

College Project 2023 (117 words in questions)

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

Our College Project was designed to give students tools to succeed after college. Alpha Nu Sigma officers met with Horry-Georgetown Technical College's (HGTC) president, Dr. Fore, to discuss College Project ideas. She welcomed our suggestions and added an additional one. Dr. Fore stated she loved our proposals and wanted input from HGTC's vice-presidential leadership team (Cabinet) on which idea they preferred. The one they selected led us to collaborate with Student Affairs to co-host fall Welcome Back celebrations on each of our three campuses. We agreed our project would address the portion of HGTC's mission statement "to provide a student-centered environment and inspire life-long learning." To develop our project, we collaborated with college administrators, staff, and community partners.

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

Prior to meeting with our college president, officers reviewed HGTC's mission statement and brainstormed ideas during officer training. Additionally, we brainstormed ideas at chapter meetings, narrowed them down by category, and determined which would be the most feasible to implement. Ideas included life skills, outdoor sports court, and college signage. We understood we would adjust our plan to any needs our college president identified. We wrote proposals to present to her, and three officers and an advisor attended this meeting. Dr. Fore included a fourth idea, student recruitment, and requested we present these four proposals to HGTC's Cabinet, which we did. Cabinet considered our proposals and instructed the Student Affairs VP and Academic Affairs VP to share Cabinet's final decision with us. Cabinet chose life skills, and the VPs instructed us to collaborate with the Student Affairs department to co-host HGTC's fall Welcome Back celebrations on our three campuses. Detailed planning for the event began after the Carolinas Region Honors Institute in July. On the trip home, students brainstormed themes and chose "Carnival of Life" and "Reveal the Unknown of Life." We shared these with Dr. Cindy Johnston, Assistant VP for Recruitment and Engagement. She selected Carnival of Life.

We surveyed chapter members to determine topics and condensed them into the following categories:

- Finance (personal banking, budgeting, loans, establishing credit)
- Legal (estate planning, wills/trusts, power of attorney, medical directive)
- Do It Yourself (basic home/apartment maintenance and repair)
- Healthy Living (nutrition basics, healthy aging)
- Civic Engagement (voter registration, evaluating sources for bias)

Our original plan was to ask faculty to present these topics, but we learned faculty would not be available during Welcome Back celebrations, so we decided to contact community partners.

College Project 2023 (117 words in questions)

Chapter officers emailed finance, legal, civic engagement, and healthy living professionals to invite them to participate. When they agreed, we confirmed participation details.

We met with HGTC's procurement manager and a Student Affairs representative to discuss carnival-themed foods and games as well as tables, decorations, and a DJ because the Student Affairs' budget was used to pay for these items.

Our research librarian volunteered to create the "Evaluating Media Sources for Bias" handout; an officer created our healthy living brochure; a local handyman created the "Basic Home/Apartment Maintenance and Repair" guide (attached). Two officers, who are Digital Arts majors, created a draft flyer to advertise the events. Once approved by advisors, it was sent to Dr. Johnston for dissemination; however, she informed us they could not use it. Instead, they added information from our flyer to the official advertisement (attached).

Remaining planning included how to ensure students visited each community partner, and we decided to identify their tables with a red flag. Each student received a bingo card we created, and they collected a sticker from each partner table they visited. Students returned filled bingo cards, completed a survey created to assess qualitative outcomes, and received a ticket for a drawing.

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?

We studied HGTC's mission statement before meeting with our college president and brainstormed project ideas to discuss with her. To prepare for meetings with administrators, officers engaged in a listening exercise to improve communication skills. We also learned about the importance of teamwork by completing a "tallest tower" competition during officer training. Since we understood the importance of the meeting with our college president, we dressed professionally.

We learned how to create concise and professional business proposals, several of which required statistics and investigation. Once completed, members rehearsed presenting them to an advisor.

We used professional business communication skills to correspond with our community partners. Officers drafted a generic email, which was reviewed by an advisor prior to sending. Once approved, this email was customized for each partner, and we sent thank you emails to them and a final report to administrators afterwards.

