

Minutes for SLAAC 10/9

Present: Aliza Frame, Ellen Tinder, Lynn Ishikawa, Cody Watson, Kathryn Millis, Smita Rahman, Fadi Fawaz

All minutes were approved

-Lynn shared information regarding the situation in Mason Hall

- Someone posted a notice to not pour anything in the sink, and used some type of translation device to put their message into Mandarin. A Chinese student reported the incident and was reported to Aliza by email. A photo of the sign was also posted to Facebook. A message was sent out to all international students regarding the issue.
- Chinese students in Lynn's class expressed a feeling that domestic students are not interested in befriending them
- Additional discussion on the topic:
 - Fadi talked about a program in place at another institution in which international students are paired with domestic students and the program had a budget
 - Smita raised the question of what is currently being done on campus
 - Aliza raised an issue of campus climate and follow up
- International students reported on their opinions of the issue:
 - One student offered her opinion that because DePauw is a small campus there isn't much space for difference and because of that people are likely to have problems with respecting differences. She elaborated and explained how her style of communication has changed since she has been on campus.
 - Another mentioned that before coming to the US, she never thought about the difference that might be evident or the difference in communication. For example, in class it is against a learned norm to speak out and give her opinion. However, at DePauw that is very different. It is hard in class, because before expressing their opinion they must also think about the language and therefore domestic students sometimes get to express their opinion first
 - In high level math/science courses international students can be the majority. He expressed the climate is great and that he has only had one incident where he felt. His first reaction to the sign in Mason was that he felt it was weird.
 - Smita asked if the sign was indicative of a larger campus climate issue
 - A student the sign reaffirmed her thought that there might be a larger issue
 - Another shared his experience on wanting to check out a study room in the library and feeling grouped . He doesn't view the sign as a larger issue, because an issue can't be assumed from one person's opinion. Doesn't see any form of resolution.

Proposes that we should try and minimize issues but acknowledge that issues will never fully dissolve. She stated she was glad that the sign was posted because it allowed for discussion to happen.

- Smita asked for suggestions on how to improve campus climate
 - Culture exchange
 - Interviews between different cultures/exchange ideas
 - International students at DePauw helping domestic students prepare for their own study abroad experience.
- Asked if other international students feel the same about the climate as Chinese students
 - A student responded said she doesn't feel as though it is unique to Chinese students. She said that during orientation there are flags of every country on campus but noticed that it was not always the case and that differences are not always celebrated on campus
- The question was raised on how some international students assimilate and why others might have a harder time
 - Stated that he engaged with domestic students in lab and through group projects and that he likes to talk to other students in the lab
- Fadi proposed the idea of sending a survey or meeting with students of different nationalities to see what they want and what ideas they have for campus climate
- Aliza asked the students what they view works well for them and what doesn't
 - Student responded that what works best is speaking to professors more and having more conversations and taking more initiative to meet with international student services
 - From his perspective he feels as though American students are independent and they sometimes enjoy being alone, he feels as though his personality is similar. But, he feels as though Chinese friends want to spend more time together. His idea is that the way each culture makes friends is very different which is why the expectations are different
- Proposed the question that if international students feel as though the sign is indicative of a larger issues than that is what is important.
 - Smita said that sign seemed to promote the idea of stereotypes and Aliza said the sign led to more discussion of other bias incidents that have been unreported and that the situation has led made them feel more comfortable reporting issues. She also said that from asking other students about the issue believed that it might be cleaning staff, not students.

- Smita asked what role SLAAC might play in addressing the issue of the sign
 - Asking for a survey of international student?
 - What kinds of questions are being asked?
 - Who should the survey be sent out to?
 - Aliza noted that the questions would change if the survey were sent out to only international students
 - Smita proposed collecting data first and then moving forward
- Campus Climate: Adequacy and Coordination of University Response:
 - Cody explained the student's perspective that students want to talk about campus climate but they don't necessarily want to be the ones to start the conversation. Student government is looking into trying to gather information beforehand so everyone is able to respond- trying to tweak their process
 - How do conversations get initiated?
 - Smita noticed the sense that issues have calmed however there is still a sense of elements that still need to be talked about
 - Lynn asked if there were mandatory programs that discuss issues of campus climate
 - Aliza responded with the introduction of programs initiated into the first-year mentor program and noticed that there was a difference between this class and past classes on how they respond to issues of inclusion
 - M-requirement was brought up
 - Lynn mentioned that in the discussion in her class the older international students accepted that they weren't going to make domestic friends.
 - Study abroad-
 - Are international students used as a resource when domestic students are preparing to go abroad
 - A lot of campus climate concerns regarded faculty-
 - Smita asked if there was any follow up regarding the requirement of diversity training
 - Smita proposed that Carrie Klaus come in to talk in our next meeting
 - Lynn proposed the idea of a video being made with the accounts of international students
- Appointment of SLAAC representative to committee discussing curricular/ co-curricular issue
 - Smita asked for a volunteer to represent SLAAC
 - Fadi and Kathryn volunteered

