Sheryl Reed

Field Notes Stories I & II

Jrn 200

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**News Story 1**

**First Interview**

11.14.13 at approximately 4:00 p.m. with Jean Ann Miller, M.S.W. Director of Center for Student Activities and Leadership Development at OU. Phone: 248.370.4332

Location: 49 Oakland Center, in the basement level.

There is a large front office and greeting space directly on the left when entering the CSA office, and to the left is a nice seating area. On the other side of the seating area are tables and chairs in blocks, and then against the walls are tables and chairs with computers with notes on them for club use only.

Ms. Miller was not in her office, she was detained at a meeting, I waited just over 30 minutes for her to arrive. She greeted me with an apology. I was still excited to have the interview opportunity, so I smiled and said hello, thank you, that is not a problem, nice to meet you. I tried to play down that I even noticed the time. She escorted me into her office behind the large front office space area and left her door open half way, she made gestures she was cold and said her office was always cold. There were lots of papers, and sticky notes about her desk and all around her. Her demeanor was pleasant.

We talked about the new student organizations starting this year out of the Center for Student Activities and Leadership Development (CSA), and what the incentive might have been for each new club. There are five new clubs with an open invitation to all OU students, plus one waiting for approval and there is consideration of additional clubs and/or inclusive efforts.

New clubs started:

* **Mission Kindness,** with President Rebekah Thomas

This is a service club, and they have a tag line “Where ever there is a human being there is an opportunity for kindness.” –Seneca. I did ask who is Senca? Miller did not know, but she said they are going around campus doing random acts of kindness.

Meeting dates & times: Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. at 225 HHA

* **Classic Films**, actually named **Classic Hollywood Club**, with President Amber Stankoff. The club has a social status; they discuss the Golden Era of film. She said it attracts cinema studies majors who really like old films.

Meeting date & time: Friday at 1:00, in the Oakland Center.

* **Nifty Knitting**, with President Andrea Greynolds. Miller: They offer supplies of yarn and needles and teach knitting, or knit together while socializing.

Meeting time & date: Friday, 12:pm -5:pm, Oakland Center, in CSA lounge area for groups to meet, stay as long as you can each meeting.

* **Red Cross**, with President Luke Winkel , This club has service status,

Meeting date & time: Tuesdays at 12:pm, Oakland Center, Room 125

Miller said This club helps out with the Red Cross, and is currently collecting clothes for veterans. In response to my question, which club seems to have had the best response of students showing interests? Miller said this club has had a great response with 60-70 members right now. I asked why did she think this group had such a high number of responders so quickly. She said it was because it gave the students a chance to help others and it looked good on their resumes especially if they were in a HS program.

* **British at Heart Club**, with President Mindy Cao. I asked what inspired the start of this club? “This developed from the students who had studied abroad in Brittan, Oxford, who wanted to continue with the cultural learning of Brittan,” said Miller.

Website: This as a social group for any and all anglophiles with discussion about British music, culture, literature, proper tea etiquette and more as described on their website.

They meet on Mondays @6:00 p.m., bi-weekly, at the Honors College lounge.

**Archery club** is being put together and waiting on approval. She said they will probably meet at Great Lakes mall for purpose of using the archery range.

The non traditional/adult learners have been a personal interest of hers. She notices that there are not as many adult learners, making them a minority in the school. Miller is interested in future research to see if adult learners would be interested in a student organization or a social gathering to come together and give each other support.

She also shared concern for two other categories of students.

One was the transfer students not getting the same introduction into the school as the freshman students and do not get as much information at the start of the new year to get connected quicker.

The other was the commuter students not being included in activities as much students who live in campus housing. The students in campus housing have a resident assistant (RA) who keeps them up on activities and collects the students to travel to events in groups. She sees commuters sitting in their vehicles to eat their food and drinks, with their cars running, spending gas monies. Treat commuters differently, bring hot cocoa out to them in the parking lot on cold mornings instead of making them come in to get it to help them feel included and important as part of the student body.

All the clubs are posted on the website: [www.oakland.edu/csa](http://www.oakland.edu/csa) or search for GrizzOrgs.

I asked why did these clubs start this year, was there a particular reason(s)? She said that when one or two students have a passion for something and there isn’t already a club, or they want to do something similar to what is being done but do it a little differently, they find others that are interested and an academic advisor and they come to CSA for approval. There has to be 4 registered OU students and 1 on campus advisor for part of the registration

Q&A

Question: What age do you consider adult learners?

Answer: ages 18-24 traditionally, and anyone older is an adult learner.

Question: What directs your own personal interest in adult learners?

Answer: To make sure adult learners feel welcomed, and included in the community. Transfer students don’t get the same orientation as first year students and they miss out on information.

Question: What is the benefit of being involved in a student organization?

Answer: “Some of the benefits students receive from their involvement in the clubs are feeling connected to a community, that adds to the student life experience, acquiring new skills such as leadership, communication and multiculturalism, in addition to being able to add the experience to their resume to round it out or for positive impact on grad school opportunities.” “A person’s experience is not just academic, there is a whole person to address and it helps round out the college experience giving a social opportunity”. “Also, it looks good on a resume to lead or participate in a group”. Nursing professionals can put the Red Cross participation on their resumes to give them a boost when competing for jobs when they graduate or for grad school opportunities.” “Participation makes the experience more enjoyable for going to school.” Friendships.

She explained, “This is a little mirror to what is out in the real world.”

