

Create Your Own Conference

Engaging Commuter Students in Campus Life

- introductions of everyone, where they are from and what their campus is doing to engage commuter students
- established that the majority of students commute to school
 - are finding that most commuting students have “tunnel vision” – come to school and go to lecture then leave
- Solutions and Ideas to Try
 - Good morning commuter program
 - One random day a month, but Tim Hortons coffee and timbits and give to commuters coming onto campus
 - Print labels for upcoming events on cups (found this was good because the students don't have to search for information on events)
 - Website also printed on label
 - Pens given as well
 - Found to be successful and students receptive to it
 - Good because it recognizes students and helps them to feel more welcome
 - Student Passport
 - Students gain points by attending events, getting instructors to sign for participation
 - Almost no students participated
 - Not 'cool' enough
 - There was not enough going on to have the program run
 - Participation passport (Brock)
 - Swipe, track, win
 - prizes (500), and grand prizes every semester
 - swipe at events – 3 big events during the year
 - started with 2300 participating and now at 7400
 - used to use signatures and stamps but too labour intensive so now use student cards that are swiped and the data is stored in a small laptop
 - very labour intensive
 - send emails and newsletters to inform about events
 - team of student staff that are paid for 1 hour to be at event and swipe cards
 - haven't really checked how many commuters are attending
 - some students may swipe and leave but it is still getting them slightly involved and then may start being more involved
 - <https://butler.brocku.ca/passport/>
 - Vitamin A (University of Alberta)
 - Small staff
 - Paper slips used for points that would have to be turned into the main office (this didn't really work)
 - Video uploads
 - Upload videos to youtube
 - People at home use the internet

- Can monitor how many people watch the video
- This project is in the works right now
- Events blog
 - Subscribe to the blog
 - Can track when you open the blog and visit the site
- Flip cams
 - Blog entries and interviews are posted
 - Can track hits on blog, from where, and how long they stay on the site
 - Has had varied success
 - Mail chimp – email, newsletter service where you can track who views
- Digital community facilitator
 - Understand/ dedicated to the digital community
 - Measure engagement in the digital community
- Monthly message to the students (University of Calgary)
 - Hasn't translated to more students coming to events
 - Message is linked with a video message that more students seem to watch
- Facebook
 - Some have found that more students read the facebook messages more than emails sent by the university
 - U of C – students created an event to protest tuition increases and 2000 people attended the event
- Survey for better engagement
 - Response from the survey was to have a campus activities desk
 - Have a desk with a whiteboard that shows that daily events
 - Have had good success rates as it is an easy way for students to find out what is going on while walking by and not having to stop and ask
- Text messaging
 - Has only been used for emergency notifications
 - Hasn't been tried for events notifications
- Peer Mentors (Guelph)
 - Send weekly messages about how to register for classes etc.
 - Want to reach out virtually as soon as they become students (academic advisors) then transfer the students into more specialized groups (faculty etc)
 - Want to start contact earlier in order to get the students more involved
- Video Project
 - Helps to identify areas
 - Helps belonging into the community
- Communication (Ryerson)
 - Interview new students and post on the internet
 - Don't have a central way to communicate with the students (have ~40 different websites to look at)
 - UBC and U of T have good central events communication
 - U of T – Ulife - <https://ulife.utoronto.ca/>
 - UBC - <http://www.events.ubc.ca/>
- Portals

- An area that contains all of the information needed
- Was simple enough to work very well
- Students thought it wasn't cool enough
- NAIT
 - 40 orientations for students and parents
 - more likely to be engaged before school starts
 - advertise all student service events
 - at end of summer have a final event – 25% of students attend
 - 1st year student handbook
 - contains information on student services and support available
 - student goals questionnaire
 - under 7 minutes, online survey
 - 1200 out of 4000 1st year students were given the survey
 - provided names to services so that they could contact the students (this was a problem)
- Course Clustering
 - University of Saskatchewan ran a pilot project using course clustering
 - Use the 2 or 3 most enrolled classes
 - In the option picked there will be a break in the classes where the students will be on campus and have social/academic events they can attend
 - At Trinity – in the timeslots use peer mentors, etc. to have social/academic events
 - Very successful
 - Proactive about pulling certain classes
- Volunteer Program
 - Students select program that they want to get involved in
 - Gain leadership skills
 - Getting involved in a limited way is a start
- FLC – University of Toronto
 - <http://www.flc.utoronto.ca/index.html>
- How are we satisfied with engagement?
 - Progress – how many students are involved? Is it more than before?
- Problems to look at (these were not discussed in detail, only posed as questions to think about)
 - People that register and then don't come
 - Are we doing what commuter students want?
 - Do commuter students have different needs?
 - Do they want what we want?
 - To what extent do they want the community – as they have a life/community outside of the university community
 - How do we get the information to them that we know will benefit them
- Research Done on This Issue
 - Barbara Jacoby – looked into commuter need/wants
 - ACPA - <http://www2.myacpa.org/index.php>