Student Affairs; Weekly Digest

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Inside The Issue:

Feature
Updates
Achievements and Recognition
Upcoming Events
Contact Us

David Who?

by Zachary N. Clark

Picture it. April, 2019. When STATIC first brought up the idea for an event with David Dobrik, I had the same reaction then as many of you have expressed to me, to others, or to yourselves this entire Fall semester: "Who

the heck is David Dobrik, and why are we bringing him to campus?" It turns out STATIC was touching on a student activities programming phenomenon well-before it exploded into reality. When my Executive Board members were diligently brainstorming options for our current semester's programming calendar, we had very little reference on past event success of this artist, a Vine-turned-YouTube celebrity, documenting the various ridiculous occurrences in his and his friends' lives for all to see. At that point, only one other school, the University of Rhode Island, had arranged for him to headline an event for the Fall, but STATIC's Entertainment Chair, Mike Corona, emphatically reiterated the need for IUP to be the second. Given his popularity with IUP students and his followings on social media, he guaranteed that STATIC would sell all tickets within the first week, leading to a bet being made (and one that I can happily report that I lost). In his own words on why he believed Dobrik should come to IUP, Mike said, "I think it's a mix of what social media has become and him as a person. We see him on Vine, YouTube, and Instagram, and it makes us think we're close to him and actually know him. He is also a very giving person. We see him give away money and cars to people in need all the time and you can truly see that they appreciate it. Of course, college kids see that and want him to give them something; but for me, seeing that makes me want to give back to people, too." Aside from me, still left wondering why we're paying this YouTuber money and what he'll do on stage, the Executive Board was unanimous in its resolve to book Dobrik. So, we did. I sent an official offer sheet to William Morris Endeavor, his college booking agency, and we were able to negotiate for an October 16th event.

So, who is he? According to Dobrik's official biography, "David Julian Dobrik (born July 23, 1996) is a Slovak-born YouTube personality, actor, and talent-show judge. He is known for being the de facto leader of the popular YouTube ensemble, The Vlog Squad, as well as Axel from The Angry Birds Movie 2 and one of the judges on America's Most Musical Family. He started his career on Vine before creating his own YouTube channel towards the end of 2014." His hijinks recorded on Vine first and then YouTube harken back to MTV's Jackass, without the innate offense, destruction, and mayhem caused by his contemporaries Johnny Knoxville, Steve-O, and Bam Margera. Dobrik's videos feature pranks, challenges, and other comedy bits, including giving his assistant, Natalie, a hard time and dropping a Mentos into a bottle of Coca-Cola that his friend is holding while he drives.

As many of you may (or may not) remember, Vine was a video hosting service, launching in 2013, but differed from other such applications in that videos were limited to six seconds in length and looped endlessly. Just prior to its launch, Twitter acquired Vine; just under two years later, Vine had 200 million active users (which would be, if it was its own country, the seventh most populous country in the world, equaling the population of Nigeria). Vine helped define an entire generation of high school and college-aged kids. Generation Z absorbed Vine content, revered its celebrities, and memorized each hilarious and impactful upload. However, Vine's quirks, those same eccentricities that vaulted it into culture phenomenon level, also became its downfall. Vine, by way of its parent company, couldn't keep pace in the market, couldn't make enough money, couldn't adapt quickly to demands from users, and couldn't out-design competitor's applications, so Twitter made the decision to shut Vine down in 2016.

After the shutdown, Dobrik packed his proverbial bags and headed over to Vine's two main competitors, YouTube and Instagram, along with many of his comedically-inspired friends. He found his niche on these new platforms through expanded storylines that Vine couldn't offer: episodes, most of which are four minutes and 21 seconds in length, centered around one experience (driving across the United States to go to an In-N-Out burger joint – 3.3 million views) or a particularly ridiculous situation (how to hack any vending machine… by smashing it with a chair – 8.1 million views). Why did this make him popular? Sophia Weingrad, STATIC's Vice Entertainment Chair, said, "David Dobrik's fans stem from his YouTube content where he uploads pranks, bits, and often has celebrity guests. I think he's such a big deal because people wish they could live the life he does and that's why they're always so interested to see what he does next!"

The event was structured as a moderated conversation, similar to other events that STATIC has hosted in Fisher Auditorium, meaning the Executive Board developed a number of questions that they wanted Dobrik to address while also providing him leeway to expand on various discussion points and entertain the audience with humorous anecdotes and stories, all the while facilitated by STATIC student leaders. This part of the event lasted for 60 minutes, and then led into 15-minutes of audience questions submitted to STATIC via its social media pages, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Finally, randomly selected ticket purchasers were invited to stay for a brief, post-show meet-and-greet with Dobrik, lasting for a maximum of thirty minutes. Overall, STATIC was extremely proud of this event, especially considering that all 1,465 tickets were sold in the first week of sales and that no security or medical incidents occurred that evening, and I am extremely proud of my organization for doing what it sets out to do at the beginning of each academic year: providing high quality, diverse, student-centered entertainment to the IUP campus community.

