STRATEGIES TO INTENTIONALLY ENGAGE STUDENTS IN COLLEGE-LEVEL INITIATIVES

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SESSION OUTCOMES

Participants will be able to…

1. Articulate the value that students bring to the advocacy process
2. Identify best practices for developing effective student-based initiatives that provide service to the college, alumni, institutional advancement, and admissions as well as leadership opportunities and personal development for the students.
3. Identify strategies for recruitment and selection of quality students for student-based initiatives.
4. Describe challenges associated with creating effective student groups and some of the pitfalls to avoid.
5. Utilize initiatives to develop a "feedback loop" through which deans can acquire valuable student feedback beyond the initiative itself.

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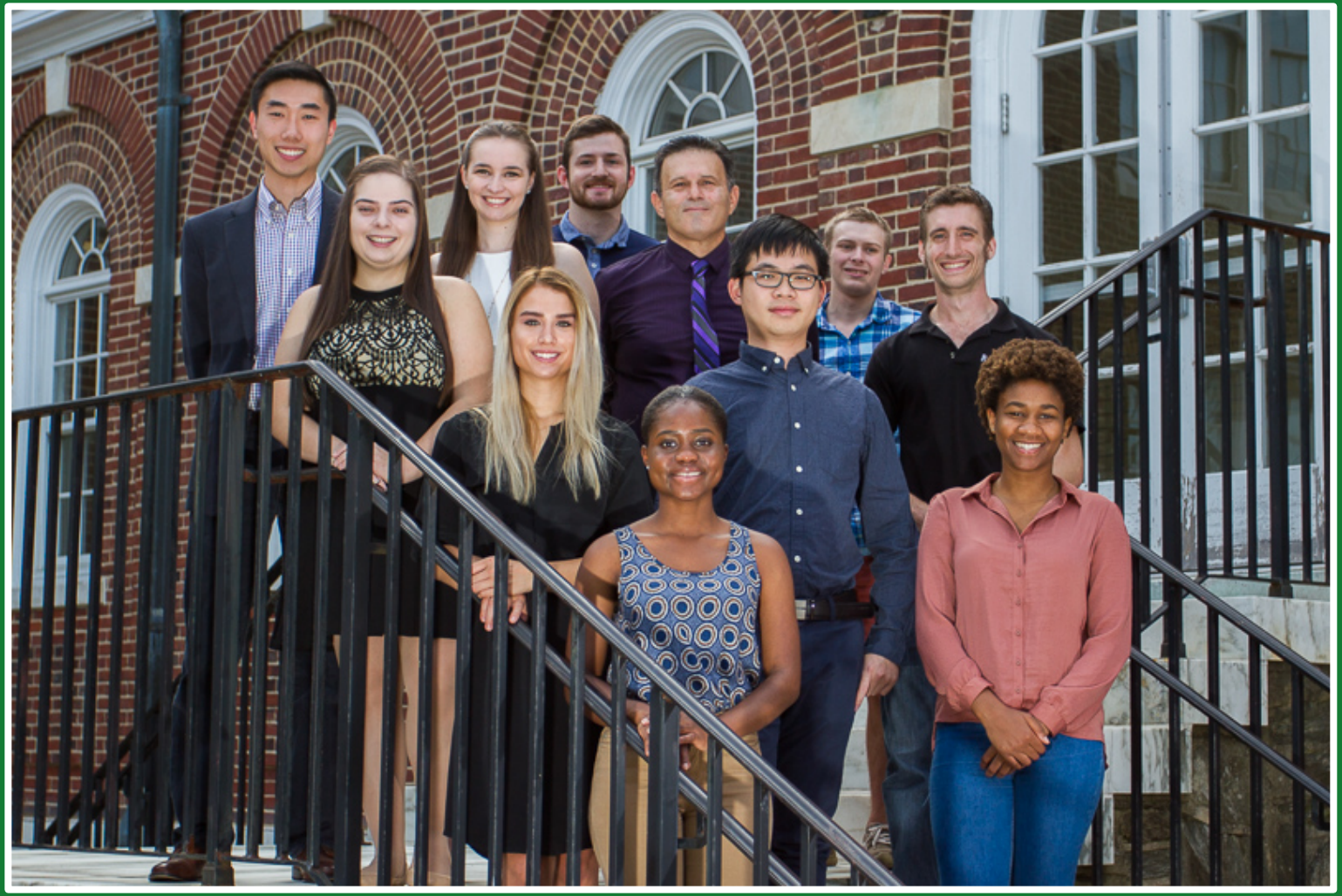

