Office of Student Life & Cultural Centers/Asian & Pacific Islander Student Center

Building Cultural Awareness through the Participation in the Lunar New Year Festival

Assessment Report

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Choose One: Learning Outcome Assessment

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Purpose of Assessment:
 Students are offered several programs managed by the Cultural Centers that strive to impact their development through cultural enhancement. The Lunar New Year is managed by the professional staff in the Asian and Pacific Islander Student Center. The assessment served several purposes to the program: to find out what they learned about Lunar New Year and its cultural traditions, how it advanced their academic learning, and how the program could further be improved.

Targeted Learning Outcome:
 By participating in the Lunar New Year Festival, students will be able to articulate one learned aspect about the communities that celebrate the festival.

Assessment Method:
 A paper survey containing a mixture of Likert scale and open-ended questions was given to participants at the end of the program to measure their learning. Students were encouraged to fill out the survey after participating in the program with the incentive of receiving a ticket to participate in the opportunity drawing to win gift certificates for the Bronco Bookstore.

The first four questions were based on a Likert scale (from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”). The questions were asked with the following prompts:
- This program fulfilled my expectations
- I learned about issues on diversity
- This program raised my cultural or social awareness
- I would recommend this program

The next set of questions were open-ended:
- What did you learn about Lunar New Year?
- How has this program advanced your academic learning?
- What did you like best about the program?
- In your opinion, how can this program be improved?

Results: 900 faculty, staff, and students participated in the program and a sample set of evaluations was collected from 68 students.

Of the 68 respondents, 66 responded (97%) they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the program fulfilled their expectations.
Of the 68 respondents, 59 responded (87%) they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they learned about diversity issues.
Of the 68 respondents, 65 responded (96%) they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the program raised their cultural and/or social awareness.

Of the 68 respondents, 68 responded (100%) they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they would recommend this program.

The following is a sample of responses to the open-ended questions:
- “I found out that it was the year of the Tiger and the Lunar New Year celebrates the lunar calendar.”
- “It’s great to see so many students and faculty get together for a specific cultural celebration, especially those who aren’t Asian. We’re really learning from one another.”
- “Fortunes and luck are a strong part of the Asian cultures that celebrate the lunar new year. Red is a lucky color and is used often.”
- “I learned the different kinds of animals that involve the lunar year. Like the year of the tiger (like this year) and dog, ox, etc.”
- “The mix of food, performances and learning was great!”
- “I really enjoyed the performances, especially the Chinese gymnast and lion dance.”

Conclusion:
The results of this study come from the small, representative sample of 68 out of about 900 participants. However, for the purposes of this study, a theme did emerge from these data.

More than 87% of students who participated in the survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the Likert questions, revealing that some issue of diversity or cultural awareness made an impact on the student during the festival.

The open-ended questions revealed that students learned at least one fact regarding the cultures that celebrate the Lunar New Year Festival. However, the answers ranged from general (“It’s the Year of the Tiger.”) to specific (“Fortunes and luck are a strong part of the Asian cultures that celebrate the lunar new year. Red is a lucky color and is used often.”). There were tables surrounding the festival which included information about the various cultures that celebrated the festival, including how they celebrated and what traditions were significant for each community. However, only a few comments in the open-ended questions referred to specific practices.

The Lunar New Year Festival offered learning opportunities for the students who were part of the planning committee as well as those who participated in the program. This event is a community building event for many student organizations, encouraging them to continue their involvement with the Asian & Pacific Islander Student Center. Students were able to clearly articulate at least one tradition connected to Lunar New Year (general or specific), as well as connect with other cultural student organizations through the fundraising booths.

Implications for Practice:
It is clear that the students overall enjoyed learning at the Lunar New Year Festival and walked away with some knowledge of the cultural celebration. However, the survey also revealed some needed changes for upcoming events. For example, future programs should seek out ways to convey more specific information regarding the celebrating cultures, rather than just information that can be sought out in advertising (e.g. this Lunar New Year was the year of the “tiger”). We tried to create more interactive activities that would engage participants in the learning, such as the fortune wheel, but most of the knowledge-based questions on the survey were answered based on advertising.

The survey also revealed specific practices for future Lunar New Year Festivals. The Asian & Pacific Islander Student Center increased the participation of student clubs and organizations to help sell food at the event (fundraising booths). However, last year all the student groups sold out, but this year they did not. This may be due to the sheer number of student groups involved in selling food. To avoid this, the center should reduce the number of booth participants. Maybe the additional booths can sell items other than food or create activities to still be able to raise money and awareness of their organization. This change in practice will allow direct profit for student organizations and the Asian & Pacific Islander Student Center can offer education and entertainment revolving around Lunar New Year, which was an expressed request in some of the answers to the assessment.