Presidential Task Force on the Senior Year Experience

“Muhlenberg should think boldly and intentionally about our students’ senior year experience.”

Randy Helm
President
November, 2006
Priorities Set at the Top

Theory
- Reflection
- Integration
- Transition

Practice
- Senior Week
- Website
- ReOrientation

Define and publicize your priorities to shape the message
Senior Celebration & Last Lecture

- Reflection on several levels
- Partner with Student Activities
- Students nominate/invite faculty
- Afro-Centric provocative address stirred increased interest
- Class of 2011 assumes this has always been

Student assumptions can change quickly as classes rotate out
President’s Reception for the Class of ...

2007 – 600 seniors/parents, food, President mingling, **no formal presentation**

2008 – President Helm and SYE Director **announce plans for the first Reality MC 2009**

2009 – President Helm and SYE Director **describe multiple programs related to SYE** and invite students to Reality MC

2010 – President Helm and SYE Director **shift the message** of SYE from College as Provider to Senior as Engaged, Intentional Owner of the Experience

**Campus cultural change is evolutionary - be patient**
Attendance growth: 54 to 77 to ??? (Target 100)
96% of 2009 and 2010 attendees would recommend Reality MC to next year’s seniors.
Who Comes?

2009

- 54 seniors from all majors
- 20 men, 34 women
- Grad school, jobs, travel
- Many were strangers to one another
- 61% reported a parent influenced them to attend
- 4 requested consultation with Dean or Vice President

2010

- 77 (13.6% of Class of 2010)
- 23 men, 54 women
- 8 revealed Post Grad Plans
- Majority valued time with other seniors
- 10% came due to outside influence
- 33 requested appointment with the Career Center
Most Popular Topics

- W4401kHMO: Translating Day 1 at Work
- Getting Your Apartment
- Love Your Money
- The Least You Need to Know About Taxes
- Networking Reception
- Expand Your Comfort Zone
RMC Outcomes

• 2009
  • Pre-Post test
  • Analyzed students’ confidence on various skills/factors

• 2010
  • Post Event Survey
  • Analyzed degree to which outcomes were achieved

Value qualitative and quantitative results
2009 Pre-Test, Post-Test Results

Totally Confident, I’m ready!

Willing to step out of my comfort zone
Able to handle my financial matters.
Able to handle life management matters.
Networking knowledge and skills.
Pursuing a plan for my future.

1 = No way, I’m not ready.  2 = Unprepared.
3 = Somewhat prepared.  4 = Totally confident, I’m ready!
2010 Results

Rating Scale

1 = strongly disagree  2 = disagree  3 = agree  4 = strongly agree

Topic of interest to me: 3.2
Information was new to me: 2.8
I feel more confident to handle the transition to life after college: 4.0
Reality MC 2011

- Gift of StrengthsQuest
- Alumni, Associates ask to be involved
- Accentuate “Top Chef”
- Longer lunches

Balance student and institutional goals
Funding/Resources

• Annual Budget
• Grants
  – CashCourse
  – National Association of Colleges and Employers
• Campus Partners
• Student Workers/Intern

Show creative funding in your annual report
How much to invest?

- What is totally in my control?
- Where can I have influence?
- In what ways can students take ownership?
- Who else can help?

It is o.k. to let some things go
Participants
• Learned new strategies to manage change
• Identified skills, attitudes and behaviors to make the transition successful
• Rated every aspect 6 or higher on a 7 point scale

Understanding the Gender Salary Gap: A Cohort-Based Longitudinal Study  Article by Gail Eisenberg and Sam Laposata

Look for Win-Win situations
Avoid forcing an idea
StrengthsQuest

- Migrated from use to MBTI to StrengthsQuest
- Student Leadership Director spearheading campus integration
- Creating new bridges with Student Life departments
- Faculty interest growing

May need to modify your own plan to maximize overall benefits to students/program
Collaboration

• “Partner” = $$$
• Listen to others’ concerns
• Present the “Win”
• Be open to new ideas

Make sure you understand how the project fits with your partner’s priorities
• 3-Tiered Mentoring Launched for the Class of 2009
• Great concept
• Alumni valued it more than the seniors
• Task Force vision and funding are not aligned

Verify your partners' commitment level - do they have support?
Website:

• Share information
• Facilitate involvement
• Recognize achievement
• Create class anthology

Campus Culture...change?
Branding

Event vs. Program/Department

What is included in the brand?

Who owns the brand?

Use multiple means to convey the vision and message
SYE Outcomes

• Embedded in the College’s Institutional Research and Assessment
  – NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement
  – HEDS – Higher Education Data Sharing – Senior Survey
  – CSS – Cooperative Institutional Research (HERI College Senior Survey)
• Event evaluations
• Participation narratives

Data earns respect, supports College Assessment
“Our institutional strategy must, consequently:

• Enrich and increase the rigor of the senior year experience;” (one of 5 bullets)
Future of SYE at ‘Berg

Keep changing lives.

Be open to new possibilities
Hi! If you made it this far reading the presentation and you have thoughts, suggestions, or questions please let me know!

Thanks!

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