SIENA COLLEGE COMMUNITY POLICY INSTITUTE

Summary Description

May, 2016

I. Find a faculty fellow
    A. Dr. Daniel Lewis and Dr. Mathew Johnson (Political Science Department and Sociology Department)

II. Secure funding
    A. Bonner Funds and "The Review Foundation" funds
        1. Written proposal outlining:
            a) Why the need for this program?
            b) Why Siena College?
            c) What is the mission or goal?
            d) Tentative program design and structure: how we can we incorporate academics and community engagement in one program and how it will grow?
            e) How to measure the growth
            f) How to create sustainability and capacity
            g) Budgeting information

III. Startup Recruitment
    A. Start recruiting fellows right away "On Your Mark, Go, Get Set" mindset
        1. Faculty Nominations from the Political Science Department
        2. This was done by a rising Senior Bonner as their service site: Student Coordinator, Brittany Drollette
        3. Interviewed for Summer Fellows, signed on four to start
            a) Responsibilities Included: Organizing PolicyOptions.org Database, tracking their progress in a state spreadsheet and a local spreadsheet of different types of organizations, people and programs. This takes a large portion of time and attention and learning to use the PolicyOptions Interface (Video Conference with Bobby)
            b) Developed a Community Issue Map that breaks down the biggest issues for different demographics in our community
        4. What would I change?

a) First step is to define the mission of the organization and make it a collaborative process with the students. Allow them to have a say in the mission!

B. Hired a VISTA to work with the Student Coordinator and Faculty Fellow

    1. Signed on in August in time for the beginning of the Fall semester. [VISTA Assignment Description](#) outlined certain responsibilities including:

        a) Learning about the Center and knowing all 11 programs thoroughly, meeting with Bonner Foundation to learn about the network and the history of PolicyOptions

        b) Infrastructure design—recruitment model, orientation and training calendar, and develop student support structure

        c) Develop budget and accounting systems

        d) Implement recruitment plan for semester by semester recruitment (fall, spring, summer semesters) and a [developmental pathways model](#)

        e) Create Marketing Materials and handbook for students and coordinators

        f) Develop Impact and Assessment tools

        g) Build DEEP Connections with the school and other community partners and programs

        h) Service wrap-up with transferables

IV. Orientation of Students

A. Onboarding process

    1. NIH Certification- We ask fellows to complete this online training due to the vulnerability of the researched populations and just in case they communicate directly with people throughout their research.

    2. Sign commitment papers

    3. Review student handbook and sign a terms and conditions page that they understand the expectations

    4. Review a semester assignment description that outlines the expectations in detail

    5. Trained on Basecamp, Google Drive based system, and Policy Options basics

    6. Divide research project teams up/independent projects and write their assignment descriptions

B. Orientation Workshops and Trainings

    1. Intro to our Center and Icebreaker

    2. Student Expectations and Handbook

    3. Professionalism Training- email, professional dress, presentation skills, communication

    4. BWBRS and Operations training

5. How to Digest Policy News activity

6. Time and Project Management Training

7. Scheduling- making sure project teams have corresponding office hours

C. What would I change?

1. Include program mission based workshop, develop a thorough understanding of what public policy is and how it can become a tool for change

2. Stronger emphasis on training the project team leaders

V. Academic Integration

A. POSC 265 Course

1. Learning Goals:

a) Understand the core concepts related to public policy in the U.S.

b) Critically analyze and evaluate public policies and policy alternatives

c) Understand the nature and complexity of the public policy process

(1) Revising the course to place more emphasis on the analytical skills and concepts (less on the policy process)

2. How POSC 265 is engaged? How is it connected to the PolicyOptions Model?

a) The course uses CPI work as a model for course assignments:

(1) All written assignments are centered around CPI core issue areas Education, Health, Housing & Homelessness, Hunger & Food Security, and Justice & Community Safety.

(a) Adding Environmental Policy to open the course to Environmental Studies students.

(2) All written assignments are focused on local and state policy areas.

(3) The first written assignment uses the Issue Brief template as a way to introduce core concepts of public policy and as a way to show the practical application of the work. Well-written & researched briefs are forwarded to CPI at the end of the semester for further development and publication on Policy Options.

(4) The two other written assignments a best practices analysis and a policy evaluation mirror common products produced by policy analysts and CPI.