UTILIZING A STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL TO HARNESS STUDENT VOICE

Stephen Fleming

"When students' perceptions change and the institutional leadership doesn't, that is a problem."

--Dr. Wayne Williams

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RU QUICK NUMBERS

Institution

- Public comprehensive research institution
- 16,155 students total
- 28% minority students
- Student:Faculty Ratio is 17:1
- 4,483 of 13,269 undergraduates live on campus

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences

- 2,099 distinct students
- 7 departments
- 15 Bachelor degree programs
- 69 full-time faculty

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EVOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL

Advisory Board

- Primarily advised on student issues
- Served as a sounding board for new initiatives

2013-2016

Initiative-Driven Board

- Maintains functions of the advisory board
- Owns initiatives within the Council
  - Excellence in Teaching Award
  - Service and programmatic initiatives
  - Meet the Deans events

2016-Present

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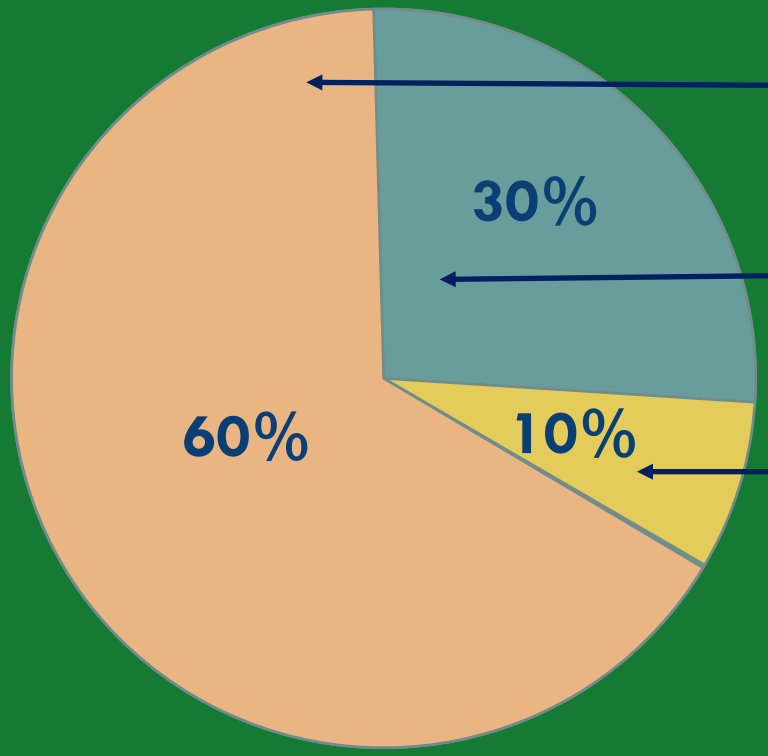
RECRUITMENT

- Invitation by Recommendation
- Individual Meetings
- Incentivizing the Opportunity

FUNCTION OF THE COUNCIL: ONE MODEL



- Advisory First and Foremost
- Chosen Initiative
- Presence at Events
  - Homecoming
  - College Assembled

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INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

Major Panel at Local High School

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INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

CHSS Talks Sex

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INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

Alumni Meet & Greet

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INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

