



HYDRA

Civic Engagement At and Beyond Southwestern University



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In Memory

Beloved student, Rob Atkinson is remembered by his friends, peers, and professors at Southwestern University on a daily basis. Facebook groups and pictures reflect his laughter and friendships, conversations reflect his wisdom, and events such as Make Peace and the Rob Atkinson Lecture Series give a glimpse into his passion for peace and dialogue.

On Tuesday, April 7th the Kappa Sigma fraternity opened their home to professors, staff, and students to discuss ideas surrounding "passion". Facilitators of the event were Philosophy professor, Dr. Phil Hopkins and Civic Engagement Specialist/AmeriCorps*VISTA, Jessica Hager '08. For two hours a conversation developed questioning the pursuit of passions, problematic and systemic issues surrounding societal molds and pressures, the "look and feel" of truly open dialogue, and the graceful way in which Rob attempted to explore such topics in his daily life.

There is no agenda for this Lecture Series, and one individual even commented that it should be renamed the Rob Atkinson Discussion Series because no one is lecturing; this bi-monthly gathering is about dialogue, honesty, and learning from others. When reading the Kappa Sigma's online invitation, one can find the following description of the Series:

"We can think of no better way to pay tribute to our dear friend and brother Robert Atkinson than by making our life and home an extension of the classroom. In an attempt to accomplish this, we at Kappa Sigma will be hosting a lecture series. Rob's lecture series will present faculty, students, and staff with an opportunity to discuss what they are most passionate about and how they are living in accordance with their passion. We hope to foster open honest discussion outside of the sterile classroom environment and allow for the barriers between student, faculty, and staff to be broken down. It is our sincere belief that everyone can and will benefit from such



Democratic discussion. We encourage anyone from the Southwestern Community to attend this event, whether faculty, staff, or student. The only thing that we ask is that you leave biases at the door and come into this event with an open heart and mind!"

Keep an eye out for the next discussion, as the Kappa Sigmas hope to continue for many more years to come.

Southwestern students were also inspired by Rob's passion for peace and began constructing a rotating art exhibit known as "Make Peace" in honor and memory of him. "Make Peace" displays a variety of paintings, music compositions, photographs, artifacts, and other art forms focusing on their personal views and meanings of peace. To see the unveiling, join the Southwestern community on Tuesday, April 21st in the Bishop's Lounge.

CEG Found Its Roots

by Abbie Ornelas '12 & Jessica Hager '08

The Civic Engagement/ Green hall (CEG hall) is a place where like-minded individuals can live together in a tight-knit community. The Civic Engagement aspect of the hall embraces members' awareness of society's issues and their passion for creating change. The Green aspect speaks to minimizing mankind's negative impact on the environment. The common living quarters will enable members striving for sustainable life styles to collaborate on projects and collectively decrease their harmful effects on the environment.

The fact that there will be nineteen students with different majors and interests will allow for different perspectives, while still encouraging friendships. These friendships will be strengthened through fun group activities, which will be defined by the interests of the members; this could range from community service projects to helping out in the community garden, or just going out and playing a game of volleyball. The lack of structure leaves much leeway for those in the hall to implement any ideas or pet projects they may have, and offers ample leadership opportunities.

Ideally the green and civically engaged habits adopted while living in the CEG Hall will continue throughout the lives of the residents, and the friendships made will endure long after our year on the first floor of Moody-Shearn Hall.

For the first time in two years, the CEG Hall will make its way back to its roots in Moody-Shearn. Less than a decade ago, students made Moody-Shearn the home of the first Green Hall. It is said that that they wanted to have a place where the environmental movement was understood, so they created an on-campus living community where this could flourish. Two years ago, the Green Hall became the Civic Engagement/Green Hall in an effort to slightly expand its goal, and continues to grow in its stability. It is open to all sophomores who will not be living abroad during their fall or spring semesters.

Congratulations to the new Civic Engagement/Green Hall Residents for 2009-2010!

Alexis Kropf	Whitney Moore
Martha Simon	Charlie Toro
Rob Connell	Cheyney Nelson
Eric Gonzales	Jazz Thomas
Carissa Nash	Jordan Romero
Lillie Mayeux	Daniela Garcia
Melisa Garcia	Kate Castles
Kim Sump	Serilyn Caudle
Brandon O'Conner	Simon Tian
Abbie Ornelas, RA	



The 2007-2008 CEG Residents after the Dorothy Lord Residential Building Dedication.

SEAKing Challenge for Change

by Paige Menking '11

April 1 was the kick off of Students for Environmental Activism and Knowledge's (SEAK) second annual Campus Energy Challenge, an event that pits dorm against dorm in a competition to see who can save the most energy and do the most benefit to our planet throughout April.

