Assessment Summary

Description

The purpose of the SPB retreat was to educate and energize the SPB in light of a new year. The retreat took place on Sunday, September 1, 2013 from 1:00PM to 4:30PM. The 8 executive members of SPB were required to attend; however, 1 absence was allowed. Therefore, 7 executive members of SPB were in attendance. The retreat included a review of the organization’s mission, an evaluation of expectations, roles, and advising, motivation and goal setting exercises, and educational sessions on specific social psychology theories specific to working on teams and in groups. The retreat was meant to be a learning environment for students to identify their motivation for being a member of SPB.

Assessment Method

An original questionnaire was a part of the closing activity of the retreat. All student programming board members in attendance were required to complete the paper questionnaire at the end of the retreat and submit questionnaires to me prior to leaving. The questionnaire was developed by me to directly correlate with the session’s learning outcomes. Of the 7 students who participated, 7 completed the assessment questionnaire for a response rate of 100%.

Results

The questionnaire provided to the retreat participants did not ask for demographic information. However, from personal conversations and information collected at other instances, I have the following knowledge of the SPB executive members. Of the 7 student participants of the fall retreat, 2 identify as men, 5 identify as women; 2 students identify as international students; 1 student identifies as a senior, 5 identify as juniors, 1 identifies as a sophomore.

The program was designed with several CAS Learning and Development Outcomes in mind. As a result of attending the retreat, students should have been able to:

- Articulate both internal and external mission of the SPB (A3 Constructing Knowledge).
- Work as a team to set goals and make plans for achieving those goals (F1 Pursuing goals)
- Understand what motivates themselves as individuals and as a team (A3 Constructing knowledge)
- Continue developing stronger relationships with other team members (D1 Meaningful relationships)
- Understand 2 specific social psychology theories that affect teamwork and leadership within groups (A1 Understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines)
- Understand that their SPB experience affords them transferrable skills useful to future jobs/vocations (F5 Managing career development)

There is strong evidence that the 6 learning outcomes outlined above were obtained.

- On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strong agree), all 7 students responded with a 4 or a 5 to the questions directly correlating to these learning outcomes (questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11).
- One student did respond with a 3 to question 7, “I understand what motivates us as an SPB team.”
• Self-identify strengths and skills they possess as individuals (C1 Realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect)
• Articulate how they fit into the team dynamic (D2 Interdependence)

There was weaker evidence that the 2 learning outcomes above were fully obtained.
  o Prior to the retreat, I amended the schedule and retreat materials to eliminate specific focus on personal strength identification. Due to an oversight on my part I forgot to eliminate the related questions from my assessment tool.
  o One a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly disagree), all 7 students responded with a 3 or 4 to the questions directly related to personal strength identification (question 4 and 5).
  o One student did respond with a 5 to question 5, “I can articulate how my strengths and skills are important and unique to the team.”

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

Discussion

Overall, the SPB executive members responded positively to the retreat. I think they all appreciated having a structured event to begin the year. I asked 3 open ended, satisfaction questions on the assessment. Positive feedback included enjoying the more engaging activities of the retreat such as team building activities and ice breakers. Four of the 7 students commented on enjoying a TED talk I showed to begin the retreat. Constructive feedback included having more teambuilding activities (3 of 7 students mentioned this) and focusing more on individual strengths (2 of 7 students mentioned this). I believe the retreat was a strong combination of fun and business-related items for the semester. Because most students answered assessment questions with either “agree” or “strongly agree,” I would say that learning and development outcomes were sufficiently achieved.

The total cost of the 7 attendees was approximately $50. The venue was free; we held the event in Coates, and snacks were of minimal cost. I spent several days determining which material and activities to include. I also developed a presenter guide from which I can draw structure and ideas for our next retreat in January. In the future the event may cost slightly more by ordering Aramark food or taking the retreat off campus.

In my opinion, an SPB retreat at the beginning of each spring and fall semester is essential. These retreats allow students to reflect, to set goals, and to become excited about the future of the organization. Based on the fall 2013 SPB retreat, I make the following recommendations:
  • Content: More focus on the students’ individual strengths and how these strengths are important to the functioning of the organization.
  • Content: More fun, teambuilding exercises. Based on the retreat and other SPB meetings, SPB students seem to respond very positively to having fun with one another. Having fun seems to be a primary motivator for these students to produce excellent work for the organization.
  • Logistics: Perhaps an off campus location and food if budget allows.