

### ***Instructionally Related Activities Report Form***

SPONSOR	DEPARTMENT
Dennis J. Downey	Sociology

  

ACTIVITY TITLE	DATE (S) OF ACTIVITY
Traditional Irish Ethnomusicology/Performance events	Thursday, February 28, 2013

#### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Attach:

- 1) Student evaluations or assessments  
Submitted evaluations from three events, including over 200 separate evaluations.
- 2) A list of attendees complete with each student major and expected graduation date, and  
Attendee names included in evaluations.
- 3) Images demonstrating student participation (up to 6 images)  
Videos of events sent separately.
- 4) A summary of expenses  
Honorarium for Ben Power: \$1,110 (that includes his own expenses for travel and accommodations, as well as his payment to his accompanist at the noontime concert)

E-mail to the IRA Coordinator at [lisa.ayre-smith@csuci.edu](mailto:lisa.ayre-smith@csuci.edu) within 30 days after the activity.

*Thank you for your commitment to engaging our students!!*

#### **PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

##### **(1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY;**

The event was actually a series of events – three primarily sponsored and funded by the IRA funds, and a fourth that primarily sponsored by the Center for Integrative Studies (but all were listed as co-sponsored on the publicity materials).

The three primary events highlighted Ben Power, traditional Irish (and Scottish) musician and Ethnomusicologist. (Extensive information about Ben Power was provided in the original application; it is available from me if anyone is interested.)

The first two events were lectures highlighted by performances. First: "Tradition & Change in Traditional Irish Music" (9:00 to 10:15, scheduled w/ Sociology 100 &

Chicano Studies 491). In this presentation, Ben discussed the traditional form of “session” music, and how social contexts have influenced its evolution, addressing questions of tradition and commodification. Interspersed with the lecture was demonstration of traditional Irish music (flute, bodhrán) as well as sean-nós dance.

Second: “Piping on the Hearth: Labor, Meaning, & Societal Critique in Artisanal Instrument Making” (10:30 to 11:45, scheduled w/ Anthropology 100). Here Ben presented the revival/reinvention of Scottish smallpipes (small form of the bagpipes) in the 1980s, and the conception of music and culture and nationalism that was integrated into those instruments on the part of artisanal pipemakers. Interspersed with the lecture was a demonstration of several different types of smallpipes (including Nortumbrian pipes and border pipes).

Third: a lunchtime World Music Concert, featuring Ben Power & Kira Ott playing music from their soon-to-be-released CD of traditional music. Ben primarily played the flute (although also demonstrated the bodhrán, Scottish smallpipes, and singing); Kira accompanied on the fiddle. The sets mostly included jigs and reels, with rich discussion of the structure and meaning of the music. One of the final sets was a wonderful demonstration in which they began with an impromptu discussion of how they preferred to play a particular song in different regional styles, leading to a discussion of those styles, followed by an impromptu playing of the song several times over in very different regional styles. This was a tremendous learning experience for students.

**(2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?**

There were four classes involved in the events (as well as faculty and staff, and a smaller number of students, from outside of those classes). As described above, the topics were closely related to each of the classes – and, as evaluations indicate, the presentations contributed richly to the learning objectives of the courses.

**(3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?**

Ben’s mix of skilled musicianship and academic study of traditional music and its context produced a wonderful series of events that was able to educate while it entertained. That mix exemplifies CSUCI’s emphasis on interdisciplinarity. An additional strength was the scheduling designed to accommodate large classes, which made for particularly good exposure to students.

**(4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY’S WEAKNESSES?**

While we reached a good number of students (over 250 students attended events, publicity was not as good as it might have been. I should have started earlier and worked through more creative networks.

**(5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?**

I would try to keep from scheduling our guest in back-to-back-to-back events. He seemed fine with it – a little bit of a grueling schedule, but he did fine. And, really, that was the way that we were able to reach so many students.

I would also try to involve more students (and faculty and staff) beyond the classes involved. Of course, this is a particular challenge that we face with all events at CI. But I think some publicity could work on the margins. I would estimate that probably close to 90% of attendees were students registered in the particular classes associated with the scheduled events. I think something closer to 75% would be ideal.

#### **(6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?**

I certainly learned a lot about organizing an event on campus – for example, became a little more familiar with the “25Live” system. I also become more familiar with the video equipment available at the library. (I’ll add – I’m looking around for a good place to house those video documents since I think they’re so valuable, and that will lead to some very productive learning.)

Finally – while this isn’t exactly “learning” – in in the process of organizing the events I initiated a great relationship with one of my colleagues in Performing Arts who I had not even met beforehand. I’m sure we’ll end up collaborating again at some point.

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