university in relation to student activism and what is your responsibility in managing it?
- What does your institution or government expect related to student conduct, especially when it takes the form of activism for change?
- What skills or competencies are required in order for you to be effective in dealing with student activism?

All that a convener has to do is to pose these three questions to a small group (10-15 is suggested) and ask one individual to record the responses either on a newsprint pad or writing board or take notes that can be shared back with the group. If the convener has a group larger than 10-15, several groups could be formed with each pursuing their own conversation but sharing perspectives once the initial brainstorming takes place. After the conversations, conveners are asked to summarize the responses to the three questions, noting how many people participated and from what nations/geographic regions, and send them to:

Dr. Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo at enquiries@iasas.global

All responses will be compiled and shared on the IASAS web site and at other meetings where the "Conversations" of IASAS can contribute to the advancement of student learning and development around the globe. The purpose is not to form policy or practice that would impose a particular approach. Instead, IASAS seeks to offer the opportunity for international educators to compare their perspectives so that appropriately adapted practices can be discerned for local/regional settings. The "student activism" conversations will also help educators respond in ways that protect the stability of their institutions while also making sure that students' voices are heard as constructive input to institutional leaders.

IASAS believes that these conversations are key to building consensus, fostering support, and advocating for the enhancement of students' learning experiences around the world. The evidence gathered on the impact of student affairs and services is that the more that is offered to students, the more likely they are to stay in university, to persist to graduation, and to gain from their overall educational experience.

If you would like assistance in planning or implementing the plan explained above, please contact Dr. Bardill Moscaritolo at enquiries@iasas.global or Richard Zereik at Richard.zereik@mcgill.ca or go to the IASAS website where you will be able to continue this conversation.