CAMPUS ACTIVITIES
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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

LET THE
TRADITIONS
BEGIN!

Traditions: Changing, Enhancing or Even Discontinuing Them

HOW TO PROGRAM WITHOUT A PROGRAMMING BOARD

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MAKING THE MOST OF GRADUATE SCHOOL

Book Review:
Creativity, Inc.

About the Cover: Students relaxing on the Green at the University of North Florida. Photo courtesy of the institution.

Things Shouldn't Change– Or Should They?

By **Glenn Farr**
@EditorGlennNACA

WHEN I SAW A LOCAL PRODUCTION OF *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF* **A FEW YEARS AGO,** as Tevye sang "Tradition," I began to remember my first impressions of the word and what it meant. In my younger life, it usually applied to a family or social custom that persisted whether or not it still served a purpose or whether anyone actually enjoyed it. We did it because we "had to." When I was in college, an uncle telling me at a family gathering that "things are not supposed to change" punctuated this impression.

His assertion left me inarticulate, because at that time, my college experiences were bringing a lot of change to my life and causing me to question the traditions that were in practice all around me, particularly those pertaining to religion and social customs. Even though I could not think fast enough to respond to him, my inner self screamed, "But change is the essence of life!" And, for quite a few years after that, I would every so often metaphorically throw the pieces of my life up in the air to see where they would land – forcing change upon my life and myself to embrace it.

I still do that, although now I do so less often and with more deliberation and calculation beforehand. Over time, the stakes are often higher and it becomes more difficult to recover from any potential negative impacts of change.

As for Tevye, in "Tradition," he defines the historical roles of the social classes in his village and tells how they contribute to the betterment of all. Things are fixed and continue as they should, as they always have, he believes, until an edict from the Tsar expels him and other Jews from their beloved village in an act of brutal, forced change. Tevye seemed to share a philosophical kinship with my uncle, in that neither thought change was natural or desired.

I am fortunate I have had a few reality checks along the way that allowed me to learn to let go of a few fixed practices and beliefs. And, while now I may still find myself not wanting to leave some cherished personal or cultural tradition behind, I understand that change is the order of the universe and the best thing to do is roll with it.

I understand that traditions do play positive roles for us, though. They can imbue a sense of history, help strengthen social order, and allow us to reminisce at regular intervals, from which can come reflection and growth. When I was a child, a cherished tradition for me was the annual Christmas gathering at my favorite aunt's house, where my brother and I enjoyed playing with our cousins and opening presents together. From those gatherings, I derived strong family ties and learned the value of sharing. As my cousins and I made our way to adulthood, that tradition faded and I truly missed it for quite some time.

These days, my favorite traditions revolve around the local theatre calendar, when the various companies in town announce their upcoming seasons or hold awards and membership galas. It's exciting to learn which shows will go up in the coming year or to gather with like-minded artists to celebrate the best among us.

When it comes to campus traditions, it's important to periodically evaluate whether they still meet their missions, determine what they offer the campus community and decide whether they need to be maintained, tweaked – or even eliminated. Several of our writers in this issue share experiences that can guide you as you explore, change, or maintain the traditions practiced on your campuses.

Tradition: Adapting to Deliver Value to Our Members

By **Toby Cummings**
@toby_cummings

THIS PAST FALL, I was privileged to have two longtime friends and Texas Aggie alums visit me in Columbia, SC, for the opening weekend of college football. Not only did I get to attend my first football game in SEC Gamecock Country, I got to do it with an Aggie shirt on while being up to the wee hours of the morning the night before on the Statehouse grounds at "yell practice" with hundreds of Texas A&M faithful. They all knew the chants and cheers, they knew the motions and movements, and as hard as the local USC students tried to disrupt the scene, the tradition of being an Aggie lived on.

The following day, I was able to take in the SEC/USC tailgate scene as thousands of college co-eds in black dresses and cowboy boots (tradition) walked the fairgrounds outside of the stadium preparing for the game. There were traffic cops, parking attendants, buses, trucks, grills, coolers of food and drinks, generators, big screen TVs, tents, live bands, Frisbee games, and a plethora of things that seemed to have popped up overnight. My guess is that, at some point, all of this was coordinated, planned and programmed in a manner that made the engaging experience as amazing as it was.

There is no doubt that every organization and entity has tradition in its lifeline. NACA is similar and has a 55-year track record of helping to intentionally create campus life through providing resources, knowledge and relationships to those who make it all happen. However, as time goes on and things change, we see that traditions also bend and adapt. This evolution of things that are important and build the fabric of an organization is a natural and necessary occurrence, even here at NACA.

Since becoming NACA's Executive Director a little over a year ago, I have been amazed at the care and thought the Association's elected leaders and key volunteers put into making NACA the best value it can be for its member schools and associates. Not a day goes by that someone in the NACA® family isn't working to see how we can be better today than we were yesterday. Some of that involves adhering to traditions and honoring what got us here as a viable organization in the first place. But much of that involves adapting and changing with the times to deliver relevant value for your time and dollars as members.

Have you been to a regional or national Block Booking session lately? You likely are used to seeing folks hunched over tablets and laptops cutting deals with geographic routing tied in graphically while groups of schools across the country "caucus" and then start blocking acts/events that they are programming on their campuses. But the tradition of filling out forms and upgrading later in the week at the Block Booking booth has evolved. The tradition of getting to the meeting early to get a seat up front to see the screen has morphed into finding a seat near an outlet to keep one's device powered for the session. Yet, the tradition of making connections, providing resources, knowledge and sharing ideas to create a campus life is alive and well.

