Division of Student Affairs High Impact Practices (HIP)
Cover Sheet 2013

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Name of HIP:  Executive Member – MSC Freshmen in Service and Hosting (MSC FISH)
Approximate # of TAMU students involved in the HIP:  6

Please check the TAMU learning outcome(s) associated with this HIP:

Bachelor’s:  ☐ Master the depth of knowledge required of a degree
☒ Demonstrate critical thinking
☒ Communicate effectively
☒ Practice personal and social responsibility
☒ Demonstrate social, cultural, and global competence
☒ Prepare to engage in lifelong learning
☒ Work collaboratively

Master’s:  ☐ Master the degree program requirements
☐ Apply subject matter knowledge
☐ Communicate effectively
☐ Use appropriate technologies
☐ Develop clear research plans
☐ Choose ethical course of action

Doctoral:  ☐ Master the degree program requirements
☐ Apply a variety of strategies and tools
☐ Communicate effectively
☐ Develop clear research plans
☐ Use appropriate technologies
☐ Teach and explain the subject matter

Please check the QEP learning outcome(s) associated with this HIP:

☐ Improve student learning by developing habits and skills for lifelong learning — Curiosity, Initiative, Independence, Transfer, Reflection
☒ Improve student learning by developing habits and skills for integrative learning — Connections to experience, Connections to discipline, Transfer, Integrated communication, Reflection and self-assessment
Abstract

MSC Freshmen in Service and Hosting (FISH) is a student organization that provides leadership opportunities aimed at enhancing its members’ purpose and identity by engaging in community service and program development on campus and within the community. FISH is comprised of 80 freshmen members, 16 Assistant Directors, and 6 Executives.

Through this year-long experience, the Executive Members are responsible for the leadership of four sub-committees, which work to create and implement all of the organization’s programs. Each sub-committee is comprised of 20 freshmen and meets once a week.

Description of the activity

a) Invest time and effort to purposeful tasks. Please describe the length of time of the experience.

Executive Members of MSC FISH are selected in March and begin transitioning into their new role through bi-weekly meetings, a spring retreat and two summer workdays. Their “term” ends at a banquet held on Parents’ Weekend the following academic year.

Transition programs:

- Bi-weekly meetings: Begin to discuss expectations, timeline for projects, and short-term goal setting
- “May Day” is held after graduation and consists of the following training:
  - Setting individual mission statements
  - SMART Goal Setting
  - Committee Expectations
  - Review and discussion of the college union
  - Program brainstorming – how are we congruent with our mission
  - Budget overview
  - Strengths Workshop
- Summer Retreat – held in July and consists of the following:
  - Committee planning
  - Overview of MSC policies, procedures and practices
  - Financial planning
  - Risk Management practices and expectations

Extended Leadership Opportunities:

Leading subcommittees - Each executive member purposely invests time and effort leading a subcommittee that creates and implements various campus wide programs and service opportunities. Tasks include: budget planning, meeting facilitation, peer feedback, risk assessment, public speaking, and program evaluations.
Leadership Development/Student Learning

Student Learning Outcomes:
MSC FISH Chair and Vice Chair created specific learning outcomes that members of their staff and organization should achieve through the planning and implementation of campus programs and community service projects:

By planning campus programs and community service projects the Executive members will be able to:
- Effectively communicate verbally for a wide variety of purposes and audiences
- Give critical feedback effectively (non-threatening)
- Analyze the elements/facts of a specific situation/problem and develop alternatives accordingly
- Is able to predict, evaluate, and articulate a broad range of implications, consequences and conclusions
- Looks at the project in a timely manner, provides clear feedback to the committee members, and recognizes work and effort accordingly
- Provide clear, nonjudgmental, and direct feedback by describing the situation, the behavior, and the impact

By planning campus programs and community service projects the Assistant Directors will be able to:
- Determine, calculate and initiate tasks for the group
- Assign task(s) with objectives that clearly state the end result the designee is responsible for achieving
- Is able to predict, evaluate, and articulate a broad range of implications, consequences and conclusions
- Provide clear, nonjudgmental, and direct feedback by describing the situation, the behavior, and the impact
- Creates an environment where the parties can discuss issues and work out conflict proactively; does not choose sides

By planning campus programs and community service projects the freshmen members will be able to:
- Initiate the task, perform and complete assigned task(s) by a specific timeline
- Use resources and maintain a specified budget
- Accurately convey the intent of their message when speaking
b) Interact with staff, advisors, and/or faculty about substantive matters usually over extended periods of time.

**One-on-One Meetings with Staff Advisor.**
Executive Members meet with a staff advisor at least once a week for 2 hours and set up additional meetings as needed. During these meetings staff:

- Advise students in the development of service learning events and programs
- Educate students to fulfill their responsibilities in the following areas: program conceptualization, promotion, production, evaluation, personnel selection, training, motivation, management, fiscal accountability, marketing research, contracts, interpersonal and leadership skill development, goal setting, and decision making
- Facilitate student development with the use of learning outcomes rubrics by providing intentional and focused leadership development for student leaders in project management; student self-awareness, and developed peers to lead the developmental process
- Ensure that all applicable University rules, policies and procedures are communicated to individual student committee members
- Advise students in relation to career choices, academic challenges, personal problems, and a variety of other concerns impacting their ability to function successfully in the University community

**c) Interact with peers about substantive matters usually over extended periods of time.**

**Subcommittee meetings**
Executive Members lead committee meetings with peers twice a week. During these meetings students discuss program conceptualization, promotion, production, evaluation, training, motivation, management, fiscal accountability, marketing research, contracts, interpersonal and leadership skill development, goal setting, risk management procedures and decision making.

