

THE U-BOOK

McKenzie Newton

An integrative Service Project Summary Submitted to the University of Utah in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Service-Learning Scholar's Program through the Lowell Bennion Community Service Center

Janae Lilly
Service-Learning
Bennion Center

Dr. Carolan Ownby
Professor
LEAP Program

John Fackler
Director of Alumni Relations
University of Utah Alumni Association

William Hoang
Student Partner
Service Learning Scholar

March 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Abstract..... | 3 |
| Introduction/Background..... | 4 |
| Literature Review..... | 5 |
| Procedure..... | 6 |
| Results..... | 7 |
| Reflection..... | 7 |
| References Cited..... | 8 |

ABSTRACT

The U Book has the main purpose of addressing the issue of campus involvement. The University of Utah has the reputation of being a commuter campus and thus struggles with low campus involvement. Although over 29,000 students attend the University, the majority of students never join a student group, attend a school sponsored event, or participate in any other extra curricular activities. Most simply come to campus for class then go to work or go home. This is exactly how students miss out of the college experience, which encompasses more than the strictly educational side; just attending classes, but also interaction with the school's community of students, programs, faculty, administration, and partners.

The U Book began in the Fall of 2007 and has developed into a resource available to all students to learn about opportunities and events that happen on campus, as well as 50 University traditions. This year the U Book underwent minor updates in response to feedback gained from students. The Third edition of the U Book is on schedule to begin evaluation and production to be available to freshman orientation programs in early June. Working closely with the Orientation Office, orientation leaders distribute a free copy of the U Book to incoming students for the year. It is estimated that over 4,000 transfer and freshman students will be attending summer orientation programs. To enhance the service of U Book, a website is currently under construction to meet the needs of students who may have questions about activities as well as create an online community of U Book students.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The U Book began in Ohio at the Association of Student Advancement Programs (ASAP) conference at The Ohio State University during the summer of 2007. At this conference the University of Utah Student Alumni board came across a presentation by the University of Florida on a publication put together by their Student Alumni Association called the “F Book”. The F Book has become a well-known publication across many universities as a tool that unites students with their school through traditions. The U Book is modeled after the F Book in terms of its purpose, but it is, of course, unique to the University of Utah traditions, events, and needs. The U Book features fifty traditions at the University of Utah which students are encouraged to complete before they graduate in order to achieve recognition as “a Ute Tradition Keeper” and obtain a medallion at graduation. The hope is to create a connection with students early in their college years so that they continue to remain active with their University even after they have left school.

Completing my ISP project on The U Book was the clear choice for me in conjunction with my major area of study in Public Relations and my extensive extra curricular involvement and the benefits I’ve received from that throughout my college career. From the initial meeting in Ohio to the production of the first, second, and now the third copy, I know first hand that the U Book is a special publication which reaches out to all types of students and will, and has, increased student involvement on campus. The traditions found in the U Book create opportunities for students to do things they may not know about and is a great facet to take a break from studying and enhance the college experience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The F Book was reintroduced onto the campus at the University of Florida in 2006 and since its return it has been met with huge success. The Student Alumni Association at Florida has made their publication a sustainable resource on campus that is distributed free to all students. By donations from Florida alumni, the F Book is cost free to the school and distributing it to every student on campus allows for maximum involvement from the student body with none left out. The message that is sent to students by receiving a tradition book for free is simple: Your school cares about your active participation in this community. In the development of the U Book we took into consideration the success Florida has had with its own F Book and applied it to how it would be effective at the University of Utah.

To aid in the effectiveness of the U Book the website for the publication is currently under construction and will be linked to the University of Utah Alumni Association website (www.alumni.utah.edu). This page will update students on the dates and locations of upcoming events for each tradition in the U Book. Texas Tech University has a website which displays this idea we are striving for. On their website, information is listed for each tradition; it is simple, easy to access, and gets to the point without confusing students. This in the long run will be a time saving tool for alumni, students, and all users of the U Book. Students will be able to rely on getting necessary information by simply visiting a webpage.

The webpage will also offer students a change to upload their progress toward the status of "Tradition Keeper". This will essentially create a U Book online community similar to facebook but on a much smaller scale. Students will be able to create an

account and track which events they've attended, what other students were there, as well as add pictures and comments about how the event was this year. This will parallel the goal of the U Book in and of itself creating and fostering community, involvement, and participation.

PROCEDURE

Before beginning the project last year, my student partner, Will Hoang, and I divided tasks we wanted to be completed for U book. Will was in charge of distribution and website construction while I have been responsible for leading the committee for the revision of the U Book and prepare for the printing of the second, and now the third edition.

With distribution, our goal was to distribute a free copy to all incoming students at orientation programs starting in June. The U Book is also available at The University Campus Store. After meeting with Gwen Fears, John Fackler (Director of Alumni Relations and advisor to the University of Utah Student Alumni Board) and Will were able to work out a method by which orientation leaders would be handing out a U Book to each student as they checked into their day programs. This May, we will need to again attend the intensive training orientation leaders go through and educate them about the U Book and all its services so when they distribute a copy to each new student they will be able to answer any questions students may have.

Revision of the U Book is always a major ordeal. Last year I led the committee into a collective effort of brainstorming and collection of student feedback to determine what changes needed to be made. The same process will follow this year as we enter

revisions for our third edition. I am excited to be leading the committee again this year, but also to have appointed a co-leader and young team who will be able to groom the upcoming leaders and train them to continue the process for years to come after I graduate this May. Through several meetings and endless e-mails the job was completed and will be again.

Construction of the website was begun by Will last summer but upon his leaving, we appointed someone from my committee to take over the progress. The partner has been Terri Winkler at the Alumni Association (she is in charge of web pages and design). The website should be completed before this fall. (Just one year behind schedule).

RESULTS

Creating the partnership with the Orientation Office has been a major step forward towards getting this publication into the hands of all students for many years to come. Initially, we were planning on having members of the Student Alumni Board facilitate all distribution and market the U Book directly to students. By having orientation leaders as the direct distributors of the publication it will be helpful in that it saves our group time and effort in coordinating with the orientation office for each of their summer programs. Also, hearing about the U Book directly from their orientation leaders will have a greater impact on incoming students since they will be spending the entire day or two (depending on the orientation type) with them.

Changes made to the U Book for the second edition included a new table of contents, a welcome letter written by the Student alumni Board President, and an evaluation of which fifty traditions were to be in the new edition. The campus map

included in the U Book has also been changed to emphasize where the Alumni House is located. The U Book committee has decided to remove any highlighting of off-campus restaurants and has chosen on-campus dining choices to be pointed out in the publication. This is to stay with the goal of having the U Book remain sponsor-free. The U Book committee has also edited all tradition photos to make the second edition unique from the first. Production of the second edition was completed on time (the first week of last June), and the production and publication of the third edition is expected to begin in April and be completed by the first week of June 2010.

REFLECTION

I was thrilled to work on the U Book as my ISP. I have been extensively involved on campus and feel it has absolutely changed my campus experience. My opportunities have also been greatly enhanced because of the communities I have worked with and formed through student programs and traditions.

I have found tremendous growth here and thus focused on the value of participation and involvement in your community with the facilitation of the U Book. It promotes involvement on campus through multiple facets to appeal to any type of student. I feel lucky to have completed the project last year so I could stay to help facilitate its sustainability as it enters its third year of publication. Being involved with the Alumni Association as a vice-president of the Student Alumni Board has made this collaboration run very smoothly and effectively. I believe the U Book will remain sustainable as long as the committee remains a part of the Student Alumni Board.

The U Book has, in my opinion, the potential to completely change the statistics of involvement on the campus of the University of Utah. The U Book has been very well received across campus, not only by students, but also by professors, student programs, and the administration. Should the website, distribution, and involvement continue on track, I believe the U Book will touch countless students and continue to carry out the goal of addressing low campus involvement, and raising the value of engagement in community.

REFERENCES CITED

University of Florida Alumni Association (2006). *The F Book*. Retrieved Mar. 16, 2009, from <http://ufalumni.ufl.edu/saa/fbook/virtual/default.aspx>.

University of Texas Tech. *Texas Tech Traditions*. Retrieved Mar. 16, 2009, from <http://www.ttu.edu/traditions/>.