Remember the scene I described earlier at the USC tailgate? To many of our members, that is nothing new and it involves something you think about every day – the details involved in putting things together to create an amazing experience for others. However, we all have an opportunity to learn and improve our program management and planning skills and that holds true for the staff here at NACA. During the past few months, we have been pushing ourselves to improve our program management and collaboration through use of technology. Whether it is Base Camp, SharePoint, Podio or other software of your choice, powerful and impressive tools exist to help us be more accountable, responsive and collaborative in getting things done. We hope in time, that you as members of NACA and also as volunteer partners, see an improvement in those areas when working with the NACA® staff.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition of *Campus Activities Programming®* and the start of the fall football season that is ripe with tradition and events that require great program planning to be successful. This issue contains information on both of the topics and I hope you find it a valuable tool in helping you create an engaging campus life.

Let the
TRADITIONS
Begin

The Green is a long-standing tradition at the University of North Florida and is a great place to catch students hanging out on a beautiful day studying, chatting, playing Frisbee or even listening to some of their world-renowned classmates from the Music Flagship program practice in the nearby Fine Arts building.

Photos courtesy of the University of North Florida.

By

CATHY COLE, MS,
University of North Florida

DEEANNE CROOKHAM, MPA,
Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center (FL)

JASON W. LEE, PhD,
University of North Florida

LUCY CROFT, EdD,
University of North Florida

Traditions can be nostalgic and inspire loyalty to an institution, or even help define it, but how do you encourage traditions when your institution is a fairly young one?

Traditions

Multiple hours of no-sitting, no-sleeping dance marathons, tug-of-war contests, surprise "day-off" holidays, spirit day, founder's day, and signature marching band formations … . Does all this sound familiar? Universities and colleges across the country embrace their collegiate heritage and unique cultures with ingrained customs that are passed from generation to generation. These long-standing nostalgic practices evoke a sense of unequivocal pride and school spirit. These practices are the **traditions that drive** an intense deep affinity to one's alma mater.

Traditions are important to every university. They give an institution character, individual identity and sense of affinity and loyalty. They are totems that anchor people to the place. According to *Merriam-Webster's Learners Dictionary* (2015), a "tradition" is "a way of thinking, behaving, or doing something that has been used by the people in a particular group, family, society, etc., for a long time." When promoting the nomination process for its Your Best Campus Tradition™ Video Competition (http://naca.ws/1fJ9iwO), the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) uses the vernacular: *Does your school have a tradition that highlights school spirit, showcases a signature program, or highlights best practices in programming efforts?* This language generates enthusiasm for fostering collegiate loyalty.

But what if your school is young, recently rebranded, or just has not discovered its identity yet? This was the case for the University of North Florida (UNF) before Feb. 20, 2014. How does one go about formally identifying university traditions for an institution that was founded in 1972, a mere 43 years ago? Some would argue that it takes hundreds of years to establish traditions and traditions cannot be forced into a culture. However, a university traditions committee was established to unearth some organic traditions that had already taken root on our campus. And during a period of more than 16 months, a task force comprised of stakeholders from across the University did just that and identified several university traditions. What follows is our path of discovery.

UNF Background

Established as an upper-division and master's degree-granting institution, the University of North Florida began offering classes in 1972 to a 2,000-member student body. In 1984, freshmen and sophomores were admitted. In 1990, the University opened a doctoral program in educational leadership and, in 2007, UNF added a doctorate in nursing practice and a doctorate in physical therapy (Introduction to UNF, 2015).

The University has expanded from a handful of buildings at the end of a dirt road to a thriving campus with five colleges in a bustling section of Jacksonville. Yet UNF retains its small-campus feel, helped by its location amid beautiful lakes and nature trails situated on 1,381 acres – 500 of which are undeveloped nature preserve. The campus also is midway between downtown Jacksonville and the beautiful beaches along the Atlantic Ocean coastline (Delaney, n.d.).

Every school has its own story, as each is unique with regard to traditions and other defining characteristics. UNF has its share of both opportunities and challenges, not unlike other universities. While UNF offers students various opportunities and desirable characteristics, it is not without its issues and shortcomings that must be addressed.

Students and faculty share a beverage at the first incarnation of The Boathouse at the University of North Florida in 1973. Today's incarnation is a full-service bar and grill in the Student Union.

Athletics is an area in which the University has struggled to build stakeholder affinity and raise its visibility, both in the local area and beyond. Until the 2014-2015 basketball season, when the UNF men's basketball team won the A-Sun Conference Title with a guaranteed invitation into the NCAA Tournament, the athletics program had little recognition beyond its region.

Although UNF ranks incredibly high in its freshman academic profile – the 2014 incoming freshman class boasted an average GPA of 3.9, 1214 on the SAT and a 26 on the ACT – and it comes in regularly in the top 20 of Princeton's lists and the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, and has even been listed as a "Cool School" by the Sierra Club, UNF still is striving to raise its profile and let its story be heard on a broader scale.

The Process – About the UNF Traditions Project

The University of North Florida Traditions Project was developed in an effort to positively impact student retention by strengthening students' emotional connections to the institution. The goal of the University-wide project was to help further develop a sense of UNF pride for students, faculty, staff and alumni by highlighting and promoting the traditions that have the greatest meaning for the University community. This was not an effort to create new traditions, but to recognize existing ones.

