Unit 2:1 – Formal Report Proposal

To: Dr. Erika Paterson, ENGL 301 99A Instructor
From: Eugenia Fasciani, ENGL 301 99A Student
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Subject: Proposal for increasing the number of participants in ACSA's Mentorship Program

Introduction

The Arts Co-op Student Association (ACSA) represents the student body responsible for bringing together Arts Co-op students, alumni and staff in order to enhance the cooperative education experience. ACSA offers its members the opportunity to network with established professionals, attend résumé building workshops and participate in mock job interviews. A fundamental component of ACSA is the mentorship program which aims to facilitate professional relationships between students and those already in the workforce.

Established in 1999, ACSA has seen an increase in the number of participants in the mentorship program with the exception of the last two years. The 2019/2020 cohort saw a total of 40 participants (20 mentors and 20 mentees) take part in the program; this represents a 50% decrease from the year prior which saw a total of 80 participants. The lack of social media promotion for the program has contributed to the decline and will be addressed further as part of this proposal.

Statement of Problem

If current trends continue and the mentorship program finds that it cannot sustain itself, it will be difficult for ACSA to meet its objective for providing students an opportunity to network and learn from established professionals. There are three major implications of this problem. Firstly, ACSA may see a reduction in membership rates across the board if the mentorship program is no longer being offered. Secondly, it will be more difficult for ACSA to request funding from AMS and the Arts Co-op Office in order to support the club. And thirdly, students and professionals that wish to be part of a mentoring relationship will be denied the invaluable experience to do so.

Proposed Solution

One solution to increase recruitment may be to develop a strategic approach to online marketing. This would need to take into consideration that the target audience would be a combination of potential mentees and mentors. As more people are spending time online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this would be a great opportunity for ACSA to explore creative ways that the organization could interact with those that may be a good fit for the mentorship program. The first step would be to develop a robust social media strategy. The next step would be to create promotional material that would appeal to potential participants and distribute that material online.

Scope

To assess the feasibility of developing a strategic marketing plan for promoting the mentorship program with the aim of recruiting more participants, the intention is to pursue the following six areas of inquiry:

1. How many participants are there in the mentorship program for the 2020/2021 cohort in comparison to previous years?

2. What are the current social media statistics with regard to ACSA's social media platforms? How much engagement (i.e. likes, comments) are posts relating to the mentorship program receiving?

3. What are students/people in the workforce looking for in a mentoring relationship? How can program incentives be marketed?

4. What feedback would previous mentees/mentors have for ACSA with respect to the mentorship program?

5. Is anything being done differently this year that would particularly benefit the participants? Is there anything that *can* be done differently?

6. Would an online marketing plan include any costs? How much time would be needed to create and implement a plan?

Methods

Primary data sources will include consultations with past and current ACSA executives through the use of online surveys. Additionally, the implementation of oral surveys with a small number of former and current ACSA members may be able to shed light on challenges to recruitment that may not be visible to someone outside of the program. The general student body will also be sent an online survey that aims to determine how much of a profile the mentorship program has and highlight opinions on ideas of a successful recruitment plan.

Secondary sources would be publications about the effectiveness of online marketing strategies in recruitment for student-led activities. It may also be beneficial to consult with past transition reports created by former ACSA executives leading the mentorship chair.

My Qualifications

As a former ACSA Mentorship Co-Chair, I have knowledge about the inner workings of the club and about how the mentorship program is facilitated. I am aware of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the program that were present when I co-facilitated the experience some time ago, giving me an advantage in seeking out a solution to the problem. As someone who benefitted greatly from their time working with ACSA, and being a current member of the Arts Co-op Program, I have a genuine interest in seeing both programs grow and flourish.

Intended Audience

The intended audience would be the current ACSA Mentorship Chairs and the current ACSA President. This proposal will also be helpful to future executives.

Conclusion

The goal of any organization whether big or small is to continue growing and providing good-quality service. In the case of the ACSA Mentorship Program, further action is needed to explore why participation numbers have steadily declined. By addressing the six areas of inquiry mentioned above, I can determine whether a strategic online marketing plan would reverse these trends. With your approval, I will proceed with next steps as soon as possible.