

2015 College Project Award Winning Entry Excerpts

Please Note: While these entries did not receive a perfect score in every category, these excerpts were chosen as examples because they were excellent models.

Question 1: Briefly describe your College Project and who from the chapter and the college administration was involved in determining it.

Entry: Beta Lambda Mu Chapter, Lone Star College-CyFair, Texas

Project Topic: Completion College: Mentoring for Success

Our project was a comprehensive mentoring program for three groups of at-risk students on our campus. In the spring semester, our officer team and advisers met with the college president and our two vice presidents. We asked them to identify a serious need at the college. The president responded by stating her concern for three particular groups of students: Schroeder Scholar recipients, financial aid recipients, and minority males. Over the past several years, she had noticed a very strong pattern in which incoming students in these groups did not complete the fall semester. She and the vice presidents asked us to consider a plan to explore and solve this issue. Following our meetings with the administration, we presented their request to chapter members. They came up with the idea of brainstorming sessions with members, officers, faculty, and administrators to turn the president's idea into a specific plan of action. We held three such meetings, and the feedback included a wide range of ideas. At the third meeting, we coalesced around a plan to provide intensive mentoring for 50 students from each at-risk category in the fall semester. Based on input from all parties, we agreed that the program would involve one-on-one mentor meetings, a monthly event for all participants, a strong emphasis on student support services, a post-project assessment, and collaboration with faculty, staff, and administrators. When we presented this plan to our college administrators, they were incredibly supportive. They immediately offered extra funding for the project, the active participation of all administrators, and assistance in documenting our results. Because we had this support from the beginning, we were able to pursue a plan that was both ambitious and feasible.

Question 2: Summarize your objectives for the College Project and the process by which the chapter and college administration set these objectives.

Entry: Alpha Rho Mu Chapter, Lone Star College-Tomball, Texas

Project Topic: Promotion of the College Completion Agenda

Our objectives were to support the college's mission of college completion, to model grit and growth mindset to all EDUC 1300 FTIC students in the first few weeks of class, to maintain connection to the EDUC 1300 students throughout the semester, to reinforce grit and mindset in major events at the middle and end of the semester, to give the EDUC 1300 students opportunities to tell their own stories of grit and mindset, and, as Society scholars, to reflect on the outcomes and future potential of our project.

The process by which we set these objectives began in May with a meeting with Dr. Nutt to determine project direction.

Next chapter membership met and researched the Community College Completion Agenda and works by Carol Dweck and Angela Duckworth, leading figures in grit and mindset theory. In chapter meetings, we then formulated a preliminary plan and scheduled a meeting with Dr. Thomas to discuss our ideas. With his advice, we revised our project and presented it to Dr. Nutt who enthusiastically approved. We then had a series of weekly summer meetings with Dr. Thomas to create the curriculum of our presentations and to plan our follow-up engagement activities. Once the project had fully crystallized, we asked Dr. Nutt if we could present our plan to her cabinet so we could have full administrative buy-in. At that August meeting, the Dean of Academic Initiatives requested that we work with her on the reflective component, and the Vice-President of Student Success suggested that in the future we should consider even earlier outreach via new student orientations.

Question 3: Describe the planning process and strategies developed to complete the College Project.

Entry: Kappa Alpha Chapter, Holmes Community College – Goodman Campus, Mississippi

Project Topic: Partnership with Healthy at Holmes to Install Hydration Stations

In the spring of 2014, our college president, Dr. Glenn Boyce, suggested that Kappa Alpha restore the campus's dilapidated green house as our College Project. Unfortunately, when Dr. Boyce resigned to take a new position, we were then faced with the realization that a new president might not be supportive of our green house initiative. Our concerns were confirmed when the interim president, Dr. David Cole, asked us to explore a different avenue due to budget concerns. Therefore, our chapter returned to the drawing board and fashioned a more cost effective project of equal quality. Many hours of planning and organizing were necessary for the project to be successful. Our officer team met often throughout the spring, summer, and fall semesters to discuss our goals and formulate a plan. We then polled students in several classes to determine how many students use the water fountains, how frequently they use them, and whether they would drink water more often if the fountains were replaced by retro-fit, refillable hydration stations. Kappa Alpha counted the water fountains on our Goodman campus to devise a strategy for the placement of future hydration stations. After getting the results from our survey, we then strategized with various campus administrators, including the college president, to implement a College Project that could benefit the students, campus, and local communities. When Dr. Jim Haffey became president in October, 2014, we suddenly realized that we would need to present our plans for the College Project to him. He was enthusiastically supportive; however, he gave us a limited budget. For this reason, we had to develop new strategies to complete our project. We went back to the campus director to help us find the most advantageous locations for our hydration stations, which were now limited to four because of our new budget. This, in turn, led us to meet with the director of maintenance on the Goodman campus, Joey Netherland, to present our project and receive feedback on proper placement and filter maintenance. We then coordinated with the contact advisors of our sister chapters and their respective vice presidents on the other two Holmes Community College campuses. In addition to the four hydration stations purchased on the

Goodman campus, we also acquired approval to purchase and install a hydration station on their campuses.

Question 4: What were the quantitative and qualitative outcomes for your project, including the lessons learned by your chapter members and others?

Entry: Alpha Epsilon Eta Chapter, Cuyahoga Community College, Highland Hills, Ohio

Project Topic: Veterans Appreciation Dinner

Approximately 850 invitations went out to college administration, staff, student veterans, and the Wade Park residents. As the RSVP deadline grew closer, we got a better picture of how many guests would be in attendance. We catered for 180 guests and 173 were in attendance, with 54 from the Wade Park Domiciliary. Seven chapter members volunteered as greeters for the evening. The total expense associated with the dinner was approximately \$6,000. This amount was completely covered by the offices of Richard DeChant and Dr. Deborah Richardson-Phillips. These generous contributions allowed our chapter to retain funds in our account to assist with other activities. Planning this college project involved a lot of communication with the college's administration and our chapter officers. Interacting with an array of individuals, which included the College President, Campus President, College Directors, and Executives, allowed the officers involved to build on their leadership, verbal, written, and organizational skills. Working with the VOA also allowed the team to broaden their network connections, creating a relationship with the community. The Executive Officers reflected that they drew a deeper understanding of the sacrifices made by those who once served our country in the name of freedom. Visiting the Wade Park Domiciliary and seeing how some of these heroes were now living was saddening, and this was a motivating factor to see this project to its completion. Chapter members learned that communication and teamwork were essential in pulling a project of this scale together, and regardless of the role or duty they were charged with, each individual's part played an important role to the success of the project.

Question 5: What is left undone or what opportunities remain for the future?

Entry: Omicron Chapter, Rochester Community & Technical College, Minnesota

Project Topic: Develop an Honors Program for our College

Despite the massive amount of work already done, this will be a multiple-year endeavor. It is the hope of Omicron Chapter, college administrators, and faculty to have the program and initial courses make their way through the AASC gauntlet over this spring and summer and hopefully to have honors course offerings available to students at Rochester Community and Technical College by the spring of 2016. It will take the ongoing support of Omicron Chapter to nurture the new program through its infancy and make sure that it remains successful and student-driven. As such, there will be tremendous opportunities in the future to conduct additional research, make more visits, participate in training and development side-by-side with honors faculty, and really steer things. Further, the chapter will be

instrumental in assessing the success of the program and making improvements and course corrections going forward.