As the area charged with enhancing campus life for the student body, UNF Student Affairs took the lead in organizing the Traditions Project, with the intent of making it a truly collaborative, University-wide initiative. The project began in February 2013 when key stakeholders from throughout the University community were invited by the Vice President of Student Affairs to take part in a workshop to define tradition for the UNF campus. Representatives from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, the President's Office, the Board of Trustees, Athletics, Student Government, the Library, Admissions, the Administrative and Professional Association, the Faculty Association, the United Service Personnel Association, Alumni Services, Public Relations, and Institutional Advancement attended the first workshop. It was during that first two-hour workshop, facilitated by the University's Center for Professional Development and Training Director, that workshop participants created a definition for a UNF tradition and criteria from which to rank suggested ideas, programs and events. The brainstorming session produced the following working definition:

A UNF TRADITION IS ... An experience (event, practice, behavior, place, and/or occurrence) that endures through generations, evokes a sense of shared identity and loyalty, and is embraced by the community.

The definition helped to serve as criteria for determining which events and activities should be considered core UNF traditions. The next step in the process was to take the definition and break it down further into three sections to provide an opportunity for evaluation:

Endures through generations:
- Stakeholders repeatedly participate in and/or discuss the experience as a sign of affiliation.
- Creates an emotional response in any context.
- Is adaptable over time.

Evokes a sense of shared identity and loyalty:
- Forges a bond among stakeholders.
- Creates a sense of something larger.
- Is a rite of passage.

Embraced by the community:
- Has a following and general awareness in the community.
- Is cared for/maintained by the community.
- Breaks down barriers – is welcoming across groups.

It was important to have members from every constituency group serve on the task force so the entire campus community would embrace the outcome – identifiable traditions.

In the next phase of the project, conducted from April through December 2013, committee members gathered suggestions from the University community through a series of focus groups and online surveys. Focus group participants were introduced to the project and asked to name the traditions they felt were most worthy of inclusion.

Forty-two focus groups and six surveys were conducted, with a total of 684 participants, regarding the shared experiences alumni, students, faculty and staff found most meaningful. Out of those sessions and surveys, the committee collected more than 1,400 suggestions. Focus groups concluded in December to allow time for a final list to be developed to be revealed during UNF's 2014 February Homecoming. After the last focus group, the Traditions Taskforce Committee reviewed the focus group and survey results, taking into consideration the popularity of suggestions and their fit with the established definition and criteria, and compiled a preliminary list of core traditions.

After the University's winter break, the list was made available for public comment online and at two open forums. After the comment period, the Traditions Committee met one last time to review the comments and finalize the initial list of core traditions.

The language and imagery used to describe the list of traditions was further refined through collaboration between the Office of Campus Life and University Marketing and Publications, as materials were developed to promote and support an unveiling event.

The Unveiling

The final list was unveiled as part of the Homecoming festivities at a special UNF Traditions Celebration for alumni, students, faculty and staff at the UNF Boathouse* restaurant on Feb. 20, 2014. (It should be noted the UNF does not have a football team so Homecoming is scheduled in association with basketball.) The event was combined with an alumni "Third Thursday"** program and more than 200 people were on hand as the official traditions were announced. The actual

presentation was delivered by representatives from the faculty, staff and students, as well as by the President of the University. A commemorative lapel pin was distributed to all attendees to symbolize this pivotal moment in the school's history.

UNF Traditions List

(Available at: www.unf.edu/campus-life/UNF_Traditions.aspx)

The Traditions are grouped into three categories to highlight overarching themes of distinction:

- **Osprey Spirit** – gestures and programs that evoke a sense of school pride;
- **Osprey Perch** – popular hangouts where UNF members socialize and contemplate life; and
- **Osprey Nest** – iconic symbols unique to the UNF community.

The Osprey Spirit

Swoop – the Official UNF Cheer

Every new student is taught the official UNF cheer – a wing swooping motion – at Orientation (some learn when they come for a campus tour) so that they can perform the move at all athletic events, official gatherings, walking through airports, or whenever the mood strikes. As part of the employee orientation program "New to the Nest," new employees are taught how to swoop by a member of the Admissions Swoop Squad.

River City Rumble

The all-sport, all-year athletic rivalry against the Jacksonville University Dolphins started in 2005. The two NCAA Division I teams battle for the Old Wooden Barrel trophy, which is awarded to the school with the most victories over the other during a school year. Each year, the teams square off 22 times in 14 sports. By the way, no one knows why the trophy is called the Old Wooden Barrel. It was just created to help develop the rivalry between the two institutions.

Lip Sync

Lip Sync is an annual Student Government-sponsored, can't-miss event for students during Homecoming each year. Nearly every club and organization on campus is represented in this karaoke-on-steroids competition. Some years are themed ('80s music, anyone?) and some are not, but all are great fun with outrageous costumes, colossal props, and some pretty amazing dance routines. Winners proudly claim and display their titles as a badge of honor until the next year.

Blue and Gray Wednesday

Wednesdays are campus spirit day and everyone is encouraged to wear Osprey colors. Adopted in 2011, the campus community is asked to wear the school colors each Wednesday to show their Osprey pride. In 2012, it became an official initiative of Student Government and Alumni Services made it one of the 52 things every student should do before they graduate.

