Spring synergy encourages group networking

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News Staff Photo/Rachel French

Andrew Stafford, a senior economics major and member of the NU Marketing Association, takes part in an icebreaker game Monday night in the Ballroom.

Over 100 students from about 35 student groups attended a Mardi Gras/Spring Break-themed Student Group Synergy Monday night.

Student Group Synergy was created by SGA in 2003 "as a way to get all student groups together ... in the same room, and let them talk, network and meet each other," said John Guilfoil, SGA vice president for student affairs.

This is the second Synergy event this year. At the fall gathering, themed "Sound Off," student groups were encouraged to voice their concerns and issues with the SGA. Guilfoil said tempers became heated at that synergy, and at this one, he wanted a more fun, relaxed environment.

"[I wanted] people to just talk to each other," Guilfoil said. "I left my card so people can e-mail me concerns, but I wanted it to be a little more upbeat. Spring break is next week, it's Mardi Gras this week, so I wanted it to be a little happier."

The evening began in the colorfully decorated Curry Student Center ballroom. Balloons, candy, volleyballs and confetti littered the tables. No one from the same student group was placed at a table together to encourage networking.

Guilfoil began with an introduction outlining the agenda for the evening and each table played an icebreaker game.

Office of Campus Activities representative Erin Dayharsh then took the stage and gave a presentation about event planning.
Her presentation, "Programming 101," outlined a 10-step process to planning an event, the importance of contracts, how a contract is created, and introduced students to a relatively new addition to the Office of Student Activities called Event Planning Central, a place where student groups can go for quick programming advice.

William Haddad, SGA vice president for financial affairs, then explained the Budget Review Committee (BRC), which is where student groups can get funding for programs.

Guilfoil followed with a presentation on advertising and public relations, running through advertising basics, places for student groups to advertise and how to sell an event.

Dinner and a social hour came next, where senior English major Steve DeMonico, a member of NU & Improv’d, spontaneously seized the microphone and belted a rendition of "Part of your World," from "The Little Mermaid."

Filipe Vieira, a sophomore civil engineering major and a member of NUTV, said he enjoyed Guilfoil's presentation on advertising.

"It was pretty helpful because I learned some great tips about advertising, who to contact, where I should advertise on campus as well as advertising strategies," Vieira said.

Julia Choi, a member of the Korean-American Student Organization, a group still in the process of becoming official, said the event was helpful as well.

"I think, because we're a new student organization, it gave us a lot of step-by-step of what we have to do and kind of gave us a little more of a direction," said Choi a middler physical therapy major.

The Latin American Student Organization (LASO) was one of the groups that raised heated issues at last fall's synergy. Sergio Marrero, LASO president, said the SGA is working on addressing concerns brought up then, and that Monday's synergy was helpful in terms of networking.

"Things are moving forward and this is a step," Marrero said.