

2021 College Project Entry

Project Title: Honoring Those We Lost

1. Briefly describe your College Project and how it directly supported the college's mission/current priorities.

Alpha Nu Sigma chapter officers met with our college president to brainstorm ideas. We wanted to honor professors we recently lost, as well as members of the college who are no longer with us. We chose to create a memorial space on each of our three campuses consisting of a bench and a plaque honoring students, faculty, staff, and alumni. These spaces support the part of Horry-Georgetown Technical College's (HGTC) mission "to provide a student-centered environment and inspire lifelong learning." It was designed with students in mind to provide a shady space for studying and/or reflection. We accomplished our project through collaboration with HGTC administrators and our procurement and maintenance departments.

2. Describe the planning process in detail including who was involved in determining the project. Please Note: it's acceptable to list job titles/departments rather than all individuals' full names.

Chapter officers researched HGTC's mission statement during training in preparation for meeting with our college president. The process began with chapter officers discussing ideas because we anticipated brainstorming College Project ideas with her. Committee members created a Google survey to solicit members' suggestions for our project, understanding we would adjust our plan to the needs identified by our college president. We met with our college president who asked for our thoughts. We presented our ideas to her, and she shared her ideas with us. Our president directed us to present proposals for sustainable farming, student retention, vending machine nutrition options, and a memorial garden to HGTC's Executive Leadership Team (Cabinet). We created a one-page proposal for each idea and presented it to Cabinet members. They narrowed the focus of our project to the memorial garden idea and instructed us to meet with the procurement manager and maintenance supervisor. They further explained, "they are both great at helping to think about installation, durability of the materials, and sustainability/upkeep of the placement." Before we could start planning our project, two vice presidents approached us about changing the project to a vaccine awareness campaign on campus for the fall semester. We polled our members who overwhelmingly rejected this proposal. The vice presidents directed us to resume the memorial garden project. Once we returned to the initial idea, our officers presented it to chapter members for input as to what they felt would be the most appropriate way to create these peaceful spaces. We received approval and recommendations from the maintenance supervisor so we would know exactly what would and would not be acceptable. We presented different proposals for our memorial idea to chapter members for consideration and ultimately voted for benches and plaques to be placed on all three campuses. We

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determined this would both create a peaceful space for past, present, and future students as well as serve to honor those who had passed. Two chapter officers created sayings and chapter members voted for their favorite. Once the saying was approved, our Service Vice President continued researching plaque options and prices to find the best fit for our budget. At the direction of the maintenance supervisor, chapter officers scouted several locations on each campus for placement of the benches. Our procurement supervisor graciously donated all three benches and our chapter raised funds to purchase the plaques.

3. What knowledge, skills and abilities did members need to successfully implement this College Project? How did chapter members strengthen these areas before implementing the project?

Our committee learned how to be a team operating virtually during a pandemic. To properly identify administrators, we familiarized ourselves with HGTC's organizational chart. We understood the importance of professional communication, so we requested our advisors review emails before sending to administrators. Our advisors also worked with us to create the one-page project proposals for Cabinet.

To complement the existing college landscape plan, we researched existing landscaping. We investigated sources for benches and plaques and scouted locations on each of the three campuses and collaborated with college administrators to gain project and design approval. It was important for us to be part of the installation, so we coordinated the time and dates on each campus.

College administrators asked us to pay for the plaques since they donated the benches, so we had to review chapter finances and determine how to fund this project.

4. How did the chapter carry out the project and communicate with all collaborators?

Our college president directed us to meet with HGTC cabinet members to start the project. They requested we work with the college maintenance supervisor and procurement manager to determine the details. We met with them to place the benches and plaques at the end of the project.

College administrators were kept informed about progress via bi-weekly emails throughout the project. We sent project reminders to chapter members through Messenger and email. College Project progress was shared in both chapter and officer meetings. At the conclusion of the project, we sent a summary report to all administrators and our college president.

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5. What were the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of this project, including the project's impact on members?

Throughout this project, chapter members learned about the many elements required to operate within a bureaucracy, successfully organize a project, and function as a team.

Since our procurement supervisor directed us to research the plaques we needed, one team member called four local suppliers and researched an additional five online suppliers to determine plaque designs and prices. Ultimately, we used an online supplier to purchase three 8 inch by 10 inch aluminum casted plaques with stakes. Each plaque cost \$157.50, and the chapter spent a total of \$472.50 for all three plaques. Chapter members created two original quotes to include on these plaques and chapter members selected the one they preferred.

We coordinated the installation of three benches and three plaques, one on each campus. In total, ten volunteers assisted with the installation on our three campuses. After the installation, we sent an announcement about them to our Public Relations Director so she could share it with over 200 faculty and staff members. Our Academic Affairs department also included the announcement in their quarterly newsletter. Although we appreciated the announcements, we realized students were not informed through formal communication. In spite of this, we received a comment from a student who said "Loving this!!!" and sent a picture of the bench and plaque on one campus. Another student indicated she uses the bench instead of the library for studying.

When we submitted our final report, our college president commented, "I can hardly contain my depth of feelings over this project. Our lost loved ones are looking upon you all and HGTC for caring for them. While life goes on, remembering those we worked with day in and day out is really what is important. From the bottom of my heart and having lost a loved one in my life, I so value what Phi Theta Kappa has accomplished."

The project brought us closer together as a chapter as we reminisced on those we lost both personally and professionally and worked to honor our fallen HGTC family. Throughout this project, we learned the importance of working with college administrators and each other as we capitalized on each other's strengths to complete specific tasks. We grew as scholar-servant-leaders while we learned the value of being flexible with our schedules due to working remotely because of Covid protocols.

6. Describe how this project helped develop and/or hone your chapter's relationship with the college administration.

This project helped to strengthen our relationship with the administration because it gave us an opportunity to work hand in hand with them. We learned professional presentation

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skills as well as how to write a project proposal. We learned to follow the appropriate chain of command when we communicated with the appropriate administrators and established new relationships with departments and administrators we had not worked with in prior years. We continue to enjoy a good relationship with our administrators, and they look forward to meeting chapter members every year. Our Academic Affairs Vice President stated, "PTK continues to do outstanding work and we appreciate you all and the impact you are making!"