**Student Leader Global Summit:**

**Enhancing Global Mindsets & Engaging in International Dialogues**

**Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo and Kat Callahan**

Partnerships are key to each event the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) embarks on. This was true for the beginnings of the Student Leader Global Summit (SLGS). Cindy Love, Executive Director for ACPA, at that time, asked to partner with IASAS for their convention in Montreal Canada. Along with the first SLGS, this would be ACPA’s first time having their convention outside of the United States.

Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo, Secretary General, pitched the idea to Cindy, and with her help, a third party was introduced, Lead365. Nancy Hunter Denney, CEO of Lead365 agreed to provide the content and speakers for 25 student leaders from around the World. This partnership with ACPA and Lead365 continued for three consecutive years, with the 2015 inaugural event in Montreal and followed in Columbus, Ohio, and Houston, Texas. Members of IASAS shared information about the experience and encouraged students to apply from their university or association. Approximately 25% of those who apply attend. It is complicated at times with Visas and costs. Most of the time the cost to attend was subsidized by ACPA- College Student Educators International. The main cost for students and their student affairs/institutional sponsor was the flight. Students apply to be part of the summit and represent 11 to 12 different universities and countries.

Besides learning the valuable leadership competencies for success past students noted how valuable it was to gain a global network of students who were doing similar work on their campus. They shared affirmations while understanding some of the different challenges facing the students, especially in the IASAS region of Africa. The Lead365 curriculum was delivered by passionate leadership experts, which made the experience rank higher than other leadership conferences they were a part. Students across the board supported the idea that the summit would continue but felt it would be worthwhile to move the summit to other parts of the world and not always host in the United States or North America. Students also suggested that IASAS consider creating a student global leader council where students can continue to support their work. This is something that has not been acted on yet by the association; however, it was agreed to send out a host prospectus to IASAS members to do as suggested and plan the 2018 summit in another part of the world. At the same time, there was new leadership with ACPA, and they could no longer support the initiative, and it was not possible to hire Lead365 leadership. In 2018 Stellenbosch University was chosen to host the summit by itself. Without Lead365 as the facilitator, IASAS leadership agreed to switch to focus on a theme, and it was then decided that a relevant theme for the 2018 SLGS would be mental health and well-being.

The number of participants increased in South Africa with over 50 students from closer to 20 different countries and universities. After South Africa, the summit would move to Sydney, Australia, and then Warsaw, Poland. The following summits never happened because of COVID-19.

It was not until 2023 that EucA agreed to resurrect the summit as part of the IASAS Ten Year Anniversary in Rome, Italy. The SLGS planning began by selecting a leadership team including a director, Dr. Kat Callahan, a co-director, Luca Di Pietro, as well as three experts in areas related to the theme of the IASAS Tenth Anniversary conference around two guiding questions. How can universities become more sustainable through concrete actions? To contribute to the sustainable growth of universities, what concrete proposals would you develop? With these questions in mind, three faculty experts were selected to present content that would be necessary for students to work on the projects they would propose at the end of the summit to the IASAS general body. 40 students were selected from 20 countries. Before coming to Rome, students attended four educational sessions led by the SLGS team including Giacomo Di Capua who presented on Universities as change agents including pertinent information about UNESCOs Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the use of systems theory when addressing global issues, and Irene Culcasi and Claudia Russo who presented information service learning and creating citizens of the world. These sessions along with student participation allowed the SLGS leadership team to create groups around SDGs of interest for the students.

These groups were then tasked with creating an action plan/policy proposal that achieved three things: 1. Understanding complex SDG governance mechanisms in students’ own institutions. 2. Create a systems map and identify levers of change from systems thinking to drive bottom-up SDG progress. 3. Design and lead a campaign for SDG governance/progress according to the logic of Service-Learning such that what students are studying can be useful for creating an impact in the community in terms of social transformation and what students do for the community in terms of service allows them to develop skills and gain knowledge in a deeper and more enriching way. On the last day of the conference, students presented their proposals to the IASAS general membership.

Building off of momentum from Italy, 2024 SLGS took place in Pretoria, South Africa at the University of Pretoria. Dr. Kat Callahan, Dr. Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo, and Giacomo Baccarelli joined University of Pretoria hosts Lanche van Tonder and his team of interns led by Constant Hoogkamer and Carmen Fernandes to create a SLGS experience the 2024 participants will not forget. This global summit established outcomes with the following themes: fostering sustainable mindsets, storytelling and narratives, cross-cultural collaboration, equitable leadership, practical skill development, leveraging artificial intelligence, and global citizenship. Students networked and dove into deep discussions with their peers around these themes and heard from inspiring keynotes. Additionally, at the University of Pretoria, student affairs and services staff and practitioners joined the students and participated in some of the sessions. We also held separate roundtables to exchange ideas and network. We hope to have this continue.

Each summit will not look the same and that is very intentional. Each year, the host institution along with its team has the freedom to select the theme, speakers, and design of the SLGS. This allows for exploration of current issues, ideas, and diverse experiences from year to year making the SLGS unique. As the SLGS moves forward, the next two SLGS will take place in Ireland and Albania. With a steady team committed for SLGS, we hope to create consistency across summits while allowing for adaptability for site-specific leadership teams to be developed and current global issues to take priority for annual themes.