

Video Case Study 2023

Institution: Ohio University

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Presentation: Under-advertised Pathways to Student Involvement

Whenever people hear the words “student involvement,” their minds almost instinctively begin to generate images of more “conventional” extracurricular activities: sports and athletics, sorority and fraternity life, or student clubs and organizations. While these are all excellent pathways for students to get involved on campus, we felt a series of videos advertising these already culturally prominent avenues to student involvement would not effectively reach students who have yet to get involved in the wake of Covid-imposed isolation and distanced learning. Thus, for deciding the topics of our video series—centered in our current institutional context of Ohio University—our team asked (a) “what are some less-instinctive, under-advertised pathways to student involvement?” and (b) “why should a *previously* uninvolved student want to become involved at all *now*?”

Considering extant research, this second question of “why should a student become involved at all?” is of particular importance to an Appalachian-serving public institution like Ohio University, where many students are of rural, first-generation, and/or low-income backgrounds. As scholars of “hidden curriculum” have observed while examining academically high-achieving students, due to differences in social class habitus and cultural capital, high-income and continuing-generation students are more likely to regard out-of-class involvement as a “required” component of their networking and career development, while low-income and first-generation students are more likely to view out-of-class involvement as “optional,” having adverse effects on their experience and post-graduation outcomes (Gable, 2021; Jack, 2019). The importance of student involvement for students’ career outcomes bears out in quantitative data at public institutions, as well: at Ohio State University, for example, students who are involved on campus are 1.8 times more likely to have a job offer at graduation than their uninvolved peers (Center for the Study of Student Life, 2020). When the relationship between student involvement and student career outcomes are left as a “hidden curriculum,” some students will not have the motivation to become involved, and suffer long-term consequences.

Thus, our team chose to create videos that not only draw attention to under-advertised pathways for student involvement, but also encourage students to think about the connection between their on-campus involvement and post-graduation career. To accomplish this, we created videos promoting two under-advertised resources on Ohio University’s campus: (1) The University Hearing Board and (2) the Center for Advising, Career, and Experiential Learning.

Video 1: The University Hearing Board

The [University Hearing Board](#) (UHB) exists as a form of due process for students facing suspension or expulsion from Ohio University. The board consists of both undergraduate and graduate students as well as multiple stakeholders within the university community, in essence functioning as a “jury” for evaluating alleged violations and determining sanctions in high-level conduct cases. When people think of ways to get involved on Ohio University’s campus, they do not often picture something like the Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility. We aimed to change that.

We made a video on the UHB with a humorous, absurdist tone because volunteering with student conduct is not only unintuitive, but it also conjures a dry, intimidating image in students’ minds that we sought to disrupt. We allayed students’ reasons for not getting involved with the UHB (e.g., not wanting too big of a commitment) and made explicit the skills students will gain from the experience (e.g., ability to weigh evidence, interpret policy, and promote restorative justice). Ultimately, we made sure students understood the UHB not as merely “something to do,” but as a real experiential learning opportunity.

Video 2: The Center for Advising, Career, and Experiential Learning

The [Center for Advising, Career, and Experiential Learning](#) (ACE) is a relatively young office at Ohio University, serving as a hub for holistic student success. Many students enter the ACE with common college-to-career questions: “What can I *do* with this major?” “How do I plan for a job or career?” Students enter the ACE with such questions and uncertainty, and leave with a much better understanding of how to create synergy between their in-class education, their resume/portfolio, and the marketable experiential learning that happens through their out-of-class involvement. For many students, an ACE appointment is the first time someone has made explicit the otherwise “hidden curriculum” of student involvement being part of their career development and portfolio of resume-worthy experience. Thus, our video advertises the ACE to get people this first appointment that will ultimately spur their on-campus involvement.

References

- Center for the Study of Student Life. (2020). *Involvement, leadership and student outcomes at graduation*. The Ohio State University. <https://cssl.osu.edu/posts/632320bc-704d-4eef-8bcb-87c83019f2e9/documents/involvement-leadership-and-student-outcomes-at-graduation-accessibletr.pdf>
- Gable, R. (2021). *The hidden curriculum: First generation students at legacy universities*. Princeton University Press.
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