

Project Summary Form

Please complete this form about the data you gathered for this project and how you used it. This summary will be posted on the Student Affairs Assessment website and in Campus Labs (previously StudentVoice). The information will be used for division and department strategic planning as well as accreditation reports.

Date desired by: *March 17, 2014*

Desk Assistant Spring Training

Brief description of program / project:

This Spring, the Desk Assistant staff from both the Marriott Honors Community and the Peterson Heritage Center front desks attended a one day training. We included both incoming staff members and current staff members in this training and used it primarily as a refresher on everything they had previously been trained on and as a way for us to assess how much information they retained from previous trainings.

Who was asked to complete the survey (e.g., “students who attended...”):

All staff members who attended the training were asked to complete this survey, including our Student Managers and Administrative Specialists who had helped us create the training.

How many people were asked (if known)? *[AER to delete if mailing through SV]*

Response Rate: 28.21% (11 of 39)

Administration Type: Email sent through Campus Labs

Summary of Key Findings:

Some of the key findings were that this format of training seemed to be more useful than formats we've used in the past. At this training we used primarily peer-based education, role-playing, and games like jeopardy and a quiz bowl rather than utilizing power points or lecture-based approaches. This style seemed much more engaging than our previous training in which current members of the staff often felt like it was redundant and a waste of their time. Through the use of games and activities we were able to allow those students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a fun and engaging way. I did notice that some students wanted more role-playing scenarios than we had in this training. After the results of our Fall training survey, we also designed this training to go more in-depth on some of the topics the students had not understood as well previously. The results of this survey were much improved in that students felt more comfortable using the register, knowing who and when to call for various issues, using our various computer programs, and understanding mailroom policies and procedures. Based upon their responses, I believe we made some very positive changes to our training since the previous one. Another key finding was that some students wished there had been more tangible take-aways, such as handouts and other materials. Overall students seemed much more positive about this training than they have about past trainings we've done.

Actions Taken:

Our student managers and administrative specialists will be meeting with us to review these results and also provide our own feedback so that we can make positive changes for our next all-staff semester training. One of the changes we would like to make for the future is to add more structure to the games we played. We noticed that as we were doing the quiz bowl and playing jeopardy, some students in the back were able to zone out and not participate. We will brainstorm ways to make this more engaging for everyone throughout the entire game rather than having it only be engaging for the students who are actively participating in the game at that time.

I also noticed that several students felt the ice-breakers were pointless or a waste of time, while others noted that these helped foster a sense of team and allow new staff members to get to know everyone. We will work harder to make our departmental value of Team a stronger part of our work environment and to make that expectation more clear so that hopefully people will find more value in team building in the future. We also plan to brainstorm ways to make the ice-breakers feel more engaging—perhaps by having the students offer up ideas for ice-breakers rather than us facilitating them every time.

Which department and/or program goals does this program / project align with? *(Finalized department strategic plans can be found on our website: <http://studentaffairs.utah.edu/assessment/departments.php>)*

There are two departmental goals that our training was designed to align with. At this training, we wanted to give everyone on staff, some of whom may not live on campus, the opportunity to eat in our residence hall as a way to experience the food and facility first-hand and be able to speak about it to prospective students. This aligned with Housing & Residential Education's goal to "strengthen our partnership with Dining Services". We also had a section of our training dedicated to going over the various computer programs and technology we use at the desks, including StarRez, Blackboard, and the register. This aligned with the goal to "provide ongoing trainings for staff on technology." We are continuing that training throughout the semester as well, as we develop a new system for using StarRez in our mailroom and begin using laptops.

Which Student Affairs goals (<http://studentaffairs.utah.edu/assessment/documents/strategic-plans/strategic-plan-brochure.pdf>) does this program / project align with?

Our training was designed to align with two main strategic goals of the University of Utah. The first is "Provide education that ensures all staff is properly trained to provide professional and competent service." The purpose of this training was to help Desk Assistants build the skills and knowledge base needed to not only complete the tasks of the jobs but also to provide a high level of customer service and professionalism. We had sections of our training specifically dedicated to training our staff on customer service, where we had them role play various situations that may arise at the desk, and on professionalism, where we discussed the dress code and expectations for behavior at the desk.

The second goal is "Utilize a coordinated assessment, evaluation, and research approach to promote data driven decision-making." Our training last Fall was the first training in which we used a formalized evaluation method to strategize ways to improve our training in the future. I believe we were able to utilize the assessment and evaluation methods from the previous training to make informed decisions about how to structure our training this Spring. We managed time better and gave topics the appropriate length of time that they needed based upon the results of our previous survey. We were able to cover the topics that students felt least knowledgeable about from our previous training. We incorporated their feedback about making the training feel more engaging and relevant to current

employees. And we were able to make our job expectations much more clear this time than we did at our last training. The results of this survey demonstrate the benefit in using formalized methods of assessment and evaluation like this for our trainings and we will continue doing so in the future in order to make the most effective decisions possible.

Which Learning Domain(s) does this program / project align with?

<http://studentaffairs.utah.edu/assessment/documents/planning/Student%20Affairs%20Learning%20Domains.pdf>

There were two main learning domains that our training aligned with this Spring. Practical Competence is the first domain. We focused our training on the acquisition of transferable skills that our students can use as they move on into other jobs and roles. Some examples of the transferable skills we covered in our training include: effective communication strategies and various methods of communication, how to handle emergency situations, computer program skills and time management. We plan to continue throughout the semester in doing professional development related to interviewing skills, resume and cover letter writing skills, and building a strong professional image. We also aligned with the Critical Thinking domain in our training. We focused on helping students build skills in critically assessing emergency situations, considering all viewpoints and information related to the emergency, and problem solving. We formatted this section of our training to be interactive and discussion-based so that students would have the opportunity to engage in a dialogue about various emergency situations we've encountered and reflect upon the resources and tools available to them to handle these situations.