It’s OK to Talk to the [Insert Major Here] Students

Jeremy Straub
It’s OK to Talk to the [Insert Major Here] Students

Jeremy Straub
Overview

- Benefits of cross-discipline participatory activities
- Where / how can you participate?
- Strategies for participatory activities
- Dealing with problems when they arise
- How the university can help
- Concluding remarks
Benefits of Cross-Discipline Participatory Activities

- Learning the vernacular of other disciplines
- Generation of “out-of-the-box” ideas
- Learning about topics that you didn’t know existed
- Gaining skills in other areas
- Gaining ‘soft’ skills: teamwork, problem solving
- Gaining project management / leadership skills
- Improved self-confidence
Q: What benefits have you received our could you receive?
Where / How Can You Participate?

- Classroom activities
  - Course research opportunities
  - Course projects

- Projects
  - Senior design / capstone
  - Project classes (directed / independent study)
  - Extracurricular
  - Paid opportunities

- Can be:
  - Research – the exploration of something new
  - Other creative activity
  - Project that solves practical problem (e.g., volunteering)
  - Contest

- All of the above make good resume items! Some make great resume items!
Let’s develop a concept for a project ...

What is our topic?
What will this involve?
Strategies for Participatory Activities

- Finding interested persons
  - Your own / related disciplines
  - Other disciplines
  - Ways to find people:
    - Talk to faculty – can you mention the project in their related class
    - Talk to staff – can you put up a poster, send an email, etc.
    - Talk to students – they may want to help or know others

- Building collaboration
  - Have initial meetings
  - Explain what you’re trying to do, why you’re doing it, how others can be involved and how they may benefit
Strategies for Participatory Activities

❖ Set expectations
  ❖ Between students
    ❖ Who gets recognitions, prizes, awards, other benefits
    ❖ What is expected of participants, how much effort, when, etc.
    ❖ Other particulars of the activity
  ❖ Groups with mixed faculty / staff / student membership
    ❖ Where is responsibility / decision making vested
    ❖ What university policies may be relevant (e.g., control of funds, etc.)
    ❖ How disputes will be resolved

❖ Some projects may seem to be more relevant or offer more benefit to one group than others
  ❖ This should be discussed
  ❖ Look for hidden sources of value and unlock them!
Let’s continue with our project concept ...

What skills are needed?

What strategies could we use to find people?
Dealing with Problems When they Arise

- If you have people, you’re bound to have a few problems along the way
- Good problem solving can prevent problems from growing / impairing goal achievement

Problem types:
- Interpersonal conflict
- Meeting deadlines
- Role conflict
- Application of external power

Solutions
- Define roles / decision making / conflict resolution beforehand
- Understand and apply university policies, when relevant
Let’s continue with our project concept ...

What types of problems could arise?
How could we deal with them?
How the University can Help

- UND offers a lot of resources that can help projects of all types
- Exact resources depend on nature of project
- Resources include:
  - Student organization funding
  - Meeting space – especially new areas of the Memorial Union
  - Travel funding for intercollegiate competitions and student organizations
  - A wide variety of equipment
  - Faculty & staff with experience in numerous areas
  - Students who are looking for ways to demonstrate their capabilities
Let’s continue with our project concept ...

How could the university help us succeed?
Concluding Remarks

- ‘Cool stuff’ can and does happen at UND
  - Winning / placing in national contests
  - Exciting projects
  - Cutting-edge research
  - Exemplary creative activities
  - Nationally / regionally important events located right on campus

- Those that desire to can get involved!
References:

Research on Student Involvement:

Examples of Participatory Projects: