Creating a Campus Climate to Support Inclusive Excellence: How a Marketing Campaign Across Campus Can Promote Participation of All Students in High-Impact Practices

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Abstract

While many universities increased opportunities for students to be academically engaged in high-impact practices (HIPs) such as undergraduate research & creative activities, study abroad, internships and service learning, inequities in participation rates between underserved students and their peers still prevail. San Diego State University (SDSU) has implemented a campus-wide marketing campaign named “SDSU BeHIP!” as a strategic effort to increase the participation of underserved students in HIPs.

Introduction

HIPs lead to higher retention and graduation rates, and enhance students’ overall college experiences. Underserved students have the highest potential gains from participation in HIPs, yet are the least likely to participate or seek out these kinds of experiential learning activities (Kuh 2008). To address the inequity in participation rates, SDSU’s Division of Academic Engagement and Student Achievement (DAESA) employed the strategic marketing initiative “SDSU BeHIP!” to inform all students about the benefits of participating in HIPs, focusing first on outreach to underserved students, including but not limited to: first-generation, underrepresented, and low-income students.

Methods: Marketing Strategies

- HIPs first-year seminar / HIPs workshop(s) in other thematic seminars
- Annual BeHIP! EXPO Week
- Annual BeHIP! Student Conference (free)
- SDSU Student Research Symposium (SRS) Mentor Program
- Promote HIPs gateway courses: GENS 280: Civic Engagement (Service Learning), GENS 290: Intro to Undergraduate Research
- Emphasize intersectionality between HIPs, ability to customize HIP experience(s), and accessing HIP pathways (BeHIP! SDSU brochure)
- Peer education: student speakers/panels in a variety of settings
- Integrated messaging: social media platforms, program newsletters and listservs, course and major based outreach by faculty/departments
- Partnerships with student organizations of all sizes
- Dedicated advisor to follow up with students attending events related to HIPs with phone calls, emails, info about specific HIP opportunities

Results: Impact on Student Behavior

Underserved students exposed to at least two of the following aspects of campus HIPs “culture” are more likely to complete at least two HIPs before graduation:

- Learn about HIPs in their first year of college
- Consistent HIPs messaging across various of platforms (departments, courses, enrollment services, student orgs, special programs)
- Participate in mentoring programs and/or peer education opportunities staffed by students, faculty and/or staff well-versed in HIPs
- Personalized HIPs advising in addition to general/major advising
- HIPs linked to courses included in graduation or major requirements
- HIPs participation is tracked and recognized on transcripts, ePortfolio, etc.
- Centralized way to access information that provides clear steps to participate in HIPs
- Integration of HIPs education into existing courses, programs or campus life experiences

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Literature Cited