Excellence in Teaching Awards

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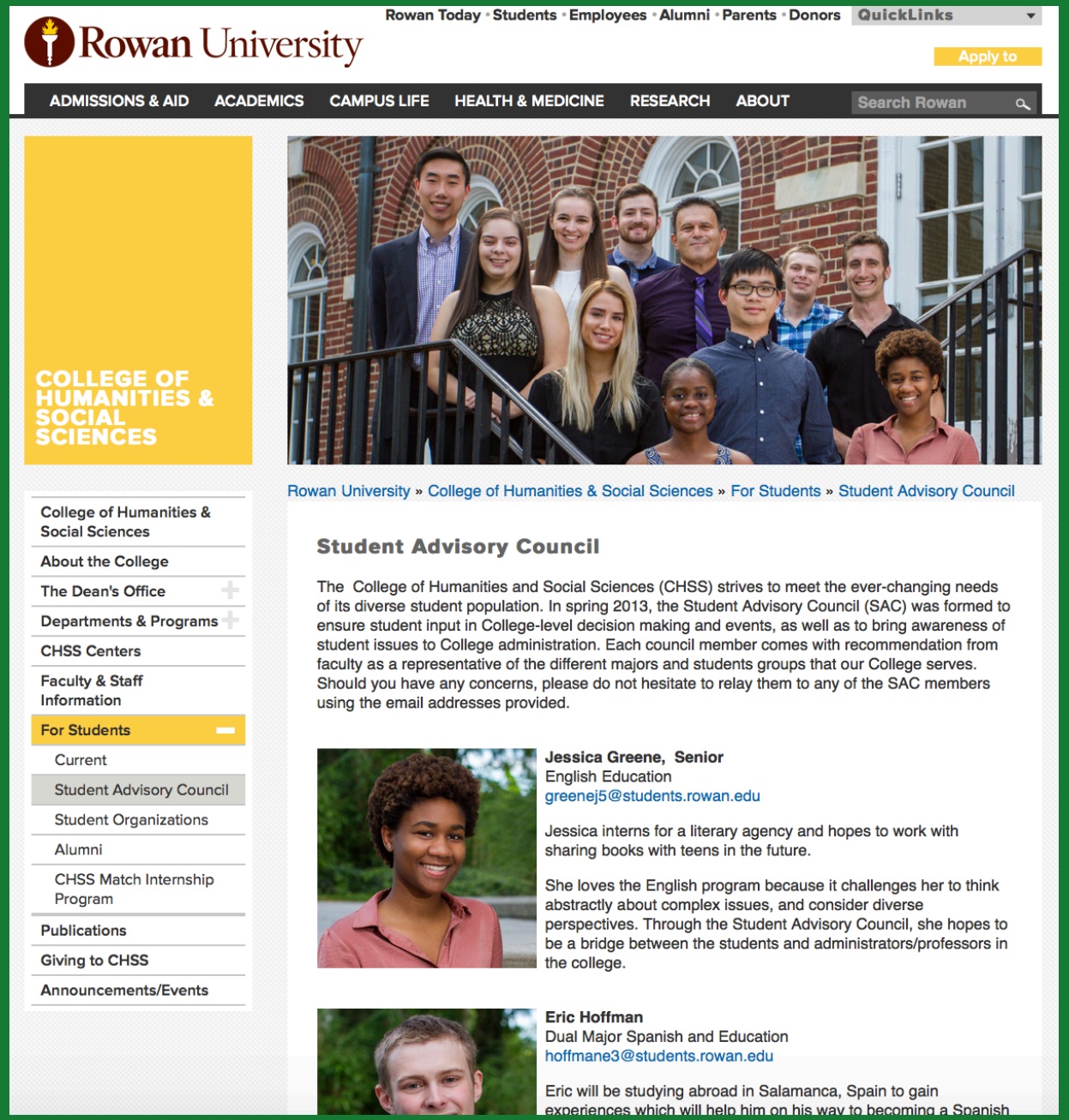
ADVERTISING THE COUNCIL



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COUNCIL MEMBER FEEDBACK

What did you enjoy most about being on the Council?