Part of the River City Rumble, the annual basketball game against Jacksonville University is a highlight for both schools, bringing out school spirit on both sides of the stands.

Ozzie's Oktoberfest

Begun in 1972 as UNF's original homecoming, it was a German-themed festival sponsored by Student Government that featured canoe rides, a dunking booth, a soccer game, a tug-of-war, and a 5K race. The festival was temporarily defunct for a few years, but has been rekindled and is now an important stand-alone event on the fall calendar, complete with food and beverage sampling, as well as traditional German music and dancing.

The Osprey Perch

The Boathouse

The Boathouse has a special place in the hearts of many Ospreys, even though it has been through several incarnations. When it first opened in 1973, it was a food service facility meant to supplement the vending machines on campus.

In its first decade, it was more like a student union – serving as a place for socialization, meetings, happy hours, and a chance to just hang out with friends. The lakeside snack bar offered a menu of pizza, sandwiches and beverages. At first, students, faculty, and staff sat at picnic tables outside the Boathouse, but a growing student body forced the addition of a deck in 1974. Soon, concerts, poetry readings and drama productions were regular occurrences.

In 1978, a fire claimed the original Boathouse and a new one was built on the same location. New and improved, the new Boathouse was larger, had a sloping roof and a deck over the lake, and continued to serve UNF as a food and entertainment venue. In 1994, it was renovated again and, in 2002, it was converted to Wackadoo's Grub and Brew, a casual dining full-service restaurant with video games, a pool table, and a large projection screen. Booths were added for more comfortable seating.

In 2007, it was upgraded again and given a new name – the UNF Boathouse Grille. That Boathouse closed its doors permanently in 2008 to make way for the current Boathouse, which is housed in the new Student Union. That Boathouse opened in 2009 and features a full-service restaurant and bar, ample seating for UNF alumni, students, faculty and staff and provides gorgeous views of our beautiful, natural campus.

The Green

The Green is the central lawn in front of the Fine Arts Center where students gather before, between, or after classes to relax, play and host events. In previous years, it has been the site for graduations, for cable news giant CNN to host several programs (including a Presidential debate), and for many concerts. It is THE place to go on campus to just hang out.

Date Night with Tommy G

This student shorthand for studying all night in the Thomas G. Carpenter Library started popping up in conversation (and on T-shirts and social media) a few years ago on

The student-made sculpture Sgt. Quackers is part of the University of North Florida's tradition of making campus spaces beautiful through nature or via students' work.

campus. At first, faculty and staff were confused by the term and assumed it was, literally, a date with someone named Tommy G. Finally, some student took pity and connected the dots. Now, it is quite common to hear the library referred to as Tommy G's and most everyone understands what it means to have a date night there.

**Alumni Third Thursdays

Started in 2004, Alumni Third Thursdays is a monthly gathering of alumni for networking and reminiscing. It was begun as a way to bring area alumni together and form a more tightly knit community. Many new graduates mark their first Third Thursday as a major milestone in their UNF lifetime – the date they truly transition from student to alum.

The Osprey Nest

Natural Environment

Because UNF is located on a nature preserve, respect for the natural environment runs deep. Not only do we have miles of hiking, biking and walking trails on campus, several lakes for kayaking and canoeing, a new ropes course, and acres of undeveloped land to enjoy, each new building constructed on campus since 2009 has met the stringent LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) standards for environmental sustainability and efficiency.

Public Art and Creativity

As well known as UNF is for its beautiful natural environment, it is also that well known for its public art and those who create it. From giant ducks to artisan bike racks to music on the Green, public art and performance enhance UNF's natural beauty. We are incredibly lucky to have a MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art), a cultural resource of the University of North Florida; a thriving permanent collection; two different art galleries featuring rotation assortments of varied works and a wide array of statues; sculptures; and installations that enliven the campus environment. Additionally, there is a committed group of students and faculty that has contributed greatly to the University's position as one of the most artistically diverse institutions in the State University System.

Osprey Statue and Fountain

Installed in 1995, the iconic statue in UNF Arena Plaza is where past, present and future Ospreys pose for classic photos – especially after graduation.

Initial Reaction

The initial reaction to the list from the campus community has been positive, overall. Many groups were happy that their favorite made the list. As one attendee said, "It was completely packed in the Boathouse. There were a lot of alumni, faculty and staff, but the students who were there became very engaged and that says a lot about how invested the students are about the future of these traditions. They want them to continue."

An alumni member agreed and said, "The Green really

Another tradition at the University of North Florida is Date Night at Tommy G's – or pulling an all-nighter at the Thomas G. Carpenter Library.

resonated with me because graduation used to occur on the Green. The Green was where I walked across to receive my graduate degree."

Another alumnus shared, "We traditionally host Third Thursdays at Seven Bridges Grille & Brewery [a local restaurant in a nearby section of town], but because this was Homecoming week, we wanted purposefully to bring this one home to campus, so we hosted it at the Boathouse. I do know that for many alums, the Boathouse was the most memorable tradition."

A Year in – and Counting

Since their unveiling, the UNF Traditions have been and continue to be promoted through the University's website, events and publications. Articles have been written, pictures have been posted, UNF Tradition T-shirts have been printed and prominently worn by students and, most importantly, people are talking about and identifying the UNF Traditions with a true sense of pride.

Since Date Night with Tommy G has been announced as a UNF tradition, staff members at the Library have been beaming with pride. They have embraced this designation and have been actively engaged in late-night breakfasts, study breaks and special events. The Library recently added a Learning Commons to foster student learning and engagement through a suite of services, technologies and study spaces, adding more reasons for students to have a "Date Night with Tommy G."

The rekindled Ozzie Oktoberfest has blossomed into one of the largest campus events during the academic year. More than 1,500 students gather at the Amphitheatre to sample local beverages, dine at the local food trucks, and dance the night way to traditional Oompah German Music. And

Lip-Sync draws participation from all aspects of campus life; a far cry from what was once perceived as just a fraternity and sorority event.

A few years back, while walking on the campus, one could count dozens of students wearing other school logos and colors. Today, that's not so much the case. Student are proudly wearing blue and gray and chanting, "Swoop," whenever possible. Even Wolf Blitzer, an anchor for CNN, "swooped" on campus during the 2012 Republican Presidential Debates – as did most of the CNN anchors.

Lesson Learned

This endeavor provided to be valuable for the University and its stakeholders. The announcement of the official UNF core traditions launched many editorial comments. A student writer for the campus newspaper, *The Spinnaker,* wrote an editorial, "Opinion: The Real UNF Traditions" (Alexander, 2014). In the piece, the student shared "a satiric look at the UNF announced traditions," writing, "A tradition is not something you can just compose into a list and announce at a party. Tradition is something that is practiced, repeated, and integrated into [the] life of a university."

The student listed 12 practices familiar to students across campus, declaring that these 12 are the "real UNF traditions … not the ones pushed on us by the Administration," (Spinnaker, October 2014, p. 21–23).

The campus learned quickly that to have traditions, it has to first identify and embrace what is organic. Then, and only then, will stakeholders believe. Perhaps other students, faculty and staff relate to what Alexander shared in his article. However, the mere fact that the article was written confirms that students are talking about the traditions and starting to identify what matters to them and what makes the UNF experience unique. That was, after-all, the original goal, to "Let the traditions begin" … and take root organically.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Cathy Cole, MS, is Director of Enrollment Services Marketing and Communication at the **University of North Florida**. She is affiliated with the Public Relations Society of America, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, the University & College Designers Association and the American Marketing Association. She has co-written the books *Creepy Colleges and Haunted Universities, Haunted Florida* and *True Crime: Florida*. During her career, she has held positions at Wichita State University (KS), Eastern Michigan University and Middle Tennessee State University. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Eastern Michigan University and a master's degree in integrated marketing from West Virginia University.

DeeAnne Crookham, MPA, is Director of Program Development for the Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center in Jacksonville, FL. She is the former Director of Campus Life at the University of North Florida. During her time at UNF, she also served as the Women's Center Coordinator, the Student Conduct Coordinator, Assistant Director for Student Life and Director of Campus Life. She holds a bachelor's degree in television, radio and film from Syracuse University (NY) and a master's degree in public administration from the University of North Florida.

Jason W. Lee, PhD, is Associate Professor and Coordinator of Sport Management, College of Education and Human Services, at the **University of North Florida**. He has been published in a number of academic journals, including *Sport Marketing Quarterly, Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism Education (JoHLSTE), International Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing* and *International Journal of Sport Communication*. Additionally, he has edited two textbooks, *Sport and Criminal Behavior* and *Branded: Branding in Sport Business*. Lee maintains an active research agenda in the areas of sport brand management and visual identity in sport. He holds a doctorate in sport administration from Florida State University, a master's degree in sport and fitness management and a bachelor's degree in social science, both from Troy State University (AL).

Lucy Croft, EdD, is Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Adjunct Professor, College of Education and Human Services, at the **University of North Florida**. Her responsibilities include supervising eight departments in the Division of Student Affairs, implementing professional development programs and assessment, and working collaboratively with Academic Affairs, coordinating Orientations and First-Year Experiences. Croft, a long-time NACA® volunteer, also serves on the NACA® Board of Directors. She has served on the faculty for and as coordinator of several NACA® Institutes and chaired the 2003 NACA® National Convention Program Committee. She holds a doctorate and a master's degree in education from the University of Cincinnati (OH) and a bachelor's degree from Hanover College (IN).

REVAMPING YOUR
CAMPUS TRADITIONS

Some traditions, such as Johns Hopkins University's Spring Fair, are so well received they usually don't need much in terms of a revamp.
Photo by Ian McLane

By
JANET KIRSCH, SASMIRA MATTA
and **ANDREW GRISWOLD**
The Johns Hopkins University (MD)

. . . .

Do you have an out-of-date event on campus? Do you have a tradition that just doesn't draw a large crowd anymore?

If that's the case, we'd like to explore specific ways to improve your campus traditions, using examples from our institution. First, it's important to examine the types of traditions involved, approaches needed to change events, and how to assess which events to revamp.

"Top-Down" vs. "Organic" Traditions

On many campuses, there are two types of traditions: top-down traditions and organic traditions. Top-down traditions are those that were established by the university's administration, whereas organic traditions are those that were created by students. Mainly, top-down traditions have limited student input, while organic traditions are proposed and introduced by students.

Changes to Johns Hopkins University Events

At Johns Hopkins University, every April we hold a three-day festival called Spring Fair. Since 1972, Spring Fair has been an organic tradition due to how student driven it is. Over the last four decades, Spring Fair has grown to become a 45-member organization event with 13 committees. Events include Kick-Off Party, Major Concert, Food Quad, Beer Garden and Carnival Rides, among others. Spring Fair is described as the best weekend on campus, as it transforms our campus from a place of academia to a public affair bringing in 10,000 to 15,000 community members.

