

THE IMPACT OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SAINT ANTHONY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CORE COMPETENCIES

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Introduction

One of the goals of higher education is to prepare students for their profession or occupation. In addition to the traditional classroom environment, there are other opportunities that can help students in promoting their professional interests and developing professional skills.¹ Involvement in student organizations is considered as one of those opportunities for skill development. Foubert and Grainger (2006)² have reported that more involved students have greater skill development compared to uninvolved students that have lower developmental scores.

Literature has revealed that student organizations provide individuals opportunities to acquire or develop valued communication skills, enable them to learn from others who have different ethnic backgrounds, and foster care and support for underprivileged populations among them.³ Participation and membership in school organizations seem to provide students with different opportunities to get acquainted with campus life and also enhances intellectual development.⁴

Student organizations are present on nearly every college campus and represent a variety of student interests such as community service, academic interests, the arts, and many others. These are representations of talents, passions, and diversity of the student body that make up each university. These organizations also offer a "hidden curriculum" that not only allows students to become skilled players in organizational arenas, but also provide benefits to their communities. This "hidden curriculum" increases overall satisfaction with the college experience and provides

a means for students to enhance their organizational and general life skills.⁵

Student organizations function as social opportunities for students to network on college campuses and also serve as a significant link for students to colleges or universities experiences. ⁶

According to Hall (2012)⁷, student organizations offer approaches to stimulate learning experience beyond the classroom curriculum. They create networking opportunities among students with similar personal and professional interests and provide the probability of building networks to bigger communities beyond an organization. Through participation in student organizations, students can maintain relationships with other individuals that have the same professional interests; develop stronger mentoring relationships with their teachers; gain ability to think critically, plan appropriately and make decisions.

Students who participated in student organizations viewed involvement as a significant element of their socialization and academic persistence that provide participants with resources to excel in their academic environments.⁸ Flowers suggested that participants are likely to continue towards achieving or completing their degree as long as they remain committed to the organization. The more students participate in student organizations, the more they are likely to improve essential abilities that will be useful in the real world setting.⁹

The Researchers suggest that involvement in student organizations contributes to the development of skills. At many colleges and universities, it is not a requirement to participate in a student organization. However, college and university students are well-served and gain leadership experience as well as other skills through opportunities beyond the formal college classroom.

Students can enhance their education well-being by developing knowledge, skills and competencies through engagement in some of the extra-curricular activities on campus such as participation in student organizations. Involvement has long been studied as a major contributor

to the development of college students. However, there is more to learn about student organizations and their impact on student development. Previous studies on student involvement and/or participation suggested that involvement in out-of-class activities has been shown to be an important factor in the development of students. Employers are looking for students who have knowledge, skills and competencies to work in organizations.

Researchers have not given adequate attention or the role of student organizations in supporting and improving the development of knowledge, skills and competencies of students. Therefore, further research is required on student participation in organizations and clubs. Constant examination of the impact of student organizations on the development of skills in students will inform students' academic outcomes and provide understanding on how students are being prepared for the workforce, hence, this action research.

Statement of the Problem

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate college students' perception of the development of core competencies in the University of Saint Anthony, specifically examining the differences of those involved in student organizations from those not involved. Specifically, this seeks answer to the following questions:

1. Is there a difference in students' perception of the development of core competencies comparing those that participate in academic student organizations to those that did not participate?
2. Is there a difference in students' perception of the development of core competencies taking in to consideration the level of involvement the student have?
3. Is there a difference in students' perception of the development of core competencies comparing participation as male vs. a female in academic student organizations?

4. Do student organizations impact the development of student's core competencies?

Research Methodology

This study adopted the Descriptive-Survey type of Non-Experimental Research Design¹. This type of research design goes beyond mere collection of data and tabulation. This was utilized in this study because it ought to discover the impact of student organization on the development of core competencies in the University of Saint Anthony.

Descriptive-Survey type of Non-Experimental research design aims to depict images of what they perceive from the given problem. Survey type of research design aims to describe the student's preferences and views of a big number of people about the given problem.

This design was utilized to gather information about the present existing conditions. Specifically, descriptive survey method was employed since it is an effective method of gathering, collecting data and information that will provide help to the research in describing the conditions to prove the value of facts.

Findings

From the statistical treatment of the data with the corresponding analysis and interpretation thereto, the following findings have surfaced

The first research question addressed students' perception of the development of core competencies comparing those that participate in student organizations to those that did not participate. The test revealed a significant difference in students' perception of their development of core competencies through their involvement in student organizations as compared to those that did not participate in student organizations. This suggests that participation in student organizations has an impact on the development of Boks' core competencies.

The second research question is focused on the level of involvement of each student in the student organization. The results suggests that the more involve the student is, the better his perception regarding his/her development.

The third research question addressed the difference in students' perception of the development of core competencies comparing males and females in student organizations. The test showed that there were statistically significant differences based on gender in the development of five core competencies. It appears that females demonstrate the following more in comparison to males: (1) communication (2) character development, (3) diversity, (4) widening of interests, (5) career and vocational development. No significant gender differences appeared in critical thinking, citizenship, and global understanding.

The statistically significant difference between males and females in student organizations suggests that gender has an influence on how students perceive their development of skills, knowledge and competencies. This indicates that males in student organizations are less likely to perceive themselves as competent in some areas. Females in student organizations perceived themselves to be confident in the development of skills, knowledge and competencies than males.

The fourth research question focuses on the output of this study which is based on the findings brought by survey questionnaires. Under this question, it was emphasized if involvement in student organizations really has an impact on Business Education and Accountancy students of USANT on the development of core competencies.

Conclusions

Involvement in student organizations really has an impact on student's perception in the development of core competencies. This study and results are based on perception of the students and what better way to understand ones development but through self-assessment.

Regarding Boks' core competencies, involvement in student organizations has significant impact on the development of skills, knowledge and competencies. For the most part, the findings of this study affirmed the literature because several researchers proved that student organizations can be considered a powerful source of student development.

The statistically significant differences between males and females provided further evidence that females perceived themselves to be developing skills differently than males. This can help to inform faculty advisors to this issue and encourage males to improve their perception of their development of skills in order to be competitive in the global workplace.

Recommendations

It is evident that students who are involved in student organizations are also those who demonstrate higher levels of development in many areas. This finding reinforces the necessity of making such opportunities available. Thus, a clear implication of this study is that student affairs professionals should work to create meaningful involvement opportunities for students, and should encourage them to join student organizations as a way to promote modest gains in development.

The output of this study, which is the student guide, would be of great help to students in educating them the positive effect and impact of student organizations in the development of core competencies.

NOTES

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² Foubert, J. D., & Grainger, L. U. (2006). Effects of involvement in clubs and organizations on the psychosocial development of first-year and senior college students. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 43(1), 166-182.

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⁶ Kuk, L., & Banning, J. (2010). Student organizations and institutional. *College Student Journal*, 44, 2.

⁷ Hall, M. D. (2012). Using student-based organizations within a discipline as a vehicle to create learning communities. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 2012, 71–84. doi: 10.1002/tl.20037.

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