College Project Award (Chi Upsilon Chapter)

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Project Topic *(include a short project topic heading)*

A Collaboration to Promote Career Services

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

Our College Project promoted the Career Services (CS) office and its resources. In the Spring Semester, the college project chair, chapter president, and chapter advisors met with the college president to discuss significant issues at the college which could benefit from a chapter project. Our college president identified student underuse of Career Services as a significant issue. This service of our college needed a boost. He asked that we speak and work directly with the Coordinator of Career Services (CS coordinator) to determine how we could help boost student awareness and use of the CS office. After meeting with the CS coordinator, the project was planned: a series of videos showing students what Career Services offers. In collaboration with the CS Coordinator and in-house videographer, we created thirteen videos. In these videos, students enacted visits to the Career Services offices; each video highlighted one service by showing the CS coordinator interacting with a student. Our videos conveyed the message to that visits to Career Services can be helpful, easy, and not intimidating. Also, our videos showed the many ways that the CS office can help students, not just when the student graduates, but through the entire college experience.

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

At a meeting with our college president, we set our first objective: to increase usage of Career Services. One of our college's institutional goals is to "create an empowering environment to increase student engagement." The CS office is critical to student empowerment, as students learn how to transform their college education into economic opportunity. During a chapter meeting, a survey revealed that none of the chapter officers or members present had used CS resources, nor even considered doing so. Even high-achieving students at the college were unaware of the benefits of visiting the CS office.

The CS coordinator wanted to rebrand the office as welcoming and helpful, and we set out to meet this goal. Another objective of our project was to show that CS can be helpful for all students, throughout their community college experience; the office is not only useful to recent graduates. The third objective of our project was to show that Career Services can be helpful, not intimidating. The fourth objective of our project was to inform students of the variety of resources that Career Services offers. Once we determined that our project would involve informative videos, we set the objective to provide a take-away lesson that students would learn by watching each video, even if that student never visited CS. For instance, in the cover letter video, the CS coordinator discusses what details to include in each paragraph of a cover letter, using one student's specific experience as an example. The video about questions to ask at the end of an interview discusses asking questions which show preparedness for, understanding

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

At our first meeting with the CS coordinator, we agreed on a series of videos to increase student awareness of CS. We then discussed potential video topics, format, and content. The CS coordinator wanted the videos to show students comfortable in the office, include a small lesson, and contain some humor. The Coordinator collaborated with us to select thirteen topics including Cover Letter, Interview, Networking, Professional Email, Professional Dress, Professional Etiquette, and Resumes. Following this meeting, members and officers at a chapter meeting brainstormed video script ideas: introduction, content, humorous element, and lesson learned for each video. After the brainstorming phase, our College Project Chair created drafts of the video scripts.

At our second meeting with the Coordinator of Career Services, we also met with the in-house videographer at our college to discuss the creation of the videos, then presented drafts of the video scripts for feedback. This feedback was helpful. Some of our scripts had grammatical errors which needed revision. Also, some of our ideas had too much humor, and the Coordinator adjusted for a more professional tone. The College Project Chair edited the video scripts, then made arrangements to shoot the videos.

We worked closely with the Coordinator of Career Services and our in-house videographer to shoot all thirteen videos in one day. This was a substantial project, so organizational strategies were important during video filming. Our chapter president was the director and our college project chair was the producer of the videos. Our director and producer shot two test videos to determine the time requirements involved. Unfortunately, some of the actors who had originally volunteered canceled or had to leave early. Thus, replacements were quickly recruited, and some actors were featured in multiple videos. Ultimately, seven chapter officers and members participated as actors. We overcame logistical challenges to record the material for thirteen high-quality videos.

After the videos were edited and available on the college's YouTube channel, we had a follow-up meeting with the college president. The president and the CS coordinator were happy with the quality and content of the videos. Our chapter president contacted the CS coordinator to follow-up about how to maximize student exposure to the videos or arrange any further promotion. The CS coordinator stated that the videos would soon be posted on the CS page of the college website. We offered additional suggestions, such as showing the videos in the campus cafeteria and playing the videos in the advising office for students to watch while waiting for appointments. We ensured that the videos could be viewed from several access points.

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

We learned how important it is to have leadership, patience, and teamwork as we collaborated with the college administration, chapter officers, and chapter members, balancing different approaches and ideas. We were very proud to learn that our Career Services videos are now official course curriculum for our college's freshman experience course. Our chapter officers and members can mention on resumes and during interviews that they helped to produce college-level curriculum. Due to the excellent quality of our videos, our college used them in a variety of venues: CS open house; lunch in the cafeteria; the advising waiting room; and at MCC Night, an event where the community and prospective students learn more about programs at our college. Most importantly, student awareness and use of CS clearly increased: in total, our videos on the college YouTube channel have 329 views. Additionally, the Career Services office had 79 student visitors in the spring semester and 116 visitors in the fall semester, a 46.8% increase following our project.

The CS coordinator wants to make more videos in the near future. This will provide an opportunity for more chapter members to participate in the planning and production process. Our chapter's reputation for high-quality video production led to the college's assessment team asking us to help create instructional videos about the graduation e-portfolio. The most lasting effects may be seen as our chapter members access CS and encourage other students to do the same as we all launch our careers.