New Student & Parent Programs

Patricia Hymes, Coordinator, Tours & Information Services
www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/nsp

October 16, 2013

Department Mission Statement:
From pre-admission to graduation, New Student & Parent Programs provides services and programs designed to empower students and their families to create a meaningful educational journey at Cal State Fullerton. New Student & Parent Programs connects students to the valuable learning opportunities necessary for this journey via campus tours, orientation programs, information and campus referrals, leadership development and welcome activities. As a result of program participation and service utilization, students develop character, critical thinking skills and the interpersonal competence requisite for lifelong learning. New Student & Parent Programs provides information and resources to parents so that they can serve as active partners in their students’ success; foster a sense of pride and community among parents and families of CSUF students; and cultivate fundraising opportunities among the growing Titan Parents network.

Program/Service Overview:
Campus Tours – Titan Ambassadors
The campus tours program at Cal State Fullerton serves thousands of visitors each year. Under the primary supervision of the Coordinator, Tours & Information Services, Titan Ambassadors promote and personalize the university to prospective students, their families, and other guests to the campus. The Titan Ambassador position is a year-long para-professional student leadership role. As a result of serving in the position, students will enhance their critical thinking skills and competency in problem-solving.

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT:
(To check mark any box below, please double click on the square and select “checked”.)
☐ External Reports
☐ Needs Assessment
☐ Program Evaluation
☒ Student Learning Outcomes
☐ Student Satisfaction Assessment
☐ Student Success
☐ Utilization Data

Learning Domain:
Self Management

Learning Outcomes:
1. Demonstrate problem solving skills by identifying action steps when dealing with issues within a tour group.
2. Utilize tour content based on the age-level (K-8, high school students, transfer students, parents, etc.) and background knowledge of audience.
3. Apply appropriate language and tone based on the audience’s needs.
4. Use effective time-management skills in managing the tour content and length.

Project Sample:
19 Titan Ambassadors (Campus Tour Guides)

Data Collection Timeframe:
May 13 – May 17, 2013

Data Collection Methods:
Data collection methods included a document analysis of written reflection responses. Titan Ambassadors were asked to reflect on their experiences as campus tour guides. They were then asked to write individual responses to the following question: “How has being a Titan Ambassador impacted or enhanced your critical thinking skills?” The Coordinator of Tours & Information Services then reviewed the written reflections and looked for themes within the short essays (ranging from 1-2 pages in length).

Limitations:
The written reflections were only reviewed by one individual. Having additional reviewers and checking for inner-rater reliability could enhance the validity of the outcomes found. In addition, the results are only based on one-time data collection and analysis.
Summary of Results:
Results from the written responses revealed that being a Titan Ambassador enhanced the students’ critical thinking skills by learning how to be flexible and adapt and actively engage different types of tour participants. Additionally, the students indicated that the position afforded them the opportunity to apply the skills gained to other personal, professional, and academic related areas.

Key Findings:
- 58% indicated that they learned how to adapt to the needs of their audience by presenting the appropriate information suitable to the tour participant’s age, personal experience or interest, and/or background knowledge of university life.
- 47% of the students indicated that the Titan Ambassador position enhanced their critical thinking skills by allowing them to problem-solve on their own when faced with challenging situations during their tours.
- 39% of the students felt their critical thinking skills were enhanced by having to adapt to changing situations, challenging questions, and unexpected circumstances while conducting campus tours.

One Titan Ambassador commented:
“As a Titan Ambassador, my critical thinking skills have been enhanced by those situations that I had to think quickly on my feet for a change in tour route or a tricky question from a member of the group. In the beginning, I would have become flustered by the question or the sudden change which would have affected my performance. However, through my experience in giving countless tours, I have learned to be flexible as changes arise and to think carefully before I answer any questions.”

One Titan Ambassador wrote:
“Having to be quick in my critical thinking skills and utilize my resources so often has helped me in my daily and academic life. During stressful and busy times, it is easier to organize my thoughts and my plans by thinking critically about what is most important and finding the best possible means of follow through.”

APPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS: (Please be as specific as possible.)

1. Create a standard tool/rubric in order to focus the evaluation on important themes and standardize the data collection/analysis process. Using clear language on the rubric can also assist evaluators to more quickly identify the students’ depth of understanding related to specific areas of critical thinking.
2. Utilize multiple readers in order to increase inner-rater reliability and thus strengthen the credibility of the assessment findings.
3. After three years of data collection, analyze results and conduct longitudinal comparisons.