- "It's definitely something that helped me get involved on campus, whereas otherwise I wouldn't have been involved and able to possibly help other students in the future."
- "I enjoyed the opportunity to advocate for my fellow peers. It felt rewarding to have the responsibility and chance to positively affect the student body."
- "Everything, I really enjoyed working together as a team and addressing different issues as they arise."

COUNCIL MEMBER FEEDBACK

In what areas could the Council be improved?

- "I would have liked to have been able to meet all together. I think that would have been more ideal and easier for the board/and you!"
- "Maybe find a way to increase the student body awareness on who and where to go for council services. I am not sure the majority of CHSS students even know we exist."
- "It would be helpful if we had specific things to look for each week) Like what are students in your major saying about____?)"

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COUNCIL MEMBER FEEDBACK

Do you feel as though the Council complement ed your academics?

- "Absolutely was a positive experience to my academics and inspired my studies very much. It felt really good to be more productive at the university, especially because of all the newest advancements going on at the university."
- "I do, and I wish I had been able to be a part of it for longer because being on this council made me be more conscious and more outspoken about any issues I had academically or otherwise."
- "I don't think it made a change academically. However, I was able to better identify with CHSS and not feel completely alone."

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OTHER QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Is there support?
- What will be the function of the Council?
- How will the Council be funded and advised?
- Who will make up the Council?

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STUDENT AMBASSADORS

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COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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STUDENT AMBASSADORS

https://cla.umn.edu/academics-experience/organizations-clubs-communities/cla-student-ambassadors

BACKGROUND

- Recruitment focused
- Need for college specific students
- Previously relied on Admissions student workers
- Trained to participate in panels and individual conversations
- Fully articulate on the value of the liberal arts with strong advocacy for the college

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FORMAT

- Application process
- Open to sophomores and above, all categories (NHS, NAS, International)
- Extensive training at the college and university level
- Weekly meetings
- Annual retreat
- Stipend of $400 each semester for 40 hours
- Coordinator led
- Recognized on-campus student organization

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PROGRAM SPECIFICS

- Focus on leadership
- Representatives of the college
- Protective of their time and expertise
- College gear, business cards, individual profiles
- https://cla.umn.edu/academics-experience/organizations-clubs-communities/cla-student-ambassadors/cla-ambassador-profiles
- Video projects
- https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6NnxVEXy471eWp4OGZ2ZkFPSlU/view?ts=57c0b312
- Envoy program with development and alumni relations

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OUTCOMES

- Program model adopted by other colleges
- Improved relationship with Admissions
- Increased scholarship winners in the college and across the University
- Readily available for individual student recruitment, focus groups, photo ops, Dean's counsel, external and alumni relations
- Competitive opportunity for students in the college
- Resume builder
- Pride in the college

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THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Cost – approximately $15,000 per year
- Coordinator is essential – the program cannot run itself
- Protect the authentic student voice
- Beware of units that want to “partner”
- Involvement of senior leadership is an important aspect of success and works both ways

STEM PEER-MENTORING FOR STRUGGLING FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

Dr. Bryan Hall

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BACKGROUND

- College goal: Improve second-year STEM retention.
- STEM students make up a significant percentage of our overall population (~37%).
- Nationally, STEM retention is significantly higher than non-STEM retention (+7.2%)
- Decided to target STEM students struggling in their first semester.

Population	Second-Year Retention (2015-2016)
STEM	82.1%
Non-STEM	81.0%
STEM Midterm GPA 2.0 or Below	71.6%

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PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

- One of several STEM initiatives in the college.
- Only initiative implemented by students.
- Form of service learning.
- Engages students at the upper and lower tiers of academic performance.

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PROGRAM GOALS

Mentees will:

- feel an increased sense of belonging at the university.
- develop an academic and social support network.
- cultivate basic college/life skills.
- retain into the second year.
- improve their academic performance.