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

Project progress was shared in chapter and officer meetings. We collaborated with administrators throughout our project via emails and meetings, which was a challenge because

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the Student Engagement Coordinator was on extended leave and her replacement had not been hired. Several administrators directed pieces of the event, which required several different communication channels and caused some confusion. Student Affairs determined event dates based on availability of food vendors. Because of this, we were not able to inform our community partners of the exact date of the events when we initially contacted them to participate. Ultimately, event dates were a week earlier than we anticipated.

We met with HGTC's procurement manager and Student Affairs' personnel to discuss details, and we were unexpectedly responsible for procuring carnival games. We contacted a local business who provided corn hole, giant Jenga™, and giant Connect 4™ games. During this meeting, we requested carnival food such as funnel cakes, popcorn, sno-cones™, and cotton candy, which was provided by Student Affairs, who also agreed to distribute the approved advertising flyer to all students, faculty, and staff at HGTC.

Chapter officers recruited members to volunteer at each event. We researched costs and ordered flags and stickers for the bingo card for community partners' tables. Since Horry County Voter Registration decided not to attend, we created a QR code to direct students to their website. We confirmed dates and attendance with our community partners and met with Student Affairs to determine placement of our table for maximum contact with student attendees. Our bingo cards included each community partner name, and we distributed them to students to maximize visitation at each station. Students who filled their cards completed a survey about their experience to enter a gift card drawing.

Student Affairs embraced our theme by including red and white striped bunting, face painting, and balloons to decorate and highlight where students checked in (attached). Officers and advisors made a point to introduce ourselves to community partners during each event.

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 many elements required to operate within a bureaucracy and collaborate with numerous administrators. Chapter officers coordinated with one law firm, three banks, and one county voter registration agent to participate in our three-day project. This helped us achieve HGTC's goal of welcoming students to campus in a fun and friendly atmosphere. The events had record attendance, including 350 students at Conway, 240 at Grand Strand, and 95 at Georgetown, plus faculty and staff participants. Officers thoughtfully selected gift cards from Amazon, Walmart, and Barnes & Noble to benefit students, and we spent \$450 which we fundraised from a yard sale. Each campus received three gift cards and winners were emailed. We spent an additional \$102 on table flags, bingo cards, and stickers.

Each community partner provided handouts on our chosen topics. One student registered to vote at the Georgetown location. When asked "what was the most useful thing you learned today?," students commented, "the list of DIY home and apartment tips;" "law firms can help me while I am in school;" "free checking accounts for students at CCNB with perks." In response to our thank you email, the law firm stated, "These three events were a joy to be a part of! We look

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forward to doing more in the future!! Thank you for the opportunity to serve in the community and with your specific locations!"

We discovered the President valued the input of her Cabinet, who helped determine our project. Officers realized we were more capable than we originally thought. We learned how to create professional proposals, present them to college administrators, and how the planning process works for a large event to be held on different campuses on three consecutive days. We believed in this project because we felt it was important for college students to learn life skills. We were pleased when Cabinet members selected our proposal and appreciated their support. One officer commented, "It's hard to believe I was a part of something so significant happening for our college."

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

This project enhanced the relationship between our chapter and college administrators because it introduced us to several new administrators and departments who were instrumental in our projects' success. Our Vice President of Student Affairs stated "Thank you all for your collaboration and hard work in making these events such a huge success. I could tell folks were having a great time!"

We were thrilled our college president and Cabinet members listened to our proposals, asked questions, and selected the one we felt would benefit students the most. We learned about the hierarchy of college operations, which gave us knowledge to share with new members when they are planning the next College Project. Our Assistant Vice President for Recruitment and Engagement stated, "We have been getting feedback that this was one of the best Welcome Back Celebrations we have ever hosted with a record attendance participating across the three campuses! The Carnival of Life theme was a wonderful way to provide important information to students in a fun and interactive way. Well done! I look forward to our next partnership program with PTK."