

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17, 2010

TO: NASPA National Board
Dr. Gwendolyn Dungy, Executive Director
NASPA Members

FROM: NASPA Latina/o Knowledge Community

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The Latina/o Knowledge Community (LKC), which is dedicated to challenging and engaging all members of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) regarding critical issues for Latinas/os in higher education, joins other organizations across the country in denouncing Arizona State Bill 1070. SB 1070 is scheduled to go into effect 90 days after the end of the legislative session on July 28, 2010. We believe that SB 1070 leads to unjust racial profiling, discrimination, and is a violation of civil rights.

Before Arizona State Bill 1070 was signed into law, the NASPA Latina/o Knowledge Community (LKC) leadership team received numerous requests to take collective steps in addressing the consequences of this legislation for members of our community; namely, students, families, practitioners, and scholars. In full support of NASPA's Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity, we believe the Association must make every effort to "emphasize the importance of understanding, approaching, and owning diversity and equity from a personal, interpersonal, institutional, and global level."

Therefore, we are answering the call to action and respectfully request that the NASPA Board of Directors, under the direction of President Elizabeth Griego, make every effort to move the 2012 Annual Conference from Phoenix to another location. We also request every effort is made to create space for educational programming on immigration issues both in pre-conference and conference formats, with particular emphasis on the extent to which institutions of higher education are affected by immigration legislation at the 2011 Annual Conference in Philadelphia. We request that members of the 2011 Annual Conference Planning Committee spearhead the coordination and implementation of this educational programming, with the support of the NASPA LKC and other NASPA entities. We encourage other knowledge communities, regional leadership, and those invested in higher education and equality to join us in this call to action.

Our rationale for these requests is based on the following considerations:

1. We understand that hotel contracts and monetary investments have already been allocated for the 2012 Annual Conference in Phoenix. We also understand that if the Association is able to cancel or postpone the hotel contracts, there is still the issue of financial costs already incurred, which significantly affect the overall budget for the Association. To cover these costs, it is possible that membership dues will need to be increased, which will have to be approved by the NASPA membership.

It is our belief that NASPA's financial commitment should not take precedence over living the commitment to diversity and social justice. By moving the conference from Phoenix, the Association is actively demonstrating that the voices of the disenfranchised and marginalized are being heard, which includes NASPA members, regardless of their involvement in the LKC.

2. We contend that Arizona State Bill 1070 is a form of racial profiling targeted at immigrant communities regardless of (un)documented status.

By keeping the 2012 Annual Conference in Phoenix, we cannot guarantee that conference participants will be free from potential harassment from law enforcement entities. NASPA members who identify as Latina/o and/or indigenous, are perceived as Latina/o and/or indigenous, are members from other countries, or are simply perceived as immigrants may have to take extra precautions to ensure that they have "appropriate" documentation. Although there are financial costs incurred with moving the conference, we cannot put a price on the emotional, psychological, and professional toll that some NASPA members may experience as a result of keeping the conference in Phoenix.

3. The Latina/o Knowledge Community actively promotes the empowerment of NASPA members through education, research, shared knowledge, mentoring initiatives, and the use of online forums to disseminate information and facilitate discourse.

We believe that the NASPA LKC role is to create positive change concerning Latina/o issues through education and action. However, this legislation, which is already being considered for adoption in other states, including Pennsylvania, warrants all of our attention regardless of racial and ethnic background.

We will support an educational forum that is funded through the Association that occurs not only as a pre-conference but as a part of a major speaker/panel session during the actual conference; for we contend that an issue of this magnitude should not be placed at the margins. The Association should offer an opportunity for conference participants to dialogue about these issues as part of their conference experiences, especially those who need to receive education about the consequences of this type of legislation on our campuses and communities.

In our roles as students, scholars, and practitioners we have often witnessed the toll that many of our students of color experience as they attempt to educate the campus community about issues that are important to them. In many ways, we feel this is mirrored in our work as professionals within the Association. We believe the impact of the educational programming at the conference level will be far greater if the Association as a whole makes a concerted effort to coordinate, fund, and implement a discourse on immigration reform. The NASPA LKC is committed to serving on any Annual Conference planning committees that specifically work on coordinating the programming in Philadelphia.

We appreciate the support and guidance by members of the NASPA National Board and staff, especially Elizabeth Griego, David Zamojski, and Joey DeSanto. We look forward to working together to address this issue.