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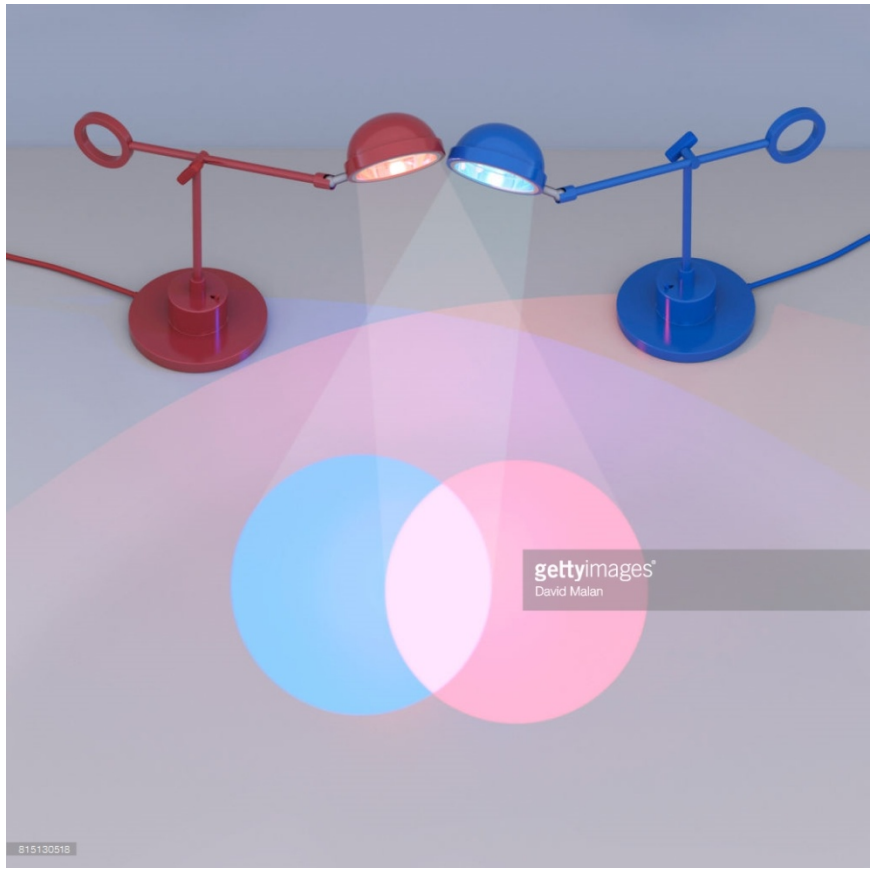
PEER-MENTORS

- Mentors were Juniors/Seniors nominated by Chairs.
- Three mandatory training sessions.
- Regularly met mentees individually.
- Participated in group events.
- Completed reflection essay.



PEER-MENTEES

- Had 2.0 or below midterm STEM GPA.
- Completed self-assessment that indicated they would benefit.
- Agreed to mentoring as part of academic contract.
- Completed affective survey.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- From a mentee: "They [mentors] know what to do and they have good advice on stuff that has happened to them and that is similar to what is happening to us. They help with maneuvering through the major that we are in."

- From a mentor: "I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this program… This program was a great idea and I think it was certainly helpful for a number of students."

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISMS

- "I think the program should start with a big event, sort of like an informal induction ceremony."
- "Another thing that I would suggest is having a formal contract for each mentor that outlines their exact duties."
- "More get-togethers throughout the year with students and faculty."
- "More interactions between mentors, and get-togethers between mentors and mentees in groups."

FEEDBACK ON OTHER PROGRAMS

"[Mandatory tutoring] left them in this position of resentment. I tutored those sessions and the general vibe in the room was that most of the students didn't want to be there, especially because some of them lived off campus."

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OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS

- 95% second-year retention for peer-mentees (19/20).
- Expanded program to include more students.
- Planning more events that incorporate faculty.
- Contracts for both parties.
- Reduced required tutoring in other STEM intervention.

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QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU