Fingers on the Pulse: A Narrative-based Approach to Student Partnerships

Oral, Successful and sustainable partnerships

Mr George Greig, Miss Aisha Hancox, Miss Kesaia Tapueluelu

University Of Auckland, Symond Street, New Zealand

Abstract:

The success of any student engagement team depends on the design of its student partnerships. Student partnerships provide professional staff with a finger on the pulse of the student community. Popular models employ students as partners to lead and direct student-serving programmes. As a team of experienced student partners, we have come to recognise the utility of student partnerships go only as far as the preparation its professional and teaching staff are willing to invest. Since becoming an industry truism, we have observed patterns of ineffective preparation and poor execution in student partnerships of all types. Whether as university staff, student body leaders or academic assistants, certainty and communication have long been determining factors in the success of any partnership. Despite this, popular strategies which use students as partners continue to favour flexibility over certainty and visibility over communication. This fatal paradigm limits engagement with students and utility to university staff. This presentation will propose a new way of building student partnerships in the student engagement sphere. Drawing from our experiences as student partners, we will demonstrate how narrative-based models address limitations in the modern partnership approach. Compartmentalising student partnerships into narrative phases encourages certainty in its form and communication in its function. This change in paradigm allows greater long-term integration between student partnerships and university staff, keeping the student engagement finger closer to the pulse of its student cohorts.

Biography:

George Greig is an undergraduate student completing his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws. He has worked as an academic mentor in the School of Social Sciences, a student leader in the Auckland Law School and student leader for junior students.

Aisha Hancox is an undergraduate student completing her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws. She has worked as an academic mentor in the School of Culture, Languages and Linguistics with Maori and Pacific students and a mentor in the Auckland Law School.

Kesaia Tapueluelu is completing her Masters in Theology. She has worked as a student leader for intending students, junior students and with Maori and Pacific students in the School of Humanities.
The three students currently work together as student partners with professional staff managing independent teams of student academic mentors.