

## ESS Cultural Clubs Focus Group Notes

### Caribbean Students' Organization

- Had never been aware of USC and clubs involvement before
- Never participated international week before - didn't know how to get involved
- Sarawah/ESS encouraged them to be apart of it
- Tried to have event at the Wave/Spoke during International Week
  - ESS tried to help subsidize costs
  - It didn't end up happening
  - But CO had a booth which they felt gave them a lot of presence
  - ESS was very accommodating and tried to get CSO as involved as possible
  - This interaction has created a positive relationship
  - Overall had a good day at the booth during International Week
  - More people coming from other intl. students association/ESS asking about CSO personally now
  - CSO felt people knew more about them now which is positive
- CSO believes more exposure the better
- Sarawah put them in touch with a contact for international week
  - Unfortunately the contact couldn't help CSO for international week (\*steel band crew contact: student planned orchestra with traditional instruments)
  - CSO felt this was a good contact nonetheless
  - Although it didn't work for International Week, great contact b/c they might utilize them for later events
  - Prior to this, they were trying to outsource people from Toronto but this London group is much more affordable and accessible
- Is the relationship a supportive one? How could the relationship be improved? What kind of things would you like to receive from the program? What kind of benefits do you see getting out of the relationship?
  - Relationship is fairly new, just started this semester
  - Going forward - CSO wasn't aware about the club/focus group availability but now knowing it's there, they can get more support by getting info about intl. week or anything having to do with related topics
  - CSO finds it hard to get info about what events are happening through the year affecting/regarding intl. clubs
  - They feel it is difficult to know what other intl. clubs are doing, yet through ESS it might be easier to get this information
  - When they met for international week before in Oct, there were other clubs interested in being apart of the week
  - These groups invited CSO to their events, which was a great connection for them ex. Invited to Israel on Campus event
  - CSO likes the connection provided b/w other clubs through ESS but feels it can be improved
  - CSO suggestion: more focus on informing students that there are ethno cultural clubs they can be apart of

- They feel a lot of Caribbean students as well as the general student population don't know about CSO
  - Suggestion: Inform international students when they come to Western what kind of Ethnocultural clubs are available to them
- Do you see Ethnocultural being a good medium for advertising your events and increasing awareness? Let's say ethno can do whatever, how would you describe the best way for them to help you with advertising for your events and reaching out for more students?
  - Hard thing about exposure at Western is that while specific USC sects might be able to have posters and different information in more critical places around campus, a lot of clubs are restricted to very specific places where there are a bunch of posters already and you can't do much to advertise - maybe the Internet would be a great place to advertise: Facebook connection/email/letting students know that CSO is having this event this week
  - They find Internet is probably the best way of getting information out - social media - other than in person
  - They hope to have ESS implement certain events where CSO is invited to talk or host discussions about topics like diversity in Caribbean or in Canada
  - They also would like to know what other cultural clubs are doing
    - \*\*Perhaps provide an event schedule to all groups?
  - CSO wants to support different intl. clubs, so therefore would be nice to know when they're having events so scheduling doesn't conflict
  - Would help both clubs b/c difficult for attendees to figure out where they want to go if events are scheduled during the same time
- How in advance does your club set dates?
  - Cultural Show Weekend - CSO always knows about it in September, yet event is planned for January
  - Homecoming Day
  - They have a general idea of where in the semester events fall
  - Social dates aren't set in stone but are flexible
- Is this an interest to you: For ethno to have events with other cultural clubs? Are you interested in unified events?
  - CSO: Sometimes it just so happens that somebody hears about the club and wants to have a collaboration, however unfortunately this is not something that is easily obtained
  - Always open to collaboration once discussed
  - If not collaboration, they find that people do not know about CSO culture and they are also interested to know about other cultures
  - Even if they are not collaborating, just knowing about other cultural events is good to spark interest so they have the option of going to learn more
  - ESS should focus on connections b/w clubs and students and the clubs
- Is there anything you would like from the program?
  - CSO: They don't know a whole lot about ESS or what they've done in the past

- Focus more so on the connection b/w students and the incoming students to create more awareness of international clubs
- Way to let people know more about the international community
- Suggestion: Idea of creating some sort of hub of information - different clubs can be listed and information can be updated, yet specific to only cultural/international clubs vs. Western Link
- ESS clubs are unique b/c they specifically relate to something that is unique about people on an everyday basis ex. Being different ethnicity
  - A hub would be cool to give people the awareness that there is a cultural group that can support you and maybe create a homely connection based on your ethnicity
  - It makes a huge difference knowing that there are other people from where you're from and interacting with those people can make the transition and Western experience a lot better - especially for international students since it gives them a "taste of home"
  - Some people assimilate well vs. others, so it's nice to have a welcoming community like this
- Best support is to connect all the clubs together as well as create more student awareness about these clubs
- There are certain aspects of all cultures that they want to showcase like food, but before it was difficult to have food served on campus (USC restriction)
- CSO would like to know from ESS exactly why this isn't possible - and hopefully they can work to get it changed
- Are you interested in partnering with Ethnocultural with their own events ex. Culture is not a costume?
  - Depending on the events, it might be interesting to them
  - They weren't aware of what the ethnocultural group does in terms of events
  - Even if it's not something that might not directly affect the club, it'd be nice to open these events up to members
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