The event would not be as successful as it is if it were not due to student ideas and support. Also, due to student involvement, when reflecting on this tradition, we realize it is one that does not need to be changed drastically or even at all. Every year, the theme changes but, mainly, the traditions of Spring Fair remain the same. Only construction and recent policy changes have caused adaptations in Spring Fair's structure.

For most colleges and universities, organic traditions are few and far between, while top-down traditions are very common. And Johns Hopkins University is similar to most universities in this regard. Three of its major top-down traditions – Lighting of the Quads, First Night, and hoptoberfest – have been assessed and revamped in their own unique ways. While it might seem overwhelming that we have revamped three events, it happened over a period of three years, and these events are still evolving and growing.

Lighting of the Quads

December brings fall finals, colder weather, and STRESS for students. To foster higher spirits, the Johns Hopkins administration created Lighting of the Quads more than a decade ago. In 2004, the peak of the event was the university President flipping a switch and turning on lampposts across campus. While the purpose of celebrating the end of the fall semester and the beginning of the winter season was achieved, the event lacked student enthusiasm and attendance. The event maintained its status quo until 2012. In that year, two miraculous things happened – not only did students want a change, the President wanted a change. For this event to be revamped, top-down and organic traditions intertwined. Students brainstormed ideas on how to enhance the tradition with the administration. Team effort made the restored event successful.

After the revamp, we greeted winter with class giveaways, hot chocolate and sweet smells of freshly baked cookies lingering in the air. Following a presidential message and special performances, we brightened the night sky with fireworks as the holiday lights all over campus were illuminated to kick off the winter season. In just three years, attendance increased by 150 percent. The anticipation leading up to the event has also been heightened. It is now an event many Hopkins students agree has enhanced their college experience (over 90% strongly agreed or agreed in 2013). We expect this event to continue and prosper due to student involvement.

Yes, fireworks are extreme and not always feasible for everyone or every event, so we'd like to share additional examples of top-down tradition transformations that are likely more achievable.

After a previous but less popular tradition at Johns Hopkins University was revamped to become the Blue Jay Beach Bash, musical attractions were added to the event. Photo by Hon-Wai Wong.

First Night/Blue Jay Beach Bash

First Night was an event that traditionally occurred on the first night of classes and was targeted at freshman, each of whom was encouraged to light a candle to symbolize a new beginning. However, students became frustrated because they felt the event was a waste of their time. After a long day of classes, they wanted to relax in their dorm rooms, not light a candle at 9 pm.

Students took it upon themselves to work with administration to improve the event with a purpose of targeting the entire campus, making the program more efficient and fun and contributing more fully to campus ambiance. This process took a few years and two attempts to truly make the first day of classes a more memorable experience for students. Ultimately, we determined that First Night had to be eliminated and a new event needed to be created.

Therefore, in conjunction with the Orientation Staff, we created Blue Jay Beach Bash 2013. The event consisted of a carnival hosted by over 50 student organizations. It offered games, food and giveaways, among other attractions. Overall, the event was extremely successful, but it was a little overwhelming for students for the first day of classes. It was a lot for them to be exposed to that many organizations all at once.

With that in mind, the motto for Blue Jay Beach Bash 2014 became "Keep it Simple." We realized that on the first day of classes, our students needed an event at which they could stop by for a few minutes if that was all the time they had.

Again, after brainstorming with Orientation 2014 Staff, we came to the decision to have a band on one of the quads, and we included some elements from the year before, such as food and giveaways. Attendance was slightly higher than the year before, but the vibe and hype was even higher. A student was overheard saying, "This is so unlike Hopkins," and it was meant in a good way. This event will continue to evolve. Plans for Blue Jay Beach Bash 2015 included more live bands instead of only one, as well as free food and giveaways.

hoptoberfest

Similar to First Night, Hopkins once upon a time had a Fall Fest, a week of autumn-themed activities. Fall Fest, which included a short event "week" of three days, failed to gain the attention of the student body its first year and consequently became stigmatized and lacked luster in its subsequent years.

Students who felt the need to enhance the fall semester joined together and changed Fall Fest from a staff-driven event to a student-driven one. In 2013, they changed its name from Fall Fest to hoptoberfest to lead the student body to believe this was a completely new programming effort and to also add an element of school spirit. In that same transitional year, we placed more emphasis on increasing the number of events offered. For example, instead of having a three-day program, hoptoberfest became a six-day program. And the student body appreciated the emphasis on school spirit.

KEY POINTS

- Advisors: Listen to your students!
- Students: Don't be afraid to talk to your advisors!
- Always assess your events.
- Don't be afraid to change an event when necessary.
- Understand that revamping may take time.

Since the weeklong program worked, in 2014, the hoptoberfest Committee focused on marketing the organization and week as a whole. Marketing efforts increased via social media and campus advertising. The organization grew, as well, which led to an increase in the number of events. Due to these changes, hoptoberfest reached a larger audience and event participation increased dramatically. We expect hoptoberfest to continue to grow both internally and externally. Its internal structure is constantly improving, while its events are growing in number, as well as in quality.

How Do You Know Which Events to Revamp?

"That event was lame." "Did we just see Lighting of the Quads or nothing?" "Attendance was low." Statements such as these triggered revamping of Johns Hopkins University traditions. But what will trigger the revamping of yours?