**Event Management.**
During events students are working collaboratively with staff and peer committee members to manage the event, problem solve issues that arise, provide customer service assistance, communicate effectively to guests, respond accordingly to incidents/accidents, and follow all formal MSC FISH policies and protocols.

**Developing relationships**
Excs are encouraged to build relationships with their assistant directors and freshmen; to serve as role models of being good students and student leaders. This often results in lifelong friendships and mentor relationships.
d) Experience diversity through contact with people who are different from themselves

**Service Events**
Through this experience, Executive Members have several opportunities to interact and work with a diverse group of people, including students, staff, and community members. Along with the daily interactions they have with other FISH members, students work with community agencies to coordinate service events in the community. Examples of past service sites include: Waldenbrooke Retirement Community, Boys and Girls Club, and the Brazos Valley Food Bank.

**Program Planning**
Through the program planning and implementation process, Executive Members interact with advisors, administrators, peers, guests, and program participants. Moreover, through this process students must consider the demographics of the audience impacted by these events. This process challenges them to create welcoming and inclusive programs and events as well as to consider the audience they serve through their volunteerism efforts.

e) Receive frequent feedback about their performance – both formal and informal – in settings that allow them to respond to that feedback

**Learning Contracts**
Learning contracts are used as a method for formally giving feedback to Executive Members about their performance as a student leader. Executive Members create learning contracts to guide them through their leadership experience throughout the year. Each Executive Member identifies skills he/she would like to develop throughout the year, connects experiences within their MSC FISH roles that will enable them to develop/hone these skills, as well as, how each experience will assist in reaching his/her personal goals. These goals have to be one of the seven identified undergraduate learning outcomes.

Learning Contracts are submitted, reviewed by the staff advisor and Chair/Vice Chair. These are given back to the Executive Members to continue to edit. Throughout the year the advisor, student chair and/or vice chair of MSC FISH meets individually with the Executive Members to track their learning and discuss how they are connecting their out of class experiences to their academic endeavors.

**Groups Meetings**
In addition, Executive Members meet as a group along with the staff advisor on a weekly and discuss the progress on personal and committee goals and receive feedback accordingly. Executive Members are welcome to provide candid feedback to each other and discuss how they can provide and receive effective feedback based on the SLLO “Effective Feedback” Rubric.

f) Are provided opportunities to integrate synthesize and apply knowledge gained from their classroom/discipline to their co-curricular experience and vice versa. Students are provided
opportunities to discover the relevance of learning through application and practice in a range of contexts.

**Formal Evaluation of Learning**
Executive Members created learning contracts to guide their leadership throughout the year. Throughout the year the Chair/Vice Chair meet individually with the exec members to track their learning and discuss how these members connect their out of class experiences to their academic endeavors.

**Practical learning**
Each Executive member of MSC FISH supervises a group of 4 sophomores and 20 freshmen that work together to create, plan and execute campus wide programming events. The culmination of this work happens in the Spring semester. In the various stages, Executive members have the opportunity to practice skills in a variety of ways:

- **Communication** - facilitation of weekly meetings, attendance at weekly executive meetings, submitting weekly reports that ask about the status of a program, tasks involved including marketing plan, risk management plan, and budget updates.
- **Delegation** – Executives are asked to provide information in weekly reports regarding task delegation that includes which tasks were delegated and what strengths connect to the person that the task was delegated to
- **Diversity** – Many of our programs and services impact a non-traditional audience. The Executives work with their committees to identify needs that are unmet on campus which has resulted in events and programs that highlight hunger on college campuses, suicide ideation, teen pregnancy, veteran’s services, and students with disabilities.

**Academic Connections**
Students identify the connections they make in their classrooms with the work they accomplish in their student leader roles. This is most notable for business majors, but is also highly valued more many of our engineers and architecture students due to the group work that they participate in.

**g)** Are provided opportunities to become aware of their values and beliefs and thus to better understand themselves in relation to others and the larger world.

**Weekly Meetings**
MSC FISH execs facilitate a reflection exercise each month for students to internalize their growth through the experiences they have had both in and outside of the classroom. These are maintained by the student but the group does share their thoughts throughout this process.
Program Planning and Execution
Through the program planning and implementation process, Executive Members interact with advisors, administrators, peers, guests, and program participants. Moreover, through this process students must consider the demographics of the audience impacted by these events. This process challenges them to create welcoming and inclusive programs and events as well as to consider the audience they serve through their volunteerism efforts.

Assessment

Individual Learning
Learning Contracts are evaluated by the advisor. These contracts are living documents that continue to change as the student meets his or her personal goals. Based on the ULOs, this is used to assess student learning and progress towards learning outcomes.

Committee Learning
MSC FISH works with Student Life Studies to assess the leadership development and learning that member experiences with the committee. These are distributed in December and April so that growth and learning can be tracked and quantified. The evaluations are based on the learning outcomes that FISH has established for the year.