



SAAC STUDENT PROGRAMMING: DEPARTMENT DRIVEN SUBCOMMITTEE

PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS (APRIL, 2010)

This subcommittee of the Student Affairs Action Coalition was charged with reviewing student programming related data, and viewing this data through a departmental lens. One underlying question was, “How the University of Utah use this data to improve student programming delivered by various Student Affairs Departments?” The committee met in the spring of 2010. The following are our Key Findings and Practice Recommendations.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Chair: Michelle Jones (Orientation & Leadership Development)
Sharon Beck (Orientation & Leadership Development)
Elizabeth Craig (Student Health)
Julian Gomez (Campus Recreation)
JaNae Lilly (Bennion Center)
Pablo Martinez (Union)
Patrick McShane (Career Services)
Amy Urbanek (University College)
Alison Vasquez (Study Abroad)

DATA SETS REVIEWED:

Campus Activities and Involvement 2009 – Benchmark
The Univ of Utah – Profile of the American College Student Study 2008
Peer Institution Research (conducted by Elizabeth Craig)

KEY FINDING:

Based upon University of Utah Student Responses to Campus Activities and Involvement 2009 Benchmark, the 47.83% of the total respondents indicated that they would like to be involved in more campus activities.

(Our recommendations are primarily intended to resolve this statement)

PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

With 47.83% of students indicating that they would like to be involved in more campus activities (Campus Activities & Involvement 2008), our committee began to explore the potential explanations for this lack of involvement. Three of the top five factors that contribute to students being less involved than they would like were work, interference with academic obligations, i.e. class, study groups, and inconvenience of commuting and returning to campus (Campus Activities & Involvement 2008). Our committee discussion then turned to realization that there was no data regarding what days/times/locations of programming would work best for our students and avoid common work, class and commuting interferences.

Recommendation #1: Develop an assessment to collect data on what days, times and locations would be best for holding student programming.

With 50.70% (Profile of the American College Student Study 2008) and 44.41 % (Campus Activities and Involvement 2009) of students indicating that flyers, posters, banners and/or chalking on campus and 49.98% of students indicating that they would like to find out about campus events through flyers / posters / banners / chalking on campus, our committee felt it important to discuss how departments could best take advantage of these types of advertising on our campus. There are still 56.09% that are unsure of how to get involved and 14.13% (Campus Activities and Involvement 2009) of students who never seem to hear about campus events.

Additionally, the committee realizes the benefits that outside organizations bring to the University in terms of both opportunities and funding; therefore, we did not recommend banning outside vendors from advertising. However, we do feel it would be beneficial to create some spaces on campus that would be used only by campus entities to enable slightly more visibility of campus-specific advertising.

Recommendation #2: Create dedicated advertising spaces on campus that are solely reserved for University of Utah entities and organizations.

Chalking on campus was included as a portion of the most highly chosen answer for both how students find out about campus activities and how they wish to find out about campus activities. The experiences that many committee members have had with chalking at other institutions have shown similar positive results. Therefore, our committee embarked on gathering data from both Utah institutions and peer institutions, regarding chalking policies. Our research found that 6 institutions allow chalking, 3 do not and at 1 institution we have not yet been able to locate this information.

Recommendation #3: Reconsider the campus' policy on chalking, considering the possibilities of dedicated spaces and/or regulations.

In order to for Recommendations 3 & 4 to have the greatest positive impact, our committee proposes that more data be collected.

Recommendation #4: Develop an assessment to collect data on what locations / spaces on campus would be the most effective for advertising, including areas for flyers, banners and chalking.

With 47.92% of students attending events and activities and only a total 7.44% actively participating, helping to plan or holding a leadership role, our committee believes it is important to focus some of our efforts to reach a larger population, specifically those who are solely attending events, as opposed to the current focus on students who are highly involved on campus. Upon further investigation of the “attending” group, we found that these students are attending the following types of events at the highest rates: movies / concerts / speakers, performing arts, i.e. theatre or music, and athletics / sports, i.e. Varsity, club or intramural. (Campus Activities and Involvement 2009)

Recommendation #5: Student Affairs departments should invest in opportunities to sponsor / advertise at events including, but not limited to, movies, concerts, speakers, performing arts events and athletics events.

With 36.56% of students selecting “I don’t like to participate alone” as a contributing factor in being less involved in campus activities than they would like, the committee began to brainstorm about various ideas which might reduce this anxiety. (Profile of the American College Student Study 2008) Ideas arose such as encouraging student groups to have a New Member Liaison, Buddy or Mentor/Mentee systems, a Buddy week within the Residence Halls, or breakout sessions connected with PlazaFest intended to introduce students to on-campus organizations. The committee concluded the following as the best way to move forward.

Recommendation #6: Form a collaborative group, including students as well as Student Affairs staff who provide departmental and student-directed programming, to further investigate ways to dissipate the fear of or reality of attending an activity alone.

Recommendation #7: Ensure that all information in this report, all information collected from the future assessments referenced in Recommendations 1 & 4, and any policy changes resulting from the work of the SAAC is clearly communicated with all Student Affairs departments in a meeting which would also include the continuance of training on using technology to reach students.

DATA REFERENCED IN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Students indicated that the following factors contribute to them being less involved in campus activities than they would like.

Campus Activities and Involvement 2009

80.81% not enough time / too busy

56.09% unsure of how to get involved

52.77% work

50.55% interference with academic obligations, i.e., class, study groups

48.34% inconvenience of commuting and returning to campus

(See Practice Recommendations 1, 2 & 3)

- Students indicated that the following factors contribute to them being less involved in campus activities than they would like.

Profile of the American College Student Study 2008

82.8% not enough time / too busy

48.92% commitment to off-campus activities

45.7% inconvenience of commuting and returning to campus

44.62% interference with academic obligations, i.e., class, study groups

41.94% work

39.78% unsure of how to get involved

36.56% I don't like to participate alone

(Practice Recommendations 1, 2, 3 & 6)

- Students indicated that the most common ways they learned about campus were:

Campus Activities and Involvement 2009

44.41% flyers / posters / banners / chalking on campus

14.13% I never seem to hear about campus events

(Practice Recommendations 2, 3 & 4)

- Students indicated that the most common ways they learned about campus were:

Profile of the American College Student Study 2008

50.70% flyers / posters / banners / chalking on campus

10.14% I never seem to hear about campus events

(Practice Recommendations 2, 3 & 4)

- 49.98% of students indicated that they would like to find out about campus events through flyers / posters / banners / chalking on campus.

Campus Activities and Involvement 2009

(Practice Recommendations 2, 3 & 4)

- Students indicated that they are involved in campus activities at this university at the following levels:

Campus Activities and Involvement 2009

47.92% I attend events/activities

44.29% I do not attend or participate in activities

3.81% I hold a leadership position in these events / activities

3.63% I actively participate in / help to plan events / activities

(Practice Recommendation 5)

- Students indicating that they “attend” (but are not “actively participating” or do not “hold a leadership position”) are involved in the following types of events / activities:

Campus Activities and Involvement 2009

55.60% movies / concerts / speakers

50.90% performing arts, i.e. theatre, music

50.72% athletics / sports, i.e. Varsity, club, intramural

33.70% spiritual / religious organizations

24.09% other student clubs and/or organizations

20.65% community service
14.55% honor societies
13.45% political activism
8.36% student government
7.29% student media, i.e. yearbook, newspaper, radio
6.16% Greek letter organizations
5.08% residential life, i.e. security, desk attendant, resident assistant
(Practice Recommendation 5)