As far as student wants, needs, preferences, and opinions regarding major campus programming, all of us, myself included, must get more comfortable with allowing them to tell us what they want to see, rather than us dictating what's been done in the past or what we think they would like. David Dobrik is the new normal for the definition of a celebrity for our Generation Z students, while still also recognizing that traditional comedians or speakers still have a place on our programming calendars. Chris McConnell, STATIC's past Marketing and Media chairs, having been involved in the early brainstorming of the Dobrik event, sums this up succinctly by noting, "David Dobrik is a big deal because it shows how student tastes are evolving. He has a massive following and doesn't fall into the traditional artist-comedian-speaker labels, so I think it really speaks to what different kinds of content students want, and are willing to pay, to see."

Updates

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Haven Project will have a table at the HUB on October 31, providing information regarding community resources.

Searching for programming space on campus? Look no further! Folger Hall has lots of available space that could work as a venue for your next program. Interested? Call the MCSLE Office at 724-357-2598.

Health Services continues to offer free flu shots for students. To date, no flu activity has been documented through the center.

Theo Turner (MCSLE) and Julene Pinto Dyczewski (OHRLD) have been named as co-chairs of the University-Wide Retention and Persistence Committee (UWRPC) subcommittee on Student Engagement.

The Student Feedback Fair, sponsored by The University-Wide Retention and Persistence Committee (UWRPC), was a huge success. With approximately 70 students in attendance providing feedback on areas of the university that impact their experience, this event was energizing and impactful. President Driscoll provided opening remarks and Alex Fefolt (SGA) shared a though-provoking speech to his peers. Over 20 prizes were awarded to students, namely a book scholarship and a $500 scholarship from Enrollment Management.

BACCHUS and ATOD would like to welcome faculty and staff interesting in being a guest BINGO caller for their weekly Friday night BINGO game! Drs. Segar and Driscoll have both recently called BINGO, and everyone had a blast! Email Ann Sesti if interested.

The MASS Office (a part of MCSLE) now has a newsletter! For your monthly edition featuring multicultural, culturally-focused, and identity-based events at IUP, sign up here!

Achievements and Recognition

OHRLD is proud to announce that Zachary Neil, Residence Director for Wallwork Suites, is this year's recipient of the Ann Webster New Professional Award via the Mid-Atlantic Association of College and University Housing Officers (MACUHO)! The Ann Webster New Professional Award is presented in recognition of significant institutional and/or regional contributions to the field over the past year by an individual who has worked in housing and residence life for fewer than 4 years.

The Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education (PBCOHE) hosted its annual Robert D. Lynch Student Leadership Development Institute (SLDI) conference in Harrisburg, October 18-20, 2019. MCSLE sponsored seven IUP student leaders from various organizations and student groups to attend. Congratulations to Mr. Na'eem Allen-Stills (Pres. Of NPHC & Omega Psi Phi and Cook Honors College member) who won the 2019 SLDI Outstanding Student Award at this year's conference. This is the 3rd year in a row that an IUP student has won the award.

MCSLE would like to thank Dr. David Piper, Professor and Chair of the Employment and Labor Relations department for presenting on Communication vs. Confrontation: Discover your Conflict Animal at this week's Executive Leaders Series workshop. The Executive Leaders Series is a six-week workshop focused on helping students understand dynamics that influence one's ability to lead others. If you are interested in serving as presenter at future workshops, please contact Kevin Foster at kfoster@iup.edu.

Upcoming Events

Open Mic Night

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs and BACCHUS are sponsoring an Open Mic Night! They invite all members of the campus, staff and faculty, too! Take some time to hang out and bond with students! Express yourself and expand your knowledge of our students and their talents! Join in the fun on Monday, October 28 in the HUB Ohio Room from 8-11 p.m.

IUP Group Fitness Launch

Trying to find that next great workout routine? Stop by the HUB Fitness Center on Saturday, November 2 to experience an array of class offerings! Free and open to all!

11:00 a.m.-Noon: BodyPump
12:10-12:40 p.m.: RPM
12:50-1:20 p.m.: BodyStep
1:30-2:00 p.m.: Barre
2:10-2:40 p.m.: CxWorx
2:50-3:20 p.m.: BodyFlow
3:30-4:00 p.m.: INSANITY Live
4:10-4:40 p.m.: BodyCombat
4:50-5:20 p.m.: GRIT

Silent Witness Display

The Haven Project will be sponsoring an exhibit from October 24-October 30 in the HSS first floor lobby. The installation will feature silhouettes that each represent an adult or child that was killed by domestic violence. Each person has a story, and these will be told through this exhibit. A trigger warning is in effect.

"Intrusion"

The Haven Project and the Six O'Clock Series are sponsoring the one-hour play in Fisher Auditorium on October 28. This solo play will enable the audience to learn about sexual violence statistics, Title IX history, self-defense moves, and the complexity of sexual violence against women. The performance is free and open to all. A trigger warning is in effect.

Domestic Violence Graveyard and Silent Witness Table

The Haven Project is sponsoring the Domestic Violence Graveyard And Silent Witnesses Display on October 30 from 1:00 to 3:00 in the Oak Grove. This visual display allows you to experience the stories of those adults and children who have lost there lives to domestic violence. A table with information and resources will be available.

Resident Assistant Recruitment Begins

Do you know of a student who would make a great RA? OHRLD will be holding interest sessions throughout the end of the semester for students interested in applying. This is a great leadership opportunity with amazing benefits! The first info session will be on Tuesday, November 17 at 7 p.m. in Wallwork, G-98.

Contact Us

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