



Office of Student Life and Cultural Centers
A Qualitative Analysis of the Rose Float Student Learning and Leadership Experience
Assessment Report

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Type of Assessment: Qualitative

Date of Assessment Implementation: February/2011

Date of Report: June/2011

Purpose of Assessment

Every year the Rose Float program strives to engage students in a unique learning and leadership building process. Aside from this, the program continuously aspires to be an award winning program among the float building industry and organizations. Through their involvement, students are expected to analyze their experiences and communicate the technical and leadership skills they have gained. Data is ascertained via an opened ended survey, in addition to the document analysis of their position reports. Their reports often include visual demonstrations of their learning, such as photographs, schematic drawings, material application processes, and the physical dimensions of the float.

Targeted Learning Outcome

The following research questions are asked of the students each year: As a result of your collective experiences in Rose Float, what have you learned? What ways have you been able to specifically demonstrate your learning? These two questions are also used to guide the creation of their reports and portfolio submissions.

Desired outcomes for this year include an enhanced sense of team despite the increase in student leaders and increased mastery in technical and leadership skills as result of enriching the educational and leadership trainings provided.

Assessment Methodology

A Qualitative survey was distributed to the 35 student leaders of the Rose Float programs via an electronic format. Survey included 5 demographic questions and 4 open ended qualitative questions. Data analysis involved the identification of themes and the use of hierarchical coding.

At the end of every float year, students are asked to respond to the open ended questions above. This information is used to continuously enhance the program and the experiences of the student leaders. Evidence of the learning is also demonstrated in an end of the year report.

Results

- 57% response rate; **N = 19** (Males -12 / Females - 7)

- **Research Question 1: Student Learning**

“Aside from many new technical skills, such as welding and design, I also learned many soft skills, such as collaboration, communication, time management, project management , and leadership.”

- **Research Question 2: Leadership Skills**

“I have learned how to work with people of diverse backgrounds in order to create a project which is beyond the scope of any of it’s participants’ abilities. I also developed skills in coordinating schedules and maximizing group talent as a result of Rose Float.”

- **Research Question 3: Graduation Initiative**

"My experience with Rose Float has helped me progress towards graduation by furthering my understanding of engineering concepts with practical, hands-on experience."

"At first thought, working in the Rose Float Merchandise Department had no correlation to my major as an Industrial Engineer, however, the creation of new techniques and processes of organizing merchandise has had me practice some of the skills that an Industrial Engineer can do within the industry."

Conclusion

Findings from the assessment have provided concrete examples of how students' best engage in the learning process. Students' experiences have helped reinforce core components of the program, as well as assist in refining elements of the program to mutually meet the students' needs and the demand of the float building process.

As a result, additional student leadership opportunities have been created to involve even more students in the program, which currently supports 35 students in official leadership positions. Annual findings are used to continuously enhance the program and the students' experiences. In addition, evidence of students learning occurs every parade day on January 1. The nature of our students learning and potential is visibly demonstrated as our float successfully travels down the parade route.

Based on prior assessment consisting of the past two years, students have articulated that they are developing tangible leadership skills, such as project management, conflict management, developing and adhering to timelines, budgeting, resource management, communication, critical thinking, and highly complex problem solving skills.

Students' reports clearly demonstrate the depth and breathe of learning that occurs through their involvement in the Rose Float program. In addition to the reports, and findings from the open ended item survey, the Senior Coordinator witnesses firsthand, from direct observation, the extent and nature of their personal and professional growth.

Implications for Practice

An assessment will be conducted with this year's Rose Float students in January 2012. This information will be analyzed and compared to the past two years worth of data analysis. Comparison of the data provides the opportunity to identify any newly emerging themes, as well as provide recommendations for improving elements of the program, such as introducing new methods and experiences for student learning to occur.

Continue to intentionally build in programmatic experiences that are focused on application and connection to learning and leadership.

Strategize, design, and implement programmatic efforts to support student's persistence towards graduation.