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CSEF: An internship program at community arts organizations for Honors College students

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Summary

- CSEF (the “Creative and Social Entrepreneurship Fellowship”) runs from August 2013 through May 2014 as part of the Creative Economy Initiative, funded by the UMass President’s Office
- CSEF aims to provide students the opportunity to intern at a community arts organization, and provides local organizations the opportunity to work closely with UMass Boston students & faculty
- Three intern teams immersed themselves in issues their sites were facing, proposed potential solutions, and are now using a \$4000 mini-grant to implement those solutions at their partner sites

Approach

Program components:

- August 2013: Student applications & interviews
- Sept & Oct 2013: Student skill-building sessions
- Oct-Dec 2013: Brainstorming, grant proposal writing, and presentations of those proposals
- Jan-April 2014: Implementation of proposed solutions
- May 2014: Final presentations of results

Methods of assessment & evaluation:

- Student writings & presentations during skill-building
- Midterm surveys of students each semester
- Midterm interviews of site supervisors each semester
- Weekly check-in meetings with each intern
- Process of creating final proposals & presentations

Goals

- Students will learn a wide range of skills necessary to effectively partner with a community organization:
 - Analyzing problems & brainstorming solutions
 - Maximizing effectiveness of teams and meetings
 - Grant writing and delivering oral presentations
 - Evaluating outcomes of their work
 - Budgeting, marketing & other skills
- Partner sites will form close connections with UMass Boston faculty & staff – and vice versa
- An issue each site faces will be impacted by the mini-grants, and the work & perspective of the students

Results from our Intern Teams & Partner Sites

Partner organization:



Student interns: James, Jasmine & Santi



Advisors for Intern Team:

- Partner Site: Sarah Champnois
- UMass Boston: Cliff Odle & Rafael Jaen
- Honors College: Megan Rokop

Goal of Intern Team: Excite Boston-area residents aged 16-24 years old about local theatre and attending Company One plays

Activities of Intern Team:

- Held focus groups of college students
- Surveyed college students about the theatre
- Organized an event to promote “The Flick”
- Recruited students to attend “The Flick”
- Will man a booth at Anime Boston to promote the play “Astroboy” both live and via Twitter

Partner organization:



Student interns: Kayla & Sam



Advisors for Intern Team:

- Partner Site: Dillon Bustin & Nicola Williams
- UMass Boston: Pacey Foster
- Honors College: Megan Rokop

Goal of Intern Team: Attract Boston-area residents aged 18-35 years old to the variety of arts performances occurring at Hibernian Hall

Activities of Intern Team:

- Piloted a snack bar at arts events
- Marketed “The Fire This Time” via email, flyers, and ads in college newspapers
- Organizing a workshop and reception for faculty & students at “The Fire This Time”
- Will survey audiences & hold focus groups

Partner organization:



Student interns: Zofia, Joel & Anna



Advisors for Intern Team:

- Partner Site: Gheed Itani & Alma Riceh
- UMass Boston: Kathleen Banfield
- Honors College: Megan Rokop

Goal of Intern Team: Establish sustainable relationships between CAC and its community through internship and membership models

Activities of Intern Team:

- Surveyed patrons about the organization
- Established a sustainable intern program
- Piloting a newsletter
- Establishing and launching a membership
- Improving CAC’s social media presence
- Organizing a CAC “Open House” event

Next Steps

- Student teams will continue implementation, and then present their work and results on Thursday May 22nd from 6-8pm in the Campus Center
- We will brainstorm ways to address current challenges during any future renditions of the program, such as:
 - Teams of 3 interns make scheduling group meeting times prohibitively difficult (so teams of 2 or individual work may be better)
 - Teams require close and frequent supervision (so assigning a dedicated faculty member to run the training & check-ins is needed)
 - Viable partner sites can be hard to recruit (so it is critical to start early and strategize about ideal site size, location, and infrastructure)
 - Students are extremely busy with courses & jobs (so the program may be best if it requires full-time commitments over summer or winter, or if acceptance requires limits on course-load & work hours)

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