We recommend that advisors always listen to your students and be open to their suggestions. We know it may hurt to hear the event you have been planning for the past few years is worn out, but change may be needed to benefit the entire student body. And students should not be afraid to talk to your advisors about your concerns regarding events. The changes made to various events at Hopkins would not have happened if it were not for our students being willing to speak to their advisors.

Also, remember to continue to revamp your events. It is important for student leaders and advisors to understand that strong campus programming evolves over time and with much deliberation. Constant adjustments and revamping will continue to make an event exciting and intriguing for students.

As Robert F. Kennedy once said, "Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly" (http://naca.ws/1MIf1gE). By this, Kennedy indicated it is, in fact okay, not to achieve success immediately and that meeting goals requires time and effort. In terms of campus programming, events may not always work as we hope, but understanding and responding to students and faculty is vital to enhance campus life through our programming.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Janet Kirsch is Assistant Director of Student Activities at **Johns Hopkins University (MD)**, where she previously served as Campus Programming Coordinator. She currently advises the Hopkins Organization for Programming (HOP), Spring Fair, hoptoberfest, the Dance Marathon and the Senior Class Council. Active in NACA, she received the C. Shaw Smith New Professional Award in 2014. She was named the Johns Hopkins Office of Student Activities Advisor of the Year in 2012 and received the Gillman Cup Award from the JHU Senior Class Council in 2013. She was recently named the Homewood Student Affairs Building Bridges Award winner.

Sasmira Matta is the hoptoberfest Executive Chair at **Johns Hopkins University**, where she is pursuing a degree in applied mathematics and statistics. She co-presented a session on which this article is based at the 2015 NACA® National Convention.

Andrew Griswold has completed bachelor's and master's degrees in chemistry at **Johns Hopkins University**, where he served as Executive Co-Chair of the Hopkins Organization for Programming and as Senior Senator and Academic Affairs Committee Chair on the Student Government Association.

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ADAPTING A TRADITION TO AN INCREASINGLY ACCESSIBILITY-DRIVEN AUDIENCE

By
GREG FINK
Texas A&M University

As the **Maroon Out** tradition grew at Texas A&M University, it became clear to programmers that how it was delivered needed to change to meet the needs of an audience that had come to expect easy accessibility.

ATHLETIC EVENTS ARE SOMETIMES HARD TO EXPERIENCE AS A SPECTATOR. We wish we could help the players on the field, especially during hard-fought games and highly competitive moments. The strain and stress we feel are palpable as the players find the motivation to keep moving forward toward the win. So, how do we come together as spectators to create an environment that inspires those players just a bit more?

Texas A&M University established a tradition named Maroon Out in 1998 to counteract the feeling of helplessness spectators often feel. At that time, Texas A&M's football team was hosting Nebraska, and the student body knew it needed to provide an extra boost for their players. So, a simple maroon shirt dedicated to changing the landscape of the entire stadium (Maroon Out, n.d.) was made available for sale at an affordable price. As a result, a sea of maroon dwarfed the red within the stands, and the excitement of the spectacle boosted the engagement of the crowd. Over 90,000 fans came in force to the stadium wearing a T-shirt that, in effect, said, "I'm here to help." Texas A&M won by a score of 28-21.

The tradition of Maroon Out continues today through the same organization that created it – Class Councils. Each football season, a Maroon Out game is selected from the home football schedule, and the organization secures the T-shirts in bulk from a local distributor and sells them in the days before the chosen game to fill the stadium with spectators sharing in this unifying experience.

But, as time has moved on, Maroon Out's audience has changed. And the legacy and culture of the tradition has morphed to match its ever-evolving audience. In 2014, Class Councils took a step back to deeply analyze its audience to determine how this high-profile tradition might continue to achieve its original mission. It was becoming clear that changes needed to be made, both for the sake of the sponsoring organization and for the audience.

Identification of Issues to Be Resolved

Class Councils is composed of approximately 200 student leaders charged with hosting several of Texas A&M's most beloved traditions. Maroon Out is easily its most high-profile effort and also the most taxing on its membership. And as its audience grew and new generations of students flooded the university, staff worked harder to meet the program's increasing demands. Exhausted and burned out, the student leaders decided to determine the reasons for updating how this tradition functioned.

Issue #1: An instant gratification audience driven by technology

As the Millennial generation's influence gained momentum, marketing and daily operations became important areas of focus for the organization. Online sales needed more transparent information and processes, while behind the scenes, quicker and quicker product turnover was required. Social

A sea of maroon in the Texas A&M University football stadium is a cherished tradition for students and alumni, one that lets the team know it has their full support.

media no longer acted as a supplemental marketing component, transitioning instead to a primary, campus-wide method of connecting to multiple generations of students. Promotional information became increasingly more expected by our audience. And when it came to sales, there evolved an expectation of convenience. The questions changed from, "I need a Maroon Out shirt. Where can I find it?" to, "I need a Maroon Out shirt. Where can I get it during my normal routine?"

Issue #2: Accessibility of the shirt

Each year, the Maroon Out shirt had been sold on campus only during the week and before home football games leading up to the selected Maroon Out game. During football games, game-day sales would involve customers waiting in long lines that could potentially disengage many hoping to buy a shirt. The majority of football game spectators are not current students. Therefore, their access to the shirt came from the limited game-day sales, online or by asking current students to make purchases during the week. It became clear Maroon Out was limiting access to its largest market, and potentially the audience to whom the tradition meant the most.

