



# Leadership conference ignites student enthusiasm

BY TIMOTHY TYMON, UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON STUDENT CORRESPONDENT

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Timothy Tymon, University of Scranton Student Correspondent

Students from eight Pennsylvania colleges and universities acquired and honed leadership skills at The University of Scranton’s third annual IGNITE Student Leadership Conference held Feb. 23 in the DeNaples Center.

At the conference, students heard about the significance of youth leadership and the importance of inspiring others from nationally renowned youth leadership speaker Ed Gerety.

“As we grow and ignite the fire within us as leaders, we make a difference not only in our communities, but also in the world we live in today,” said Gerety in his keynote address. “It starts with challenging ourselves every single day – you and I – increasing our awareness and our appreciation for our abilities and for the people in our life.”

Gerety demonstrated the importance of appreciating people close to us by soliciting participation from a student who joined Gerety on stage and was asked to pull out his cellphone, call his mother, and tell her that he loved her. Gerety’s message was simple.

“If you just found out right now, this very moment, that you had one hour to live who would you call, what would you say, and why haven’t you done it yet?” Gerety said.

After Gerety’s opening address students chose the smaller breakout sessions to attend, which included lectures, round-table discussions and interactive activities.

“We have focused on leadership development for the last two years and wanted to bring the students a very unique experience,” said Shannon Murphy Fennie, the director of the University’s Center for Student Engagement, which created the IGNITE Leadership Conference.

Fennie hopes students learn that leadership is not a position, but rather a process.

“(It’s) something that you can learn, work on and develop. Taking personal ownership of one’s leadership is really important,” said Fennie.

With 215 students registered and eight institutions participating, this year marked the largest turnout for the conference. Schools represented were The University of Scranton; Arcadia University, Glenside; Lackawanna

College, Marywood University and Johnson College, all of Scranton; and Pennsylvania State University’s Hazelton, Wilkes-Barre and Worthington campuses.

The conference was organized by Michael Baumhardt, assistant director of the Center for Student Engagement, and Scranton students serving as the Center’s undergraduate leadership programming interns Dylan Lang of Kenilworth, N.J., Julianne Leist of Holland, Lori Travers of Chatham, N.J., and Neil Jayakar of Shelton, Conn.

The conference ended with a final address by Gerety, in which he outlined keys for being a successful leader: surround yourself with positive people and positive things and carry yourself with confidence and friendliness.

“To play big in the game of life be grateful, be respectful, be kind, be positive and be passionate,” Gerety said.

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Timothy Tymon, is a communication major with a concentration in public relations and a minor in English literature at The University of Scranton.

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