The Secret Curriculum Project Final Project Report
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Project Description

        The overarching goal of the Secret Curriculum project has been to provide a "network" for students (particularly from historically underrepresented groups) to access this information and to build channels of communication between these groups and those providing this information (i.e., faculty and administrators).

        To achieve these goals, the Secret Curriculum project has focused on two initiatives. First, we have built a website that offers students practical and simple guides through some of the trickier processes at the University (e.g., applying for out-of-state tuition) and a comprehensive, searchable database of opportunities which can be accessed equally by all students across the university. The database is not only a cumulation of both UGA opportunities (sourced from departments' pages and put in one place) and other opportunities that could be found in a scholarship search website (like scholarship universe), every opportunity is vetted for legitimacy, and many of the opportunities were found by students who were willing to share these opportunities with their peers. The database is a space for collaboration across the student body (current students and alumni).

        The second component of this project is the community feedback/community-building aspect. Every week we advertise our new/upcoming opportunities via social media. We also promote our events and curate online discussions about the college experience from different perspectives. Throughout the duration of this project, we hosted a series of panels. Some of these panels have taken a town-hall-style approach, engaging students in discussions of equity of access to information at the University; many student organizations such as the A. Other panels have focused on more career-based development, such as the panel we did in conjunction with the Writing Center about writing scholarship applications. Lastly, others have been more social panels that incorporate/discuss the psychosocial development of UGA students (especially those from diverse/minority backgrounds).

        Overall, the project was an attempt to address the University's "need to diversify the UGA faculty, student body, and staff… to adequately reflect the diversity of the state it serves" by providing an additional incentive for underrepresented student groups to see the University of Georgia as a viable and accessible option for higher education. Throughout the project we aimed to help "enhance the social and economic well-being"(Strategy IV) of students at this university by simply giving them more support in simple yet effective ways. By creating a centralized forum for "All Things UGA" we were able to fill some institutional blindspots and help students.

Project Expenses

Throughout the project, the grant funds ($3000) were used to hire and compensate the project coordinator as a student worker.

Academic Impact

Academically, the project was coordinated as a directed study,INTL 4940 (CRN 34076),with Dr. Leah Carmichael during the spring semester of 2021, expounding on the foundation of the project. Essentially, this project was an assessment of a public institution through an analysis of its distribution of public goods. Throughout the project, we utilized different case studies from across the globe to analyze implemented methods and legalization that helped equalize the realm of academia. We studied educational disparities in regards to students with disabilities, racial minorities and first generation students (everything we discovered can be found in the site's tab "UGA's Profile").

The research led us down to having more discussions about how to restructure educational curriculum to be more inclusive of a wider array of pedagogical methods as well as subject matter. This summer, I am studying with Dr. Carmichael to develop a class for the School of Public and International Affairs that encompasses some of our work.

Engagement

The project was featured in the Red and Black (see link at the bottom). Throughout the project, we've partnered with the UGA Writing Ceneter and UGA's Office of Scholarships. We hosted an alumni panel with several prominent alumni from the university as well as town halls and professional development events. In our first virtual event, there were about 40 people in attendance. We've worked with groups such as African Student Union, Filipino Student Association, Extra Special People at UGA, SPIA Honor Society of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity, Hispanic Student Association, UGA Latino Alumni Association, National Panhellenic Council and Abeneefoo Kuo Honor Society. Additionally, we also created a network of student organization partners, university organization partners and university departmental support, all of whom helped support our work through promoting it to their members/affliates. Lastly, there have also been conversations with organizations like ULeague about the future of the project and potential collaborations with organizations such as Beyond Baldwin.

Link:
https://www.redandblack.com/culture/new-uga-student-group-seeks-to-help-underrepresented-students/article_d8abd368-7631-11eb-a848-036ef9f7acf0.html

Project-specific Metrics

Our most blatant way to gauge the effectiveness of this project was through social media engagement. We have 100 plus people engaging with our socia media since the start of the

project around February 2021. We've had many responses to our surveys on our website. Throughout the project, we received many positive reviews from students and administration.

Photo / Video Documentation

Any photographic/videographic documentation in this project can be found at the website. There are videos available and the site details all facets of the project.

Link: https://sites.google.com/view/secret-curriculum-project/about?authuser=0

Project Assessment

The Secret Curriculum project is important for a number of reasons. One of the biggest reasons is the fact that there's a growing movement to restructure higher education in a way that recognizes that most Americans who attend college are first generation students and that many groups that were historically excluded from higher education are now actively engaged in it. This project is a small attempt at encapsulating that spirit. This project was also an opportunity for student groups to work in collaboration with each other, for alumni students to connect with current students, and for different facets of the university to come together with a spirit of collectivism.

Apart from being forced to learn how to use canva and Instagram, as well as how to delegate and write a myriad of professional emails, I learned alot about myself working on this project. Personally, I have grown alot from this project. It's made me reevaluate the way I communicate with people. It's made me understand how to work in a team, how to avoid ego and how to support other people in tangible ways. I'm very grateful that I had the opportunity to do this and I hope that we build something that could truly serve our community.