

The Student Government Activist: Our Role in the Movement

Presenters: Marcos Montes, ASI VP for External Affairs and Marcus Rodriguez ASI Director of Government Affairs and Leadership Programs

Using the shared governance model as an opportunity to develop activist practice scenarios, student government curriculums can focus on the principles of partnership, equity, accountability, and ownership. Within this empowered framework, emerging leaders compare 'positional' to 'influential' leadership and develop partnerships that produce meaningful initiatives and learning outcomes. This session considers student government's contribution to social movements. For example, our role in establishing EPIC and EOP at Cal State LA.

In addition, we will explore more modern examples of how student activists are organizing today. For example the Cal State LA Civic University certificate program, ASI international service learning project, opposing tuition increases, and local government collaborations all serve as components of progressive student leader development.

The lecture/presentation will incorporate a Q&A portion and opportunity for an open forum to create space for learning, organizing, and taking action.

We'll discuss social constructionism and the Social Change Model as it relates to student government and civic engagement. We'll also reference components of Decision Theory, Loss Aversion, Meaning-Making and Transition Theory. Additionally, we want to explore the idea of privilege and address access and equity issues. Civic engagement, as a means of representation and expression, and community organizing, as an avenue of the social activist, will be our focus when it comes to leadership development for the public good. References will include the Cal State LA ASI Leadership Curriculum which affects development in three key areas:

Head – Cognitive Development

Hands – Physical Act/Civic Engagement and Service Learning

Heart – Reflection/Meaning Making

Program and partner highlights will include:

The Civic University (CU)

CU is a non-credit certificate program covering the processes and the important functions of the Los Angeles city government. Offered by the College of Professional and Global Education (PaGE), in partnership with the Pat Brown Institute at Cal State LA and the Office of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, the Civic University arose from a shared belief that there are immense gaps in public knowledge and understanding of how Los Angeles city government works. CU encompasses targeted learning for high impact community members, students, city staff, and public officials with true advocate potential. Workshops provided tools necessary to understanding, engaging, and influencing City Hall. Seminars focused on key institutions within city government, access to City power centers, the budget process, and data use and development.

ASI Alternative Break International Service Learning

ASI plans an annual international service program focused on a particular social issue (e.g. poverty, education reform, the environment). Students study and dialogue about the complex factors affecting

these issues and the conflicting opinions about current societal solutions. The goal is to have students critically think about problem solving with an emphasis on group and individual reflection. Using an immersion technique, students are left with a new sense and understanding about themselves, service, and avenues for community engagement.

The Students United to Reach Goals in Education (SURGE)

SURGE is a student organization founded in California State University Los Angeles, on the principle of promoting higher education among both high school and college students regardless of legal status. The mission of SURGE is to encourage and increase the number of students attending and graduating from institutions of higher education through community involvement, scholarships and political activism and advocacy.

Students for Quality Education (SQE)

SQE was formed by students in the California State University (CSU) system to build the student movement for educational rights in public higher education. We were assisted in our efforts by the California Faculty Association, SQE advocates for high quality and relevant education, and student services such as the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).

The City Impact Lab in Los Angeles

The City Impact Lab brings together those working to make an impact - in government, in the arts, in neighborhoods, in non-profits, and in business - to share strategies and collaborate. From workshops and roundtables to seminars and networking mixers, the City Impact Lab provides various ways for people and groups to increase their effectiveness and deepen their impact as civic leaders.

Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs

Pat Brown Institute, a presidentially chartered institute at California State University, Los Angeles, is a non-partisan public policy center dedicated to sustaining the vision and legacy of former California Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown through convening public policy forums, engaging multi sector stakeholders and diverse communities, and conducting timely policy research and community-driven initiatives.

California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG)

CALPIRG combines the expertise of professionals and contributions of individual citizens to effect legislative reforms on a state and national level for safe drinking water, clean air, efficient sources of energy, food safety laws, limits on federal and state political contributions and spending, and many other consumer-related issues.