

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Discipline Specific Online Clubs for Students

2005 MARYLAND DISTANCE LEARNING ASSOCIATION

Presentation by Cynthia Munshell, Amanda Knapp, Matthew Prineas



Table of Contents

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTIONS

Cynthia Munshell	4
Amanda Knapp	4
Matthew Prineas	4
UMUC Background	4

STUDENT BENEFITS

Networking Opportunities	5
Leadership Opportunities	5
Professional Development	5
Recognition	5
Etc.	5

UNIVERSITY BENEFITS

Student Motivation	6
Reduced Learner Anxiety	6
Improved Retention Rates	6
Increased Student Enrollments	6
Etc.	6

TWO COMPONENTS

Administrative Support	7
Student Services Support	7

WEB TYCHO 900

History	8
Growth	8
Demonstrations	8

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Ideas for the Future of Online Involvement	9
---	----------

SUMMARY

Thank You/Group Input	10
------------------------------	-----------

Presentation Overview

One challenge facing universities offering online degrees is the ability to offer extra-curricular opportunities that can enhance the undergraduate experience for students. The presenters will discuss the delivery of discipline-specific online clubs for students in a variety of disciplines. A model for an online honor society will be presented. In addition, strategies to promote student cohesion and engagement in university life will be discussed.

Introductions

Cynthia Munshell

Cynthia Munshell is the Director of Academic Quality in the Sciences at the University of Maryland University College. She earned her Ph.D. in Psychology from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has been working as a faculty member, advisor, clinical supervisor, and mentor for almost 18 years.

Amanda Knapp

Amanda Knapp is the Assistant Director of Academic Support for the Business and Management Department at the University of Maryland University College. She completed her Masters degree in Higher Education Administration at the State University of New York at Buffalo and will be working toward her Ph.D. in Education Policy and Social Foundations at the University of Maryland College Park beginning in the Fall of 2005.

Matthew Prineas

Matthew Prineas received his doctorate in English from the University of Rochester in 1995, and is currently the Academic Director for the English program at the University of Maryland University College. Previously, he worked as an administrator at the National Endowment for the Humanities, where he coordinated curriculum development for EDSITEment, an online resource for K-12 teachers across the country. From 1995-2000, he was a faculty member in the English department at Idaho State University, and has published articles on Milton, Henry Vaughan, Ben Jonson, and other seventeenth-century authors.

UMUC Background

UMUC is a non-traditional university with a focus in online education. It is a large and diverse institution serving approximately 87,000 undergraduate students in Maryland and around the world. UMUC is committed to lifelong learning and education of adults in the workforce. UMUC has enjoyed a long and successful partnership with the U.S. military. UMUC is committed to providing comprehensive services for all its students, where they may be, and has been a pioneer in the development of support for students at a distance.

From the 2004-2005 UMUC Catalog

Student Benefits

The Benefits of Student Involvement:

- Networking Opportunities
 - Fellow students
 - Faculty and administration
 - Professionals in the field
- Leadership Opportunities
 - Serve as representatives for discipline specific clubs and organizations
 - Discipline specific conference attendance and presentation opportunities
- Professional Development
 - Expanding ones experience and expertise in a specific discipline area
 - Giving back to a profession
- Recognition
 - Graduation cords
 - Awards
 - Scholarship opportunities
 - Graduate school application

University Benefits

**“Retention occurs when students feel part of the community”
John Gardner**

The Benefits of Student Involvement:

- Increased student motivation in the program
- Reduced learner anxiety about expectations of the program
- Enhanced learning experience through increased access to resources and educational opportunities
- Reduce the attrition rate by increasing student satisfaction
- Increase student enrollment as more students are attracted to the program through word of mouth advertising by satisfied students
- Provide students with a sense of connectedness

Quoted directly from the Consultant’s report for UMBC

Developing Distance Learning Student Services

Hezel Associates Syracuse, NY July 15, 1999

Two Components

Administrative Support:

The self-service functional component to an online education.

- Admissions
- Course Catalog
- Course Schedule
- Registration
- Transcript Service
- Payment Options
- Financial Aid Tools
- Grade Access
- Degree Auditing
- Biographic/Demographic Data
- Bookstore
- Online Databases
- Digital Library

Student Services Support:

The services that will provide students with a “means to engage in social interaction with their fellow students” (Virtual University Reference Model)

- Online Bulletin Boards
- Virtual Student Unions
- Virtual Student Lounges
- Special Interest Groups

Web Tycho 900

History-3 Waves:

- PHAT 999 and ENGL 900
- PSYC 900
- HRMN 900, MRKT 900, WIBS 900

Growth--Student Members as of March 1, 2005:

- PHAT 999 889 students enrolled
- ENGL 900 292 students enrolled
- PSYC 900 314 students enrolled
- HRMN 900 463 students enrolled
- MRKT 900 310 students enrolled
- WIBS 900 302 students enrolled

Demonstrations:

- PSYC 900: Strategies and Challenges by Cynthia Munshell
- ENGL 900: Strategies and Challenges by Matthew Prineas

Future Directions

Ideas for the Future of Online Student Involvement:

- Student Web Pages Major Specific
- Online Student Organizations
- Online Student Honor Societies
- Welcome letters to students from the department
- Departmental/Major Newsletters
- Online Career Links Major Specific
- Alumni Links (shadowing opportunities, etc.)
- Student Workshops Online
- Learning Communities
- Online Writing Labs
- FAQ's online
- Tutoring Links
- Student Recognition (Student of the month)
- Online Chats hosted by majors/departments, etc.

Summary

Institutions offering online courses have made great strides in delivery of their courses and services. UMUC has invested in its platform, online course development, library and faculty. The university and its faculty focus great energy on the development of academically rigorous courses and stimulating faculty/student and student/student interaction. The university staff have worked hard to develop user friendly services for student support. The time has come to add some of the ingredients that enrich a student's university experience: community and student activities.

Thank you

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the 2005 Maryland Distance Learning Association Conference and we have enjoyed presenting with you today. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us if you have questions.

Cynthia Munshell: cmunshell@umuc.edu

Amanda Knapp: aknapp@umuc.edu

Matthew Prineas: mprineas@umuc.edu

Group Input

What are your thoughts/experiences on the subject of online student clubs?