

To: Dr. Erika Paterson
From: Kevin Gonzalez
Date: October 10, 2017 [Revised on November 8, 2017]
Subject: Proposal for Improving Volunteer Training Quality in the Science Undergraduate Society

Introduction

The Science Undergraduate Society (SUS) hosts many events throughout the school year to cater to all undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science. These events require many volunteers to be hired and trained in a short amount of time by fellow students. The society's main events are: Science RXN, an orientation event that welcomes new-to-UBC Science students; First Week (begins at the start of first term) and Science Week (begins at the start of second term), a week of daily events with the goal of welcoming Science students to the new term. The intended audience for this formal report are the SUS President and Vice-President Internal, Antony Tsui and Julia Wu. The President oversees the direction of the organization and acts as the main spokesperson for the Society, and the VP Internal hires Human Resources Coordinators that hires and trains volunteers for events.

Considering that volunteers trained in this organization are trained by full-time students, this can cause conflict with time sensitive scenarios. If volunteers are not hired and trained adequately before these events, this can cause many volunteer responsibilities shift towards the planning committee members which then reduces the quality of experience that volunteers would receive and add additional stress to committee members. While each year has been greatly successful thanks to the volunteers, there is potential to improve the quality of how they are trained and what they are able to gain from their experience.

Statement of Problem

Currently, there is need for a structure to train volunteers in the Science Undergraduate Society. Each year the responsibility of volunteer training falls on the SUS Human Resources Coordinators, where the students in those roles change annually. As such, standards and how volunteers are trained will vary year to year and without a structure to train volunteers, those new to the Human Resources role with limited experience in student leadership may struggle. This may lead to sub-optimal training of volunteers.

Proposed Solution

One possible solution to improve the quality of volunteer opportunities in this organization is to develop a comprehensive volunteer program that includes guidelines to applications, interviews, hiring, training, walking through general event expectations/scenarios, and post-event debriefing. Creating this program provides a reliable structure for the hiring and training of potential volunteers by future executives from the Human Resources Coordinators of the Science Undergraduate Society. This will result in efficient time management of the hiring and training process, a platform where the quality of volunteers is consistent over several years, and will provide an environment where volunteers can flourish under the guidance of senior student leaders.

Scope

To determine how volunteer training can be improved in the Science Undergraduate Society, I will address the following queries:

1. How have volunteers been trained over the past five years in this organization?
2. What about current volunteer training in this organization can be improved?
3. What methods have other organizations at UBC used to improve the quality of volunteer opportunities?
4. Are methods from other organizations feasible for volunteer training in the Science Undergraduate Society?
5. Will a general volunteer training program be well-received? If not, how can it be adjusted to be more volunteer and executive-friendly?
6. Can improving volunteer training increase future volunteer participation and/or provide a platform for future student leadership opportunities?

Methods

I will primarily be conducting my research through interviews with present and past executive members and various committee chairs of the Science Undergraduate Society responsible for event hosting and volunteer engagement. I also plan to contact staff members at UBC Science Student Engagement office and to round out my primary research, I will conduct a survey with volunteers that have participated in the Science Undergraduate Society to refine the proposed solution.

As secondary sources, I will include publications regarding social change and leadership.

My Qualifications

I have been part of the Science Undergraduate Society for the past two years as a Human Resources Coordinator, hiring student volunteers for events and programs hosted by the Science Undergraduate Society. Before that, I was a Senior Orientation Leader for UBC Orientations, trained by UBC staff to guide and develop other student leaders as Orientation Leaders. Through my experience with these two organizations, I have the opportunity to conduct an in-depth study to improve training quality of volunteers.

Conclusion

There is potential to greatly to improve the quality of volunteer opportunities in the Science Undergraduate Society. I believe that through a training program that can be collaborated on and refined, volunteers will receive more out of their participation, the quality of volunteers will also improve, and planning committees will be able to rely on volunteers to make future events successful. I will begin my study immediately with your approval.