

DEVELOP AN EXCITING COMMON READING PROGRAM

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COLUMBUS STATE
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Common Reading Programs Purpose

Broad Goal: Foster student success

Specific Goals:

model academic behavior

set expectations for student success

foster student involvement

promote more meaningful learning

Laufgraben, J.L., (2006). *Common reading programs: Going beyond the book* (Monograph No. 44). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

- Involve EVERYBODY
 - Selection committee should have representatives from all areas of campus, faculty, staff, students
 - Start early. Late October – November good times for the following fall
 - Give each member a specific task and a timeline for completion

THE SELECTION PROCESS

- It's political! Try to pick a book that most departments can embrace.
- Don't let one department/discipline dominate the process.
- Choose a book with local interest/connection
- Three rules for the selection:
 - Must be under 325 pages
 - Must be accessible to ALL freshmen
 - Cannot have been made into a movie (enough said !)

MAKE THE BOOK ACCESSIBLE

- Buy the book for All incoming freshmen, Freshman Learning Community instructors, Freshman Seminar instructors
- Provide the book for administrators, deans, chairs, freshman composition instructors.
- Get copies to freshman advisors, upper-division instructors, and staff who express an interest.
- IF THEY CAN GET IT, THEY'LL READ IT. IF THEY READ IT, THEY WILL USE IT IN THE CLASSROOM AND TALK ABOUT IT ACROSS CAMPUS.

AUTHOR

- Schedule the author to speak after students have had a chance to read the book
 - CSU schedules the author for 2nd week of October
 - Speech is heavily advertised and held at the common meeting hour when no classes meet
- Author meets with special groups or classes in addition to the campus-wide speech
- Author's fee is always a consideration when selecting a book

COLLABORATE

- Take advantage of events/programs already being planned on campus and in the community.
 - Freshman Convocation speaker
 - Southeastern Literary Festival
 - The Big Read
- Encourage instructors in upper-level courses to use the book.
 - Communications majors interviewed Vietnam veterans' widows for Library of Congress archives (*The Things They Carried*)
 - Political Science majors held campus debates on guns on campus (*No Right to Remain Silent*)

Select a Book with Community Connections or Specific Ties to the Area

- Increases campus interest in Common Reading
- Allows students many opportunities to tie classroom learning to real-life examples
- Assures easy access to local experts and resources
- Spurs community participation in campus activities associated with the book

ACTIVITIES

- Provide a variety of activities to complement the year's selection.
 - Freshman convocation speech, lectures, class guests
 - Entertainment events: movies, student-led music/art
 - Service opportunities
 - Field trips, essay/art contests
- Schedule events throughout the year to maintain interest across campus
- Involve campus and community members in campus-wide and classroom events
- If you feed them, they will come

ASSESSMENT

- Assessment is essential. What do you want to achieve? How do you know when you've met goals?
- Take roll – how many students attend/participate in events? What percent of freshmen participate?
- Get feedback – survey students, faculty, community
- Imbed questions about Common Reading in end-of-term student and instructor evaluations of FYE.
- Use this data to modify and improve Common Reading program.