CREATING SUSTAINABILITY IN STUDENT-LED SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES

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STUDENT SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES AT EWU

- Service learning courses
- Individual class assignments that include going to Olympia to lobby
- Clubs and organizations
- Speakers and workshops
- Committees
LIMITS TO STUDENT SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES AT EWU

• Service learning courses (optional for students and faculty; end after class concludes)
• Individual class assignments that include going to Olympia to lobby (optional; 1-2 trips per quarter)
• Clubs and organizations (optional; require a faculty sponsor; require working with the university to receive “credit”)
• Speakers and workshops (optional; limited support for release time to attend)
• Committees (optional; student voices may be less valued)
SUSTAINABILITY

• Student-led social justice activities may become disrupted or discontinued due to:
  • Lack of interest
  • Lack of communication between groups working on similar projects
  • Student turnover/graduation
  • Faculty turnover or disengagement
  • University (OrgSync) requirements, changes
SOLUTIONS FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Student and alumni organizations

Linkages between organizations

Sustainable Projects

Faculty liaisons

Linkages within organizations
SOLUTIONS FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

• Support the development of student and alumni groups and incentivize faculty
  
  • Undergraduate Bachelor of Social Work Club (UBSW)
  
  • Masters of Social Work Student Assoc. (MSWSA)
  
  • Iota Beta (Phi Alpha Honor Society)
  
  • Social Work Alumni Network (SWAN)
SOLUTIONS FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

• Within these organizations, identify faculty or other employees who act as liaisons or advisers
  • Faculty burnout or disengagement is addressed at EWU SSW by having shared advising between 2+ employees share the position
  • These permanent members of the student organization team inform incoming students about what community projects and relationships are ongoing
  • Staggering faculty allows people to rotate on or off the team
SOLUTIONS FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

- Link students within each organization with “older” students
  - Structured mentorship
  - Officer handoffs
  - Investment in organization
    - Budget creation
SOLUTIONS FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

• Link organizations (undergrad, grad, alumni) with each other
  • Co-sponsored events
  • Membership in more than one organization
  • Shared calendar (within department or university)
CONTINUING CHALLENGES

- Computer program (OrgSync) required for club/organization recognition and funding
  - Expensive
  - Does not support off-campus sites without training someone on that campus
  - Cannot share events with graduates (need a sign-in)
  - Shared calendar very cumbersome
25 LIVE

- Revision to shared calendar on OrgSync, launched recently
- Appears easier to use for sharing events and not being overloaded
- Some access to groups in the community?
POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

- Do not go through the university system
- Advocate for the system to change by speaking to leaders about the effect of requirements
- Demonstrate that your department’s model does result in continued engagement from Bachelor’s to Master’s to alumni, benefitting the university
DISCUSSION

• Are there groups within your department/major that focus on social justice as part of their purpose?
• Do you see disruptions in activity when students graduate?
• Are your students actively engaged with alumni in the region?
• Will your students remain committed to the social justice activity/project after graduation?
QUESTIONS?

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