



All Things Ignatian



Creighton Students Union Presidential Fellowship

John McCoy, President, Creighton Students Union

The Creighton Students Union Presidential Fellowship began in the fall of 2013 as an initiative by CSU, Creighton University's comprehensive student government to encourage participation in student government by the newest members of the Creighton community and help show the expectations students have of each other in leadership roles.

Early Stages and Selection

The CSU Executive Committee worked with the Admissions Staff to develop a pool of potential participants. Admissions counselors provided recommendations of admitted high school seniors based on their potential shown in their resumes and application essays. Emphasis was placed on involvement in extracurricular activities in high school, especially student government. Further acknowledgment was given to students also admitted to the Honors Program, Cortina Program, or Freshman Leadership Program, commuter and on-campus students, and other typical demographic characteristics like "first generation" status, state of residence, and gender.

In conjunction with the Admissions office, a list of approximately fifty students was compiled for invitation to the program. Formal invitations were sent followed by phone calls from the CSU executive committee and frequent communication by the CSU President. After the May 1 deadline, sixteen students accepted the invitation to participate in the inaugural semester of the program.

The summer months were spent developing a unique curriculum focusing on showcasing student leadership at Creighton and building the next "generation" of student leaders.

The Program

The CSU Presidential Fellowship began in August of 2013 with a welcome lunch and reception for participants and their families. The reception served as a welcome to Creighton and the community we have. The welcome program featured welcomes by the CSU Executive Committee, Vice Provost for Student Life Dr. John Cernech, and University Provost Dr. Edward O'Connor.

The curriculum began the Friday following the beginning of classes and featured three different segments designed to prepare the participants for leadership at Creighton: an introduction to leadership theory and style, development of practical skills, and an introduction to Ignatian leadership.

Leadership Theory and Style

The first four weeks of the semester were spent discussing different leadership skills and styles. Each week featured a different guest speaker to either discuss their experience with leadership in different arenas or leadership theory at a larger level.

The first week featured Creighton University President Timothy Lannon, S.J. Father Lannon led a discussion about his experience leading a diverse group of people found at an educational institution and his personal experience as a student leader at Creighton.

The second week of the semester featured Creighton School of Law alumnus Congressman Lee Terry. Congressman Terry

"Being a leader that can leave a group and still have the group succeed is an incredibly important thing to realize as the purpose of being a leader."

— Julia Neppel, CSU Presidential Fellow

discussed his experience as a community leader and the skills he often uses in Washington DC or other entities where multiple leaders need to interact with each other.

The third guest speaker from the community concluded the segment on leadership styles. Carolina Quezada, Director of the Latino Center of the Midlands, led a discussion surrounding her experience as a leader in the community and in the non-profit sector. Each of the three guest speakers showcased different experiences and connections to Creighton, offering a well-rounded introduction to leadership styles.

The first segment of the semester also featured two guest speakers on Leadership Theory. Dr. Michele Bogard, Associate Vice Provost for Student Life and CSU Advisor, introduced the fellows to the different leadership styles and techniques. The following week, Ms. Katie Wadas-Thalken walked the fellows through the Strengths Quest exercise which introduced the fellows into leading with strengths and building a team complete with members showcasing different strengths and capabilities.

Practical Skills

The second segment of the semester featured weekly sessions on practical skills and information that would be helpful for the fellows as they start looking to take new leadership roles on campus. Sessions featured a professionalism presentation by Mr. Jim Bretl and Ms. Lisa Brockhoff from the Career Center focusing on image and personal presentation, a mock interview conducted by the CSU Executive team to give the fellows a glance at what interviews for student leadership positions are like, a CSU information session, and a presentation by Ms. Sue Selde on the importance of balance and a healthy lifestyle in college and especially as students take on added responsibility with new positions in leadership.

Ignatian Leadership

The final segment of the program featured an introduction to the special Ignatian tradition of leadership at Creighton. Mr. Joey Kimes, Assistant Director of the Student Activities Office, offered a presentation on Chris Lowmy's "Heroic Leadership" and Fr. Andy Alexander walked the fellows through the history of the Jesuit order and offered his perspective of what it means to lead within the Ignatian tradition.

The three segments of the semester were designed to introduce the fellows to leadership at a high level, give them skills to succeed as leaders in the future at Creighton University in any organization, and show them the importance of the Ignatian tradition of Creighton University and how the Ignatian tradition impacts student leaders throughout their time at Creighton University.

Sponsored by the Creighton University Jesuit Community, in association with the Degman Center for Ignatian Spirituality.