Assessment Summary

Description

The Alternative Spring Break-domestic was a six-day program that took place in March 2014 in Atlanta, Georgia. The program guided students through socio-historical-cultural areas of Atlanta, GA. Students learned about cultural heritage, history, demographics, and current events, both in sessions before the break and during the immersion trip. Students participated in seven weekly educational sessions (one hour each) that focused on the African American Civil Rights Movement, which were led by various faculty members, community members, and the Coordinator for Diversity & Intercultural Relations. During spring break, participants completed about 16 service hours. The experience was followed by a reflection dinner with the Alternative Spring Break-international trip and Mrs. Penelope Harley. Students who enroll in EDUC 1110: Service Learning in Education had a final presentation to highlight what they experienced.

Assessment Method

There were three different paper questionnaire surveys: pre-educational, pre-trip, and post-trip surveys. All participants completed the questionnaire during the course of the program. Of the six students who participated, six completed the assessment questionnaire for a response rate of 100%.

Results

Among the respondents, 100% were women, one was a senior, one was a junior, and four were first year students. There was also a diverse mix within the participants by race and majors. Two students identified as African American, two students identified as White, one student identified as Hispanic, and one identified as Asian. Among the majors were English, Sociology, Human Communications, International Business, Neuroscience, and Biology.

The program was designed to promote three CAS Learning & Development Outcomes and did so with mixed results:

- Students will report enhanced commitment to the development of their various identities, specifically race and socio-economic class. (CAS Outcome Domain C2: Identity development). There was evidence that this learning outcome was attained.
  - 83% of participants strongly agreed and 17% agreed that the trip made them more aware of their personal privilege.
  - 100% of the participants reported they either strongly agree or agree they feel they have increased their knowledge about at least one culture.

- Students will report an increase their commitment to social responsibility. (CAS Outcome Domain E3: Social responsibility). There was limited evidence that this learning outcome attained.
  - There were no pre to post gains in the students who strongly agreed that in addition to Alternative Spring Break, they plan to participate in at least one action for positive change in the community, region, nation, or world within the following academic year. 83% of respondents strongly agreed in both the pre and post ASB surveys that they would participate in one action for positive change.
  - There was a pre to post gain in the average hours per week a student spent volunteering. Three students reported they volunteer 3-6 hours per week in the post ASB survey, while only one reported 3-6 hours per week in the pre-educational survey.
Students will report their ability to learn something new due to reflecting on their volunteer experiences as it relates to their upbringing. (CAS Outcome Domain B2: Reflective thinking). There was evidence that this outcome was attained.

- Five out of the six respondents mentioned they at least learned one way of how individual and collective actions have an impact on local communities.
- 100% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they connected something they learned in the educational sessions with something that happened in Atlanta.

To request a copy of the assessment instrument, email DAT@trinity.edu.

Discussion

The Alternative Spring Break to Atlanta, GA was very successful due to the marketing efforts and collaboration with the international spring break trip to Dominica. Students were able to specify on their application if they want to participate in the international or domestic ASB trips, and some chose both, which made the application pool a little larger to choose from. 7 students were chosen for the Atlanta trip, but only 6 students completed the program due to one withdrawal from a student.

Each participant paid $600, and the total cost of the trip was about $6500. CCI paid for $2900 of the trip. The cost was reasonable for the students, because the location provided round trip flights, meals and snacks, lodging, service projects, and excursion activities. The participants stayed at Spelman College for free of cost. According to the survey, students were pleased with the lodging on Alternative Spring Break, but some complained about the meals. Meals were cooked family style, but with various dietary restrictions and limited budget, everyone was not pleased. For example, student only like one brand of peanut butter or bread while another student was a pescatarian but seafood was expensive to buy for eight people.

The coordinator for diversity and intercultural relations and student affairs colleague (coordinator for fraternity and sorority life) spent one hour each week facilitating the education sessions. The coordinator for diversity and intercultural relations spent a total of about 160 hours planning and executing the program. The student affairs colleague spent a total of about 100 hours executing the program.

During the educational sessions, various speakers were invited to speak to students about civil rights movement within San Antonio and Atlanta, GA. Speakers included Dr. Carey Latimore, community partner Taj Matthews, and librarian Donna Guerra. All participants strongly agreed and agreed that they found the speakers to be insightful.

The Alternative Spring Break trip should continue in the 2014-2015 academic year. CCI anticipates one of the student participants this year will become a student leader and help with the planning of next year's trip to Atlanta. CCI will continue to increase its' marketing efforts to get more participants. Based on this year's experience, I make the following recommendations:

- Keep the location to Atlanta because we are familiar with the space and transportation
- Continue the relationship with Spelman to gain lodging again
- Continue to build relationship with the popular service sites to volunteer there again
- Recruit a faculty partner who will be able to relate to students and facilitate meaningful conversations and reflections with students.
- Incorporate a fun reflection activity for them, such as creating a video blog or picture collages of their experiences.
- Decide food options before the trip to eliminate confusion with what to purchase at the grocery store and cook at the lodging site.