During the month, SEAK will encourage the SU campus to make small changes to their daily routine to reduce their energy consumption, and will raise awareness and consciousness about electricity usage through various events on campus. The event is based on the premise that it takes 21 days to start a new habit - if people can change their energy consumption patterns for 30 days, it will become part of their new routine. SEAK hopes that the end result will be greener living as second nature to the campus community.

"In the spirit of the Campus Energy Challenge, I have unplugged my fridge and turned off my air conditioning for the month of April," SEAK member and Ruter resident Allen Smith said. "Though they may seem like small, insignificant acts, I'd take those small acts over none at all. Eventually, those small practices will turn into habits which will last a lifetime."

The Campus Energy Challenge takes an atypical approach at educating the campus on energy consumption and environmentalism by taking away the doom and gloom, and making it into a game instead.

"I think the Campus Energy Challenge changes the way that students view energy conservation. By rewarding their steps to change their energy consumption patterns they begin to think critically about their habits," Campus Energy Challenge Chair Tanlyn Roelofs said. "If it takes rewards to persuade people to save energy, then I think that is a necessary step."

As part of the month-long Challenge, SEAK will sponsor many events on campus. Some are silly, some are serious and some are both, but all of them are aimed at mobilizing the student body around greening their daily lives and the campus. Events include a Smelliest Person Competition, Recess in the Dark, a Critical Mass Bike Ride, and an Earth Day Festival, but it all culminates with the Do It in the Dark Party where the victors will be announced.

SEAK is distributing dorm sustainability checklists to all on-campus residents with simple and easy, but important green living tips. Among them are: turning off unused lights, switching out incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents, unplugging cell phone chargers and unused appliances (even when turned off), turning off your thermostat on pretty days, taking shorter or colder showers and washing clothes on the cold cycle.



Boxing match between "Wind Turbine" and "Coal Fired Power Plant" during 2008 Challenge... "Wind Turbine" won!

While the Campus Energy Challenge will not fix the larger institutionalized problems that perpetuate climate change, it will make a difference in the energy consumption of this campus and how people perceive their daily actions in relation to the planet.

"To make any impact in reducing the effects of global warming we all have to act!" Roelofs said. "The Campus Energy Challenge is a small step, but a step none the less, in that direction."

NERF's Break the "Bubble"

by Cameron Navarro '10

As Student Congress President Alex Caple bolts across the mall with a bright yellow NERF gun, in quick pursuit of a panicked fellow with a matching weapon, you might wonder why the school allows Alpha Phi Omega (more commonly referred to as APO) to exist on this campus. The best answer I have is illustrated in APO's "three full purposes": Leadership, Friendship, Service. As cliché as these words seem, they easily identify what our service fraternity (fraternity/sorority – we're co-ed) is all about. These purposes are also the best way of describing why APO thrives on college campuses (especially Southwestern University).

There are few places, other than a college campus where students can have their voice heard in such a magnitude. With our activist generation, organizations like APO have created a place where people can come together and help improve their communities and lives. APO really extends the college experience beyond Southwestern's (SU) walls while other student organizations stay in the Southwestern "bubble". Many of SU's student organizations are built around the concept of making the "SU Experience" better, but if there is one thing APO does well (and honestly, we do a lot of things well), it is stepping outside the SU bubble we all slip into every August. It helps students to meet the faces of Georgetown and the faces of Georgetown meet the students.

There are many organizations (Ride On Center for Kids – R.O.C.K is a great example) that would not be the same without the help of APO. I don't want to speak for too many people, but I know that the APO members who volunteer at these Georgetown events are changed significantly by their experiences. You never understand the need of the community until you are actively involved - this is where APO steps in. It becomes the facilitator in an ongoing

dialogue between student and community.

Although many new members who join APO are not leaders or are new to service, every one of us leaves SU changed. We leave with valuable experience, even if it is how to communicate effectively through email, although most of us leave SU with a much more profound experience than email correspondence. Alpha Phi Omega is a valuable part of the Southwestern experience not only for the members, but for the Georgetown community who is left with a valuable perspective on what the Southwestern community can accomplish. So the next time you see Alex Caple sprinting across the lawn with a bright yellow NERF gun, or you see some students cleaning up the parks, or you buy a sno-cone to support Relay for Life, know that there is a drive behind these students to improve the world around them and the communities they live in.

*If you like helping people, and playing with NERF guns, APO is for you! Email me at navarroc@southwestern.edu.



Alpha Phi Omega members during one of their many service projects.

