

College Project Award - Application

Chapter, Upsilon Pi Chapter1

Briefly describe your College Project and who from the chapter and the college administration was involved in determining it?

Word Count Limit: The essay responses for the entire application cannot exceed 1200 words. No limit is given for each essay question, but to the application as a whole.

Mix It Up Day was a social event designed to create a friendly and comfortable environment where students could cross various social boundaries and get to know each other. We had food, music, and ice breaker activities. Upsilon Pi officers worked with key administration members Jennifer Rose – Academic Advisor/Counselor, Adrienne Barkley-Giffin – Director of Student Activities and Cultural Events, Jane Minton - Director of Academic Advisement and Chairperson of the Retention Committee, and Terry Crain – Dean for Student Services to create Mix It Up Day. We created this event in part because we had a brand new college president and we wanted to create a casual venue for him to mingle with students.

Summarize your objectives for the College Project and the process by which the chapter and college administration set these objectives.

Our objectives were as follows: a. Create an atmosphere for students to cross social boundaries and get to know others unfamiliar to them. b. Work with various offices and student organizations at John A. Logan College (JALC) in a collaborative effort to improve Logan's student engagement. c. Improve student academic persistence and retention rates on campus. d. Provide leadership opportunities for Phi Theta Kappa officers and members to coordinate, direct, and chair various positions. These objectives were important to our chapter and our college for several reasons. We wanted to create an atmosphere for students and faculty to get to know each other because at the community college there is such a wide array of ages, backgrounds, cultures, etc. that students may not feel comfortable crossing those boundaries on their own. We wanted to encourage the collaboration between various clubs to again promote working together and getting to know new people with differing interests. We hoped by offering a social event, more students would commit to completing their degree, because they would meet new people and have a connection to the school and the students that attend. JALC's Director of Academic Advisement, Jane Minton, pointed us to an ACT study that "recommends colleges take an integrated approach in their retention efforts that incorporates both academic and non-academic factors into the design and development of programs to create a socially inclusive and supportive academic environment that addresses the social, emotional, and academic needs of students." So we wanted to focus on the social needs of the students. The project had a lot of aspects that needed attention, so it was a great opportunity for members to get more involved and help make the JALC campus more inviting. We felt that after brainstorming many ideas with different faculty and then among ourselves, that this social event was the best choice for us given our current situation with our new president. He was excited about the event and told his staff and the other vice presidents to make sure to come and support us.

Describe the planning process and strategies developed to complete the College Project.

After reviewing various options and meeting with the many people from JALC, we decided to focus on uniting the campus. The idea for this project came from Jennifer Rose. The basis of our project was sparked by information found on tolerance.org. In elementary and high schools around the country, administrators and faculty try to increase social interactions among various groups. We decided to adapt this idea and apply it to our college campus. JALC does not have any kind of Welcome Week events and our new student orientation is online. We hoped that our event would be a great way to welcome not only the new president but also new students on campus as well. The delegation of duties for Mix It Up Day was as follows: a. Assigned Kayla Malone (V.P.) as chairperson of entertainment. She was responsible for coordinating entertainers, choreography for flash mob, and other club involvement. Using various sources, Kayla secured the JALC Choir, Massage Therapy Club, Student Senate, Education Programming Office, and Black Student Association to take part. b. Assigned Misty Anderson (Sec.) as chairperson of event activities. Her duties included food preparation and social activities. She coordinated with the LifeSavers Club to create social interactions, games, and ice breaker activities. Misty worked and created a bagged lunch system in which attendees could eat on the go. c. Assigned Dylan Moore (V.P.) as chairperson of publicity and sound technology. He contrived flyers and hand bills to publicize the event around campus. He collaborated with the IT department to set up the sound system for the entertainment for the day. Dylan also came up with a playlist of songs to be used during the event. d. Assigned Christina Boyce (Pres.) as chair of the entire event. Christina served as facilitator of the program and was responsible for overseeing each chair's operation. She gave a short welcome speech to share with everyone the purpose of the event. In order to ensure attendees would be able to participate, Upsilon Pi researched various techniques used to unite young adults and co-workers. We realized we needed to change our target audience and fit the program to college students' needs. Our chapter designed the bagged lunch system based on the busy schedule of average college student and their average lunch break. The program took place during a time when many students were at lunch or on break from class. A critical component of our plan was setting up a backup plan. This was an outdoor event and we knew we could not hold this event if the weather did not cooperate. On the day of the event, we did have to cancel due to rain. This was a great learning experience. We contacted Terry Crain to send out a mass text message letting students know it was postponed. All the details were still carried out the following week. Everyone worked together to make that happen. If we had not set up a contingency plan, we may have had to cancel altogether.

What were the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of your project, including the lessons learned by your chapter members and others?

The quantitative results met our expectations. We had over 100 people attend and had about 50 people around campus watching on our live stream over the internet. We feel that the qualitative results were more meaningful. We received an overwhelming positive response during and after the event. Our campus responded well to the activities provided throughout the day and wanted to repeat the event next year. There were many people taking pictures and sharing on Facebook and our event made the college news. Here is a link to the article about our event:
<http://news.jalc.edu/index.php/2012/09/mix-it-up-day-draws-a-crowd-in-courtyard/> This College Project helped our chapter members evaluate our campus culture and contribute to improving it. Hosting Mix It Up Day required our members to be proactive, communicate effectively, work as part of a team, focus on achieving our shared goals, and overcoming difficulties. Most importantly, members learned the basic skills needed for leadership.

What is left undone or what opportunities remain for the future?

Our chapter has already begun planning next year's event. The choir director has offered to have the choir pick music and come up with choreography for the flash mob. The Massage Therapy Club loved being a part so much that they incorporated the name "mix it up" into some of their program. LifeSavers, which is a crisis prevention organization in our area, will be assisting with ice breakers and communication activities. From what we learned this year, we predict we can continue to improve this event.

Chapter Advisor Certification

Certifying the application should be the final step after all parts of the application are complete. The person responsible for certifying the application must log in to certify. Choose your name below and press "Save without submitting." A check box to affirm the statement below will appear. Check this box and click "Save without submitting." Once the application has been certified, edits can no longer be made unless the certification is un-checked. Once the application has been completed and certified, a "Submit All and Finish" button will appear to submit the final application.

I certify that the award application is the work of our chapter's members and that only supervision and/or assistance was provided by chapter advisors, faculty members or alumni in the preparation of this award entry. The activities represented in this entry are, to the best of my knowledge, an accurate portrayal of the work the chapter has completed.

Individual Not Indicated