She said that some of the groups do allow participation in their groups that are not currently enrolled students and that is up to each group, and some of the student events allow the same, depending on the event, so if I knew someone who I wanted to bring with me to a club that I may decide to join, that may be an option.

I mentioned that I would like to interview one of the presidents or members of the new clubs and she told me that the knitting club was meeting out in the table block area tomorrow and she would introduce me to Andrea the president of the club. I said that would be great and thanked her and made the commitment to come back the next day.

**Second Interview**

11.15.13, in the afternoon, approximately 2:pm, with Andrea Greynolds, the president of the Nifty Knitting club, CSA office student area, her Phone: 248.613.1341, email: argreyno@oakland.edu.

I walked in to the CSA office, and I greeted Jean Ann Miller and then she pointed to the group and told me that the red head was Andrea and she was expecting me. I thanked her and went over to Andrea and introduced myself. We sat down at the table block that was empty right behind the table she was at with three other girls. One girl left to another part of the room to go do homework right then.

**Q&A**

Question: How long have you been involved with the CSA?

Answer: This is the first group that she has ever been involved in and the first time she has been president of a club. It started in the middle of this semester.

Question: How many members are in your club right now?

Answer: Five faithfully, plus some that come here and there, so about 11, they just got started this semester.

Question: What inspired you to put this club together?

Answer: She has been a fan of knitting since age 7, when she experienced a loom at camp. “I have an introvert personality and leading this club helps me to talk to others to show them how to knit, but there is no social pressure to talk.”

She said Jean Ann Miller is her advisor and encouraged her to start a club to help her with her social skills. “The group can knit together and discuss things like patterns and what they are working on, but there is no pressure to talk.”

Question: Has your involvement changed your experience here at OU?

Answer: The club is just started, but yes, we get together but there is no pressure to talk.

Question: In addition to improving your social skills and learning to knit, what other benefits will students get who join your club?

Answer: There use to be a knitting group who left behind yarn and needles, so we loan both knitting and crochet needles and free yarn, and lots of free patterns, an instruction book, and you can learn how to follow patters too. It is a stress release, and you make friendships, gives a creative outlet, and you can knit things for yourself, and have charity opportunities. They will be working on charitable projects throughout the year, such as blankets for preemie babies, and miscarried babies, chemo caps, scarves for vets, and blankets for animals in shelters. She said they can teach someone how to knit in 40 minutes or less, at a level where they could make a scarf. They will also have funding to buy more needles and yarn.

She then showed me some of the projects she had with her that she had done, such as the purse she knitted, and some projects she was working on, and different patterns for different skill levels stored on her laptop.

I introduced myself (first & last name) to the two other girls seated at the knitting table and they did say hi, but they were hesitant to say their names at first, then gave their first names Cita and Jessica. They were knitting and did not answer when I asked what they were working on, and just did not answer when I asked if I could ask them some questions.

**Third Interview**

11.16.13, at 1:30 p.m., with Mindy Cao, President of British at Heart club, meet at the Kresge Library, her phone 586.565-2035, email: [mjcao@oakland.edu](mailto:mjcao@oakland.edu).

Mindy responded to my email invitation to meet up for an interview, and she wore a brown coat and green purse to help me identify her. We agreed to meet on the entrance level (level 2) of the Kresge Library. She arrived only a couple minutes late. We greeted each other politely and sat in the casual seating area with the living room-like stuffed chairs and a coffee table in front of us. No computers set up in that area or study desks, it was clear that the area was intended to be used as a social setting. The café was open, I offered a coffee, and she declined.

Q&A

Question: How long have you been involved in CSA student organizations?

Answer: Three years plus this year, and this year will be the last.

Question: Are you involved in other clubs right now too?

Answer: Yes, in a sorority, and a treasurer of another group that runs all the sororities while a full-time student.

Question: How do you have time for all that?

Answer: “There is enough time to do everything. Just pick what you’re passionate about and do it.”

Question: Was this social club your idea?

Answer: It was a joint idea, between her and Brittany Kelley, her vice-president. The idea came about over dinner conversation - to start a general theme ‘British’ for something fun to do.

Question: What inspired you to put this club together?

Answer: To embrace the British culture more on the campus and have a general club for all things British instead of focusing on one aspect of the culture.

Question: How many members are in your club?

Answer: 20-25

Question: Is your involvement in this club changing your experience at OU?

Answer: “Being the president gives more perspective of how to run an organization.”

Being a member is easier because of less responsibility, but as the president I am always looking for ways to improve the experience.

Question: What can someone expect at a meeting in addition to what is described on the website?

Answer: Trivia, other game playing or Netflix in relation to the theme.

Question: What seems to be something that excites the group the most at meetings?

Answer: They bring relics and dress up in costume and bring food related to the theme. They also have tea and have a person who is the Master of Tea, and their job is to ensure tea bags are ready.

Question: What are some of the benefits for a student who is involved in your club?

Answer: Brings people who share the same interest together. The theme is decided before the club’s first meeting at the beginning of the semester, but what they do to play out that theme is up to the group. Themes are posted in advance on the club’s Facebook page. Next semester they will start fund raisers, a Better World book drive for underprivileged kids and a bake sale for the American Heart Association.

She then explained that all the officers who run the group right now will not be returning to OU next fall as they are all graduating, so they are looking for a full officer replacement. I wished her good luck with the transition.

Overall, Mindy seemed at ease talking to me, but at the same time a little tense. I took it as probably normal since she came to met a stranger and let the stranger ask her a serious of questions, none of which she heard before the interview. She was very pleasant.

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