3. Researching and Writing Process

a) Issue briefs- Using the PolicyOptions model, students must identify the scope of the policy problem, previous public policies related to the issue, the current public policy, the current stakeholders, and policy alternatives/model policies. They are encouraged to draw on academic

research, think tank and governmental reports, and interviews with local stakeholders.

b) Best Practices- This assignment requires to identify several different policy alternatives that have been implemented in other cities & states. They are then asked to identify which aspects the policies seem to work best (and which did not) and make recommendations about the "best practices."

c) Policy Evaluation- The last assignment requires students to evaluate the impacts of a public policy. They must identify the policy problem being targeted, the goal of the policy, and measurable indicators of success as well costs of the policy.

d) Students must work in the same issue area throughout the course, in order to give them time to build expertise in the area. The Best Practices & Policy Evaluation assignment are group projects.

  B. Faculty Nominations
      1. Worked great when recruiting from the POSC 265 Public Policy course
  C. What would I change?
      1. Including a "faculty mentor" to help advise students through the research project in addition to working with the faculty fellow

VI. General Recruitment
  A. We recruit for 3 different semester
      1. Recruitment for the Fall Semester

a) More general, found peer to peer recruitment works great so we did a series of classroom visits with quick 5 minute elevator speeches encouraging freshman and sophomore to keep us on the radar. (We went to freshman courses, political science and economics courses, education courses, social justice courses, sociology courses, american policy history courses, or any other course that seemed to have a tie to policy or social justice.

b) A requirement of those who will onboard in the fall semester is that they complete the POSC 265 course if they have yet to.

c) This recruitment season begins in the February before the fall semester.

      2. Recruitment for the Summer Internship

a) Focus on returning fellows or students who have completed the POSC 265 course already as they will be working full time in the center and need to have some foundational knowledge of public policy.

b) They all serve different term lengths based on the length of their independent research projects.

c) They will also work on programmatic elements like networking, social media, streamlining processes.

VII. Program Structure
    A. Office Hours
        1. 8 hours a week: 2 as a team for trainings/meetings and 6 as office hours at the center (emphasis on having office hours in the actual office and not independently)
        2. Stipend and course credit compensation available each semester
    B. Mid-semester check ins and exit interviews from the program
    C. Balance weekly trainings in professional, policy content specific, and social justice
    D. 3 tiered system
        1. Foundational policy news research: understand what is happening in the policy world currently
        2. Researching and writing issue briefs in the POSC 265 class. For those who started when the class was not offered, we saved the best of the class briefs and we instructed them on how to build upon them.
            a) Topics were chosen by the students but it would be nice to see them come from the community.
            b) Drafting Process
                (1) Begin by training the students to peer review effectively and walk through examples of good and poor work together so the expectations are set. Then as the students finish drafts, they can peer review before sharing it with a faculty member.
                (2) Be sure to include faculty in this process as they will be better prepared to review and provide feedback throughout the drafting process.
                    (a) During our spring semester when the class was not offered, the CPI Coordinator reviewed all Issue Briefs and read upwards of 15 briefs with 23 drafts a piece.
                (3) Lastly, fellows will share their issue brief with a friendly community partner who has agreed to provide feedback or constructive critique. The purpose of this step is to ensure the researched topic is accurately represented in the brief.
        3. Engaging in a community-initiated research project
            a) The key here is community initiated! We encouraged both organizations and people to send us project requests.
            b) What I would change?

(1) Streamlining the research project request process. We had met most people through networking events and we never had a backlog of projects currently. I had to scout many projects.
(2) Also having a project initiated by a community member, means the students have someone they can look to for guidance on what research is needed in a particular area.

VIII. Our Project Structure

A. Project research teams of 34 fellows led by one team leader who has experience in the program. In our foundational semester, because our numbers were still low, the four fellows all worked together on one project.

1. Be sure to provide leadership training on time management, leading amongst peers, professional communications, project management. We had to develop this curriculum as we progressed but now we have assessed what we still need compared with what worked well.

2. We had the project team leader be the point of contact with the community partner requesting research and encouraged them to take ownership of the project.

B. A project request would come in via an online survey and the CPI Coordinator would either meet in person or hold a phone call to discuss the application and the research question further to ensure the partner will be a good fit for CPI.

C. After finalizing a series of projects, I would assign each project a leader and fellows based on their interests. I then shared the project application with the research team and had them briefly research the organization

D. Before the beginning of the semester, I cross introduced the project leader and the community partner

IX. Community Partner Criteria and Relations

A. Seeking community partners that are membership organizations (associations, collaboration, networks as they often have the time and resources to advocate, many of these partners are 501c4, who have no limitations to the amount they can lobby.

B. Many of the current ACE partners, are 501c3, so we reached out the our CPs and asked them to identify the membership organizations, and we network with them

C. If one of our existing CPs has a research question, we have researched the question but will additionally reach out the organization that lobbies and advocates for the issue area and coordinate our research with them as well.