Co-Curricular Student Success Programs

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GVSU Overview

- Total Students: ~25,000
- Undergraduate: ~21,500
- Graduate: ~3,500
- Faculty (Regular): ~850
- Support Staff: ~1,600
- Master’s – Large Comprehensive
Graduate Program Overview…

- Undergraduate institution serving west Michigan
- ~25% of degrees awarded annually are graduate degrees
- 36 graduate degree programs
  - Clinical doctorates
    - DPT - Physical Therapy
    - DNP - Nursing
  - EdS in Educational Leadership
  - >80 degree options
How does a comprehensive institution better ensure successful graduate student outcomes?

PACES

Professionalism Advancement Communication Engagement Success
How did we start?

- **Provost’s Advisory Board Meeting**
  - Fall 2009
  - Advisory board members
    - West Michigan employers, professionals, and university partners
  - Told us what is needed from graduates in today’s workplace
  - Very clear need for non-technical skills
    - Communication, commitment to excellence, and decision making
    - Emotional intelligence, social skills, and professionalism
    - Stress management, time management, and motivation

- Do graduate curricula prepare students to acquire these kinds of skills?
PACES program origin

- Inception of the idea
  - Participation in MSU’s PREP program
  - Could a master’s comprehensive university do this?
  - “Adopt, adapt, and improve the idea…” (Karen Klomparens, MSU)

- Idea challenges
  - Would such a program work at our institution?
  - Aren’t there offices on campus that already provide programming for graduate students?
  - Will graduate students attend extra-curricular events not directly tied to their degree programs?
Advisory Board

- Identify offices, staff, and faculty who might assist in program development
  - Experienced with programming for undergraduates
  - Interested in expanding to include graduate students
  - Sounding board for programming ideas and new directions
- Initial members
  - Student Affairs
  - Counseling & Career Development Center
  - Health and Wellness
  - Career Services
  - Select graduate program directors
Advisory Board challenge

- Advising and providing programming ideas for a constituent group that has not been served before…

- Is there a qualitative difference between UG and GR students?

- What do GR students need that UG student don’t?

- How will we commit to servicing this group with a culture defined by, and devoted to, UG students?

- What resources are available to meet these needs?
First steps...

- Challenge: need an identity, a recognizable ‘brand’
  - Solution: Find a creative ‘champion’ (one of our staff)
    - Create a meaningful acronym, a program ‘brand’
    - Design an attractive logo
    - Marketing identity
What types of programs will be offered?

- **What?**
  - Programming that complements professional development, personal growth, and enables academic and career success

- **Where?**
  - Downtown campus locations where graduate programs reside
    - Main campus in Allendale = undergraduate students (~90%)
    - Downtown campus = graduate and graduate professional students

- **When?**
  - A time when most graduate students are available (4-5:30 pm)

- **Who?**
  - Individuals who are familiar with graduate student issues

- **How?**
  - Active and passive delivery
Passive delivery via our web page...

www.gvsu.edu/paces
Active programming (1\textsuperscript{st} & 2\textsuperscript{nd} year)

- 1-hr sessions on topics of interest
  - How to get the most out of a professional meeting
  - How to give a platform or poster presentation
  - How to manage debt
  - Library skills workshop (RefWorks)
  - Finding a research mentor and choosing a research topic
  - Fellowships: Increasing your chances for success
  - Responsible conduct of research (“RCR 101”)
  - Thesis workshop: Writing strategies for success
  - Constructing a successful meeting
  - Pursuing a PhD
  - Getting the most from your internship/clinical experience
  - Resumes, cover letters, and letters of recommendation
Programming challenges we’ve faced…

- Speakers/presenters who know and work with graduate students…
  - Avoid ‘canned messages’ and standard delivery from a service office
  - Use faculty over staff whenever possible
- Program message and examples need to fit the graduate population
- Build a pool of good providers
- Use student feedback to refine, revise, and re-shape
- Adopting social media strategies (Facebook, Twitter)
Transitions for programming – 2\textsuperscript{nd} year

- Why not try a weekend format?
  - Attendance was low for some weekday sessions
  - More relaxed atmosphere, more available time for attendees
  - Able to merge several small workshops into a 1-day offering

- “Art of Interviewing” workshop

- “Leading High Performance Teams”
- Where did Behavioral Interviews come from?
- What is the premise behind this type of interviewing?
- What are the interviewers looking for?

RESULTS vs. ACTIVITY LIST
## How did we do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valuable towards prof. dev.</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content was appropriate</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic presented in a useful manner</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keynote Speaker (Thomas Brown) was useful and appropriate</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<td>Social Media session was useful and informative</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session on Interviewing: Interviewee perspectives was useful and informative</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session on Interviewing: Employer perspectives was useful and informative</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>Session with Dr. Arnold was useful and informative</td>
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<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Mortem of an Interview was useful and informative</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Live Interview was useful and informative</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<td>Presentation methods were high quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sufficient material presented</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<td>Topic materials were high quality</td>
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<td>Registration process was clear</td>
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<td>56%</td>
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<td>Website information was helpful</td>
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<td>Overall I was satisfied</td>
<td>50%</td>
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### Would you recommend program?

- Yes: 16%
- No: 50%
- N/A: 34%

### When you would you prefer to attend PACES events?

- Sat 9-Noon: 8%
- Sat Noon-4: 12%
- Sat all day: 40%
- Tuesday PM: 25%
- Sunday PM: 8%
Where are we headed now?

- Plan and schedule more weekend workshops
  - Half days (9am to noon)
  - All day workshops (9 am- noon; 1-4 pm)

- Layer related topics
  - Example: Job Search Workshop
    - letters of application, resume/cv writing, search strategies, dress, communication and interview skills

- Bring in outside speakers
  - Build a budget and share costs with GSA

- Create a better advisory board with GSA participation
  - Social media connections with GSA
Added benefits for our efforts…

- Building an active, growing graduate student community
  - Given GSA a reason to grow and become a voice for graduate student concerns
- Helped integrate the ‘silos’ of student cultures by discipline…
  - Business students now interact with health professions and engineering students
  - International students integrate more with domestic peers
- Gives The Graduate School a supportive role in education
  - Role for Associate Dean in graduate student affairs
  - Our GAs help build and sustain programming and operations
Program assessment outcomes...

- Improving quality of the graduate student experience
- Complementing and supplementing curricula and degree programs
- Providing transferable skills
- Meeting employer needs
- Improving placement outcomes
- Building a sense of institutional loyalty
- Becoming engaged alumni who give back
- Others?
Questions or Comments?