Increasing Student Self-Confidence through the Power of Personal Challenge, Leadership, and Service Learning

Capstone Scholars Program
University of South Carolina

Dr. Patrick Hickey – Faculty Principal
David DeWeil – Assistant Principal
Natalie Cruz – Program Coordinator
Let’s Get it Started!

- Capstone Scholars Program Quick Facts
- Personal Challenge
- Leadership
- Service Learning
- Time for Discussion
Capstone Scholars Program

University of South Carolina
Capstone Scholars Program

- Two-year living and learning community
- Created in 2005
- Originally created to compliment SC Honors College and enhance overall quality of the freshmen class
- Roughly 500 students each year from over 28 states
- Mean SAT 1324/ACT 29.8, AVG GPA 3.55 after Fall 2011
- 59% Female / 41% Male
- 38% In-State / 62% Out-of-State
- Motto – Dream Big! Impact the Community. Leave a Legacy.
- Four pillars – Academics, Leadership, Social, Service
How do Capstone Students Like our Program?

- **90% of students** would recommend the program to an incoming freshman.
- **Student Testimonials**
  - “I'm glad I chose to join Capstone and it's been lots of fun as well as academically oriented too which **helped me balance my social life with my academic goals**.”
  - “Capstone is a great program for me personally and has helped me transition and meet new people which is something I'm not good at. I would definitely recommend it to incoming freshmen.”
  - “I love the Capstone Program. It is the perfect balance of fun and scholarly activities. The faculty push you to achieve all that you desire.”
  - “The Capstone Scholars programs opens up a lot of opportunities. It is a great way to start building your network and an awesome way to get involved early on in your college career.”
Importance of a program like Capstone Scholars

- When students are meaningfully connected to their college community and are involved, they transition easier (Astin, 1984; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993)
- Living and Learning Communities help with academic and social transition – residential component is crucial (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).
- Higher self-confidence eases the transition to college (Inkelas et. al, 2007)
- Higher education is crucial in helping build self-confidence in students (Astin, 1993).
Personal Challenge

Realizing your Potential
Where did it come from?

- Part of the “New Capstone” in Fall 2009
- Developed from experiences of Dr. Patrick Hickey – Faculty Principal
- Focuses on Leadership pillar
- Way to push students to challenge themselves
- Realizing their potential
Goal-Setting

- Performance goals – “Normal standards” and demonstration of ability relative to others (ex. Making a 4.0)
- Goals are dreams with deadlines (Life’s Greatest Lessons)
- Achievement of these goals lead to self-efficacy and increased self-confidence (Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998).
- Higher Education is crucial in helping to push students to venture outside their comfort zones with the goal of maturation and ethics development (Colby et al., 2003)
Personal Challenge Categories

- Extracurricular Activities and Getting Involved
- Health/Physical Fitness
- Overcoming a Fear
- Adventures/New Experiences
- Academics
- Learning a New Skill(s)
- Life Skills/Time Management
- Social
- Personal Views & Beliefs
- Other
Personal Challenge Data

Fall 2009

- 32%: 1
- 17%: 2
- 12%: 3
- 10%: 4
- 8%: 5
- 6%: 6
- 11%: 7
- 1%: 8
- 0%: 9
- 0%: 10

Spring 2010

- 23%: 1
- 23%: 2
- 15%: 3
- 13%: 4
- 11%: 5
- 8%: 6
- 5%: 7
- 2%: 8
- 0%: 9
- 0%: 10

Legend:
1. Extracurricular & Getting Involved
2. Health/Physical Fitness
3. Overcoming a Fear
4. Adventure/New Experiences
5. Academics
6. Learning a New Skills
7. Life Skills/Time Management
8. Social
9. Personal Views & Beliefs
10. Other
Personal Challenge Data

Fall 2010

- Extracurricular & Getting Involved: 13%
- Health/Physical Fitness: 23%
- Overcoming a Fear: 16%
- Adventure/New Experiences: 10%
- Academics: 8%
- Learning a New Skills: 4%
- Life Skills/Time Management: 4%

Spring 2011 Freshmen

- Extracurricular & Getting Involved: 25%
- Health/Physical Fitness: 23%
- Overcoming a Fear: 19%
- Adventure/New Experiences: 15%
- Academics: 12%
- Learning a New Skills: 9%
- Life Skills/Time Management: 8%
- Social: 6%
- Personal Views & Beliefs: 5%
- Other: 2%

1 - Extracurricular & Getting Involved
2 - Health/Physical Fitness
3 - Overcoming a Fear
4 - Adventure/New Experiences
5 - Academics
6 - Learning a New Skills
7 - Life Skills/Time Management
8 - Social
9 - Personal Views & Beliefs
10 - Other
Personal Challenge Data

Spring 2011 Sophomores:

- Extracurricular & Getting Involved: 21%
- Health/Physical Fitness: 6%
- Overcoming a Fear: 13%
- Adventure/New Experiences: 12%
- Academics: 7%
- Learning a New Skills: 5%
- Life Skills/Time Management: 4%
- Social: 3%
- Personal Views & Beliefs: 2%
- Other: 1%

Fall 2011:

- Extracurricular & Getting Involved: 32%
- Health/Physical Fitness: 17%
- Overcoming a Fear: 11%
- Adventure/New Experiences: 10%
- Academics: 8%
- Learning a New Skills: 6%
- Life Skills/Time Management: 5%
- Social: 4%
- Personal Views & Beliefs: 3%
- Other: 1%
“Every time I face a fear of mine, like my fear of heights, it proves to me that I really can do anything that I set my mind to. I jumped out of an airplane 14,000 feet in the air! It was terrifying and exhilarating and well worth it. Although my stomach was in my throat and my heart was beating out of my chest, I did it and I enjoyed it. I know I will never let my fears hold me back from any opportunity.”

- Student who went Skydiving Fall 2011
“This personal challenge has had a huge impact on my life. I now have an agenda which helps me to stay organized and prioritize my school work and studies. I have also broken my habit of procrastinating on my assignments. I now try to complete assignments as soon as I can in order to get them out of the way so I do not have to think or worry about them anymore. Overall, my time management skills have greatly developed because of this personal challenge.”

- Student working on time management skills
“There are two positive impacts this challenge has bestowed upon me. One, obviously is the knowledge of basic Chinese, which I will continue to pursue until I become fluent. The knowledge of the language will present countless opportunities in my future. Secondly, I realized that even when something seems impossible; it can be achieved through dedication and perseverance. I believe this knowledge will perhaps be even more beneficial to my future than my ability to speak Chinese.”

- Student taking Chinese classes
Directions for the Future

- Continue to offer opportunities to facilitate personal challenge (skydiving, workshops, etc)
- Will ask students at the beginning of the semester to choose a personal challenge
- Follow up with students on whether they completed their original challenge or chose another one
- Doing focus groups this spring
Leadership within the classroom

- Dr. Patrick Hickey, Faculty Principal, received a leadership grant through the Center for Teaching Excellence at USC
- Implement one aspect of leadership within all Capstone Scholars University 101 sections
- Focus on Communication
- Pre Test and Post Test (month in between)
- Goals
  - Increase comfort level in communicating with peers/faculty/staff
  - Confidence
  - Awareness of leadership opportunities in student orgs
UNIV 101 Leadership Module Results

Confidence in communicating to peers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre Test</th>
<th>Post Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confidence in communicating to faculty/staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre Test</th>
<th>Post Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNIV 101 Leadership Module Results

Confident in overcoming roadblocks and keep momentum even after failure

Confident in attaining leadership position in a student organization
Leadership within the Classroom

- University 290L
  - Mix of Leadership Development and Career Exploration
    - Facilitate leadership development
    - Shadow successful people in community
    - Leadership styles
    - Team building on challenge course
    - Allow students to discover passions
    - One credit hour colloquium
Leadership within the Classroom

- **University 101**
  - Peer leadership
    - Special sections for Capstone Scholars (25 sections with 18-22 students in each class)
    - Three credit hour first-year seminar
    - Enhanced focus on undergraduate research, study abroad, and leadership
    - Each section has a peer leader to assist with teaching
  - Former Capstone Scholars
    - Help with Syllabus creation, discussion facilitation, encourage participation in Capstone events, role model
Continuing the momentum

Capstone Scholars who become Capstone Scholars Fellows live in a special residence hall

Assist with programming, mentoring, community building
Capstone Connections Mentoring Program/Capstone Ambassadors

- Began program in Fall 2011
- 60 Mentors with 2 or 3 mentees
- Designed to help Freshman transition to USC and Capstone
- Engaged in social events as a large group and required to meet mentees monthly
- After assessment and reflection, program will evolve into an ambassador program
- Mentorship is important for leadership development (London, 2002; etc.)
Service Learning

Education, Service, and Reflection
Intentional Service Partnerships

- Hand Middle School
  - Freshmen mentor 6th grade students
  - Both encountering transition
  - Build self-esteem and develop expectations
  - Originally primarily a University 101 partnership
  - Has grown into a Capstone Scholars partnership
  - 60-70 Capstone Scholars students
  - 500 hours
  - 25 continuing into Spring Semester
  - 93% of time engaged with prescribed curriculum

- Service Events
  - Work with CS office to promote their events, workshops
We take students 3 or 4 times a semester to different service locations around Columbia. It is a great opportunity for students to bond and take a few hours out of their busy lives to impact the community.
Service Learning Trips

- Ecuador
  - Maymester trips usually center around service learning
  - Third annual trip to Ecuador to work with El Centro del Muchachos Trabajadores
  - Life Changing experience for the students
  - “I loved working at the center and especially playing with the kids on the playground. It was so touching to see how much they loved us and wanted to be around us all the time”
  - $2000 travel grants
- Puerto Rico Spring Break Trip
Importance of Service Learning

- Brings the content of the academic course to life
- Actively engages students
- Is mutually beneficial
- Helps them develop a culture of service
- Connects the class on a deeper level

- Gets them involved in the community and more active citizens
- Career Development
- Personal Growth
- Social Development/Diversity

Campus Compact, 1999
I am Capstone
Discussion/Q&A

- What are you doing in your institutions?
- How important is helping to increase self-confidence in today’s world?
- How can you implement personal challenge, leadership, and service opportunities with your student populations?
- Questions for us?
Credits/bibliography

Thank you!

- Dr. Patrick Hickey – hickey@mailbox.sc.edu
- David DeWeil – deweil@mailbox.sc.edu
- Natalie Cruz – ncruz@sc.edu