

Recruiting and Retaining Peer Educators!

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Session Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify new ways to recruit peer educators;
- List lessons learned (the good and the bad) in peer educator recruitment on college campuses;
- Discuss best practices on campuses who have had successful peer educator recruitment;
- Discuss ways to modify timelines, tools, and basic strategies used to meet the needs of your audience.

Why Peers?

“...students play a uniquely effective role – unmatched by professional educators – in encouraging their peers to consider, talk honestly about, and develop responsible habits, attitudes and lifestyles regarding alcohol and related issues.”

- *BACCHUS Network Philosophy*

Background

The number one issue/question stated by advisors when asked about recruitment and retention...

How do we get and keep more students?



Your Program's Structure

- Part of designing a recruitment and retention strategy will be based on the structure of your program
- Common Program Structures
 - Academic Course
 - Formal Peer Programs
 - Student Club/Registered Student Organization



The Weakest Link

- The greatest weakness in peer education is personality or talent driven programs
- If a strong student leaves, the entire program may be at risk



Enhanced Peer Education Programs

- Possess and ability to sense, monitor and react to change
- Frequently and carefully evaluated
- Has ability to match talents, skills, and preparation of peer educators to the most appropriate tasks, activities, and programs
- Recruits people with specific talents that match the program's needs
- Recruits students who are broadly representative of the diversity of students on campus
- Conducts highly targeted, carefully designed, frequently evaluated training activities, which are specifically tailored to the needs of each group of trainees
- Exhibits awareness of and responsiveness to the diversity of learning styles among students and their focus on visual learning
- Displays commitment to inclusive learning
- Possesses flexibility
- Focuses on effective marketing for maximum visibility

Our Students...

- Tend to be over involved
- Start earlier in college career
- Stay longer
- Become program leaders
- May be 'bumped in'
- Are not easily moved by the reaction of friends



It's about the effort & reward



- Generally speaking, students take time, energy and resources to recruit
- The number of students does not need to be large to be successful.
- Those that make the effort, make a big effort

Other Student Involvement Programs

- Against whom are you competing for the most active students?
- Why be a peer educator?
- What are the stereotypes about your peer program?
 - Are they true?



Many others areas tend to have recruitment problems as well

Recruitment

- Year-long
- Personal Invitations
- Traditional Strategies
 - Tabling/Outreach
 - Faculty nominations
- At Every Event
- Hold 'interest' meetings
- Other Student Leadership Groups



Recruitment continued...

Where are the quality student hiding?

club sports

fraternities

business-related clubs

typical related majors

student government

some pre-health professionals



Recruitment continued...

- Why not?

Service Learning

Student Safety (LIMO drivers)

Rec Center workers

Intramurals

“non-traditional” majors

Theater

Education departments

University Ministry



Recruitment strategies that appeal to students seeking co-curricular involvement.

Tips & Tools

- So you want to be a peer educator document?
- Website
 - Description of the program
 - Biography with pictures of involved students
 - Outlines of benefits
- Connection with student leadership programs
- Some majors and personality types are more likely to be drawn to peer education programs

Everyone Can Help

- Collaboration Is Key
- Partners
 - Faculty
 - Other Staff
 - Administrators
 - Community Support



A Helping Hand
Can Change the World

Best Practices

- Don't recruit during RUSH/other campus crunch time
- Target individuals not groups
- Application and interviews to weed out
- Keep things gender neutral
- Recruit from a wide variety of sources- students shouldn't always know each other
- Have them start in other roles within health promotion departments

Retention

- Students who have a sense of purpose and feel connected to the program will stay.
- Important to understand your student population as well as the individual motivation factors to help retain student leaders
- Motivation
 - physical environment
 - relationships
 - encouragement
 - positive atmosphere
- Positive reinforcement works

Environment

- Enjoy being around each other
- Talk about peer education meetings as ‘enjoyable’
- Research says that people do their best thinking, most creative idea-generation, best decision making and most effective problem solving when they are relaxed
- Welcoming and inclusive
- Encourage involvement and cooperation

Encouragement

- Provide in ways people are comfortable with- not everyone enjoys 'pomp & circumstance'
- Provide often



Recognition & Retention

■ Positive Correlation

achievement

challenge

independence

interest

service

leadership

self expression

variety

creativity



Rules for Recognition

- Give it frequently
- It must be varied
- It must be honest
- It should be appropriate to the achievement
- It should be given to the person
- It should be consistent
- It must be timely
- It should be personal
- Reinforce the positive
- Give it, or else





Recognition for Free!

- Campus award nominations- student affairs, honor societies, etc.
- GA/ Area award nominations
- Post a positive message on Facebook
- Weekly ‘at the end of the meeting’ recognition spot on agenda- Ta Da, Ta Dum
- U Rock award/YES award
- Send an email
- Submit to “Peer Educator”
- Ask ‘how are you?’
- Listen
- Representing your group at other campus planning committees- i.e. Women’s Leadership Conference
- Handwritten thank you notes



Recognition for Free!

- Handwritten thank you notes
- Contact media relations on your campus to keep them up-to-date
- Drafting thank yous from VP/Dean to send to your students-thank them for their accomplishments
- Donations from local vendors for gift certificates, etc. to reward
- Recognition on your own websites
- Traveling trophies

Your Turn

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Cares?
- Concerns?

Contact Us!!

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