

Uniting international students at Georgia State

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Body

Students can join World Students United, an organization that educates international students in navigating through the workforce. Photo by Maya Torres | The Signal

When it came to having an on-campus organization that helps international students find jobs after graduation, Georgia State did not have one.

Jesse Calixte, a student at Georgia State, decided he wanted to change that and started an organization called World Students United.

"This organization is here to promote a new culture on campus, the culture of helping international students with their professional growth," Calixte said.

Calixte, the founder and president of World Students United, realized that there were many organizations on campus that taught the cultures of international students but none of them helped with finding the right careers for them.

"Can you imagine for an international student, like me and others, who are paying a lot of money to go here but after graduating barely being able to find a job?" Calixte said.

He realized this was an issue after his former roommate, who was an international student, became depressed when he was not able to find work after he graduated a year ago.

World Students United looks to mostly help international students, but all students are welcomed to join.

"Although I am not an international student myself, I have seen the hardships and struggles that international students have faced in the job market," Kevin Chen, vice president of WSU, said.

Chen, who is Chinese-American, says that he was willing to join the organization because of the experiences he went through. He hopes to be able to help alleviate some of those concerns.

Both Calixte and Chen plan on having events with speakers for the club to help bring awareness to how international students can find jobs.

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On Feb. 5, WSU hosted their inaugural event with corporate executive Crystal Khalil and graduate student Phillip Karaya.

The event began with an icebreaker exercise in which all the students engaged.

The exercise was a game of bingo that required the students to walk around and ask other students there if what was written in the spaces applied to them.

The game lasted about 15 minutes before the host of the event, Terry Fye, a senator from the Student Government Association, introduced the first speaker, Karaya.

Karaya spoke to the students about his experiences during his time as an undergraduate at Georgia State and the importance of using your time wisely.

He went through many different job positions and internships and even changed his major.

Karaya informed the students that most of his opportunities were gained because of the people he knew and with whom he surrounded himself.

The next speaker, Khalil, talked about knowing what to do to move up the corporate ladder.

Khalil talked about her time as a representative for Coca-Cola and Porsche and how she fought to look like she was worthy of a promotion.

"Hard workers work hard and networkers move up," Khalil said.

This quote was the root of her speech informing the students that you have to become active in your career early and know where you want to be.

She presented a slideshow that detailed how she navigated from being looked over for positions to being given promotions simply because interviewers knew her work and effort.

Both guests gave speeches that told students that networking plays a big role in finding work after graduation.

Calixte said that he plans on getting sponsors and other organizations involved with WSU to increase students' chances of finding jobs.

"We will try to get the Career Advisement Center and International Students and Scholar Services' help with coming up with strategies to aid students," Calixte said.

Calixte also plans to hold more events with speakers to keep the club motivated.

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