

StudentAffairs.com Virtual Case Study Contest

Team: Boston College

Alyssa Wilson, Jessica Cantin, Aidan Wright, and Gabriela Cataloni

Faculty Advisor: Laura DeVeau

Institutional Identity & Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic On Campus Life

Welcome to Randolph College, home of Randy the Raven! Randolph is a mid-sized, vibrant liberal arts college with 11,754 undergraduate students. Randolph was established in 1887, right outside of New York City, in the suburbs. Randolph is known for blending strong liberal arts foundations with career-ready academic programs. The campus is largely commuter based with just 13% of students living on campus. Prior to the pandemic the Dean of Students Office touted over 200 student clubs and organizations and a robust NCAA Division II athletic program.

Like many institutions of its size, normal campus operations were halted in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Randolph took a science-based approach to COVID protocols and campus occupancy. While students have returned to in-person learning, student participation in on-campus activities has not returned to the pre-pandemic level of interest, resulting in the Dean of Students and the Dean of Students Office prioritizing student engagement at Randolph.

Subject Choice Reasoning

Due to the consequences of COVID-19, more students have opted to live at home or off campus after years of remote and hybrid learning. The Dean of Students Office has surveyed students and they project that off-campus living will remain a popular option for the foreseeable future as students have adapted to and are satisfied with living off-campus. However, students have provided feedback that when they come to campus they would like a space to gather rather than sit in their car or in hallways in academic buildings. To better address the needs of the commuter students at Randolph College, the Dean of Students Office partnered with the Commuter Student Association to create a space on campus, The Raven's Nest. The Raven's Nest is a 24/7 lounge space available for commuter students to utilize before, between, or after classes. There they can find a variety of refreshments and a collection of current campus resources to encourage on-campus engagement. Through "Wake Up Wednesday", a weekly coffee hour, commuter students have the unique opportunity to meet with guest administrators that directly influence the commuter student experience.

The goal of the video is to reach commuter students where they are at, scrolling on their phones in their cars in between classes thinking they have nowhere to go. By including the Commuter Student Association president, the commuters can recognize Nancy as a peer resource and a representative. In including live testimonies of commuters who were brave enough to leave their cars and enjoy the event, it is hoped that more students will be drawn to the Raven's Nest. The video highlights the Dean of Students as an attendee in an effort to show students how the power dynamic between administrators and students is neutralized during "Wake Up Wednesday" where they can feel comfortable and heard in sharing their needs.

A repercussion of distance learning and 'zoom life' associated with COVID-19 was related to on-campus programming. Randolph College saw many organizations go stagnant in terms of membership, quality of events, and the number of events being hosted on campus. Many organizations had failed in their programming efforts due to a lack of membership, student participation, and funding conflicts. The Office of Student Involvement sought a way to jump-start student organizations and student-initiated programs. The "Raven Cage" was the answer. "Raven Cage" is a "Shark Tank" inspired contest created as an incentive for students to write a pitch for an event or investment for their organization. The Office of Student Involvement has identified funds to help boost excitement for participating in the "Raven Cage". Participation in and winning the "Raven Cage" funds could assist organizations with improving the quality of an event and heighten overall campus engagement.

The goal of this video was to reach clubs and student organization members and leaders to encourage their participation in the new contest initiative the "Raven Cage". By hosting the initiative in a contest format, it is hoped that friendly competition is encouraged across student organizations so that despite the prize money, they are still brought together to strategize. It is hoped that the "Raven Cage" winner will utilize the \$1,000 to create a large-scale on-campus event or program to increase overall student engagement.