

# Fresh Perspectives

## Diversity and Inclusion Training for Student Organizations in a College of Agriculture

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### Introduction

- Student diversity continues to increase (Beimers et. al, 2013) but sense of inclusion and belonging by underrepresented groups is uneven (Drape et al., 2017).
- Colleges of Ag must prepare students to learn and work with culturally diverse populations (Drape et al., 2017).
- Racially charged events at Cal Poly (spring, 2018) impacted fall 2018 enrollment of accepted underrepresented students and damaged the institutional reputation.
- *Fresh Perspectives (FP)* is a curriculum to be shared monthly in CAFES student organization meetings for the 2018-2019 academic year.
- Goal of *FP* is to empower CAFES club members with the tools and dispositions necessary to begin and guide conversations surrounding diversity and inclusion, from a place of respect and understanding.
- *FP* is part of a multi-faceted college-level approach to educating students in the classroom, through larger campus events, and through student organizations.

### Costs/ Resources Needed

**No financial costs associated in this format. Program required:**

1. Passionate volunteers to write curriculum and lead train-the-trainer sessions
2. Committed faculty and students to dedicate club meetings
3. Supportive college admin structure to champion *FP*

Costs associated with incentivizing student attendance for an additional future event (ie. food, venue, sound equipment, etc.) would be incurred.

### How it Works

#### Program Structure:

- **FP Leadership Team:** three students with facilitation experience and one faculty member
  - Produced a series of nine, fifteen-minute instructional modules
  - Presented a new module to representatives of the 21 clubs and organizations recognized by the CAFES Student Council at each monthly Council meeting, in a train-the-trainer experience
- **CAFES Club Representatives:** Club Reps sitting on the Council then presented the module to their respective club members at their monthly meetings
- **Curriculum Series:** Topics developed from student feedback at spring, 2018 campus debrief forums. The curriculum series falls into a continuum of three themes, containing the following titles and objectives.

#### COMMUNICATION

##### Developing & Delivering Key Messages

Synthesize and deliver key messages using a model structure

##### Communicating the Brand

Explore ways to model brand expectations through interactions with others

##### Communicating Through Adversity

Apply techniques for communicating effectively in challenging/stressful situations

#### RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

##### Engaging in Conversation

Implement strategies to initiate, engage in, and close a conversation

##### Respecting Diversity

Demonstrate actions which model respect for diverse groups and ideas

##### Constituency Building

Create a constituency building plan to develop relationships with those outside the organization

#### INFLUENCE

##### Understanding Influence

Explore the core tenants of leadership and use them to craft a personal mission to positively and purposefully influence others

##### Planning for Change

Utilize the principles of planned change to cultivate a plan for organizational change

##### Servant Leadership

Examine the principles of servant leadership within the context of the campus dynamic

### Results

- Solicited program feedback from Reps via a Google Form instrument through campus email.
- **Respondents said:**
  - Completed 3+ modules – 67%
  - Modules took no more than 15 minutes to complete – 67%
  - Club members felt POSITIVE about *FP* – 17%
  - Club members felt ACCEPTABLE about *FP* – 83%
  - Felt club officers were VERY SUPPORTIVE of *FP* – 83%
- **Affect of Training Role on Club Representatives:**
  - Leadership
  - Presentation Skills
  - Verbal Communication
  - Personal Confidence
- **Key Take-Aways of Club Representatives:**
  - Understanding it is necessary to voice concerns
  - Important to interact with those who are different
  - Discussing these issues helped them learn more about self

### Future Plans

**FP Leadership Team plans to:**

1. Present an additional session at a CAFES Student Council meeting on facilitation strategies for leading modules
2. Review and revise the curriculum based on feedback
3. Consider offering quarterly *FP* workshops, to bring all CAFES club members together for training with the larger college community

### Resources

Beimers, D. L., Warner, B., & Mackie, P. F. E. (2013). Racial and ethnic diversity in undergraduate social work programs: How are programs in rural areas faring? *Contemporary Rural Social Work*, 5, 1–16.

Drape, T., Anderson, G., Church, A., Jain, S., Slabech, R., & Amaral, R. (2017). Is diversity on their minds? Perceptions of diversity in an undergraduate using a mixed methods design. *NACTA Journal*, 61(3), 255–261.



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