Your Future Awaits: Fellowships and Opportunities

Fascell Fellows: The program enables practicing democracy activists, scholars, and journalists from around the world to deepen their understanding of democracy and enhance their ability to promote democratic change. www.ned.org

Echoing Green: Through the prestigious two-year Echoing Green Fellowship, emerging visionaries receive up to \$90,000 in seed funding, obtain health insurance and gain in Echoing Green a mentor that will help them build organizations that address the root causes of society's seemingly intractable problems. www.echoinggreen.org

Urban Fellows Program: All students who are interested in pursuing a career in government and public service are encouraged to apply regardless of academic major or previous field of training. www.nyc.gov

Intercollegiate Studies Institute Graduate Fellowships: Variety of fellowships offered for those who wish to teach the following disciplines at the college level: American Studies, Education (future teachers), Western Civilization, and Civic Engagement. www.isi.org

Morris K. Udall Foundation: This scholarship is awarded to those who have demonstrated commitment to careers related to the environment. www.udall.gov

White House Fellows: White House Fellows typically spend a year working as full-time, paid special assistants to senior White House Staff, the Vice President, Cabinet Secretaries and other top-ranking government officials. Fellows also participate in an education program consisting of roundtable discussions with renowned leaders from the private and public sectors, and trips to study U.S. policy in action both domestically and internationally. Fellowships are awarded on a strictly non-partisan basis.

www.whitehouse.gov/about/fellows

Point Foundation Scholarships: Point Foundation is the nation's largest scholarship granting organization for LGBT students of merit.

Point provides support through multi-year scholarships, leadership training, mentoring and hope to LGBT students who are marginalized because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. www.pointfoundation.org

Resources for Social Change Careers

www.idealists.org

www.backdoorjobs.com

philanthropy.com/jobs

www.nationalservice.org

National & International Service Opportunities

www.americorps.org

www.liveunited.org

www.cityyear.org

www.usaid.gov

www.peacecorps.gov

www.aiesecus.org

www.transitionsabroad.com

Environmental Opportunities

www.earthwatch.org

www.greencorps.org

www.elpnet.org

www.organicvolunteers.com

www.nps.gov

www.passportintime.com

www.sierraclub.org

www.wwof.org

Education and Teaching Opportunities

www.teachforamerica.org

www.jetprogramme.org

ace.nd.edu

www.teachabroad.com

www.ictc-chicago.org

www.boyshopegirlshope.org

Best wishes to Southwestern Seniors! Stay connected through www.sugrads.org and we hope to see you back at the 100th Anniversary of Homecoming!

The VISTA Footprint

A final farewell comes to you from the "Hydra". This will be the last issue of the publication due to the completion of the AmeriCorps*VISTA program that Southwestern University has been fortunate enough to have for the past 4 years. AmeriCorps*VISTA is a program funded by the United States Government which enables non-profits to have a "free" employee to help create a more sustainable program. VISTAs receive a small stipend for their work, health insurance, and the option of a monetary Educational Award. Due to the federal government's Stimulus Package, the national AmeriCorps program will receive additional funding in hopes to provide opportunities for those searching to "serve and work", and also for struggling non-profits who hope to meet the needs of their communities.

During its duration at Southwestern, 4 alumnae have filled the VISTA position of Civic Engagement Specialist in the Office of Civic Engagement (OCE): Erin Murphy '05, Aryn (Campbell) Calhoun '06, Ansa Copeland '07, and currently Jessica Hager '08. Each VISTA used their interests and talents to strengthen the programs that develop within the OCE and Suzy Pukys, Director has served as a mentor to these newbies in the workforce.

In future years, Pukys will have student workers assisting in day-to-day tasks, OCE events, and website updates. Her mentorship will now benefit students and their future endeavors as active members in their community.

As part of current VISTA, Jessica Hager's work, she is redesigning the OCE website to be more user-friendly and hands-on. Her collaboration with John Kotarski and student Brian Tidwell has helped to create an online volunteer opportunity clearinghouse which will allow local non-profits, businesses, Paideia Cohorts, students, and student groups to post and/or find volunteer opportunities, internships, and local community events. The proposed launch is to occur before the 2009-2010 school year.

Other website highlights include: a list of community-based learning courses and Paideia professors, faculty and student resources, archived "Hydra's", photos, a civic engagement hour log, current civic engagement news stories, and a Guide of all Williamson, Hays, and Travis County social services and non-profits.

Stay Connected

Twitter twitter.com/OCE_SU

Facebook www.facebook.com/people/Civic-Engagement/1596894751

OCE Website (under construction)

www.southwestern.edu/offices/civicingagement

"Engaged" on SU Radio (NPR-style program that tells the stories of civically engaged students)

suengage.libsyn.com

Email civicingagement@southwestern.edu with your stories, thoughts, and questions (unless you want to directly contact Suzy Pukys)



Office of Civic Engagement

The Office of Civic Engagement collaborates with students, faculty, and the greater community to move beyond traditional practices of volunteerism, service, activism, and community-based learning. We promote passion and action that strengthens and ameliorates one's community.

Hydra is assembled and published by the Office of Civic Engagement. The views and opinions expressed here are not necessarily held by the office. To voice concerns, please contact Suzy Pukys at pukyss@southwestern.edu or at 863.1987.