Issue #3: Growing population of former students

Texas A&M has experienced rapid growth during the past several decades. Within 15 years for the College Station campus, overall enrollment increased to almost 60,000 students (growing by over 11,000 or 25%). All levels experienced increases – undergraduate, master's, doctoral and professional (Texas A&M University, 2015). Additionally, as Texas A&M transitioned to the Southeastern Conference in 2012-13, a revitalized increase in athletics support engaged its former students and refocused their attention to the university. Such rapid growth emphasized the necessity for efficiency as athletics audiences boomed.

High-profile Changes in Traditions Need Not Be Feared

Long-standing campus traditions evoke memories and meanings that guide participants through inspiring moments in time. The older a tradition gets, the more stakeholders are invested in the overall product. Therefore, we must periodically consider stakeholders to continually achieve the original missions of traditions-based programming.

The effort to achieve those missions may need to change to keep traditions' impact alive. Maroon Out was charged to continue providing the same final result for its audience – a unifying T-shirt designed to engage athletic spectators.

> LONG-STANDING CAMPUS TRADITIONS EVOKE MEMORIES AND MEANINGS THAT GUIDE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH INSPIRING MOMENTS IN TIME. THE OLDER A TRADITION GETS, THE MORE STAKEHOLDERS ARE INVESTED IN THE OVERALL PRODUCT. THEREFORE, WE MUST PERIODICALLY CONSIDER STAKEHOLDERS TO CONTINUALLY ACHIEVE THE ORIGINAL MISSIONS OF TRADITIONS-BASED PROGRAMMING.

Nevertheless, it was time to work smarter, not harder, for the tradition to continue and maintain its maximum impact.

Sharing ownership of distribution

Maroon Out planners decided to partner with a local distributor who could not only produce the T-shirt, but also sell it at its retail locations. Local retail distributors placed bids to partner with Class Councils, and the selected vendor would act as both a supplemental business and marketing agent for the organization. During the vendor selection process, student leaders recognized the importance of partnering with a company with excellent branding capabilities, notoriety throughout the community and quality customer service practices already in place that could be used to Maroon Out's advantage (professional online processes, quantity of retail locations and creative design capabilities).

All profits would continue to go to the student organization with the acknowledgement that access to the Maroon Out shirt would increase traffic in the vendor's store.

On-campus sales remained the primary responsibility of Class Councils, while the increase in touch points for its off-campus audience would allow for easier access to the T-shirt. And with the retail locations open year-round, sales could begin in the summer, opening the typical fall semester timeline, with the vendor being able to cover the necessary staffing requirements. The new timeline and added locations helped diffuse the pressure on on-campus sales and capitalize on reaching previously multiple untapped networks. Ultimately, with the selection of a high-profile vendor with a premiere brand in the community, the shirt was available in places typically frequented by many in the program's audience.

Incorporating new technology to increase sales efficiency

To enhance customer service, we matched Maroon Out on-campus sales operations to our technologically savvy audience by replacing outdated cash registers with new iPad cash-handling hardware and software. Customers experienced a newly professionalized and streamlined Maroon Out buying experience that also matched its vendor partner in efficiency and organized appeal. Long lines became a thing of the past, and more customers could be reached during peak sales times like game days. It became exciting to sell shirts again on campus for student leaders, while on-campus customers were more enticed by and trusting of the more professional, technologically up-to-date sales system.

Maroon Is the Color of Success

The Maroon Out program successfully updated a cherished tradition's processes to reach a growing and diversified market. Consequently, former students could buy their Maroon Out T-shirt through normal in-store or online shopping; parents and family members could buy their own T-shirts without needing to rely on their associated students; and visitors, especially during summer new-student orientation, motivated by their excitement from their time on campus, could also get the shirts. All the while, current students could still buy their Maroon Out T-shirts on campus as they always had.

In the end, the meaning of Maroon Out became much more accessible to its ever-evolving audience, and the tradition grew even larger. This past year, a bigger sea of maroon flooded the football stands, uniting Texas A&M fans and enlivening a moment that for many will last forever.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Fink is a Student Development Specialist at **Texas A&M University**, where he oversees campus-wide traditions-based programming. He previously served as Assistant Director of the Student Center & Campus Life, Fraternity and Sorority Life at Quinnipiac University (CT). While at Quinnipiac, he received the 2014 Association of Fraternity Advisors Outstanding Change Initiative Award. He holds a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from Texas A&M University and a master's degree in higher education and student affairs from the University of Connecticut.

TWEAKING TRADITIONS

to Keep Up with the Current Generation of College Students

By
JONNA GREER, Agnes Scott College (GA), **KASSIDY SPARKS,** University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and **LUCAS SWENSON,** Wake Forest University (NC)

Megan Gruber (holding bullhorn), Campus Traditions Chair, announces prize winners during aWake All Night: Awaking in a Winter Wonderland, held during the spring of 2014.

The "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" rule doesn't always apply to implementing positive change to campus traditions. If you want to pack the house, you might have to tweak your programs to create the best experience for students.

When is the last time you saw a Beanie Baby? Or played with a Magic 8 ball? We're guessing it has been awhile since you had a Silly Band on your wrist. These three toy "fads" were once the talk of the town, but now they are just things of the past. Isn't it strange to remember some of the things we thought were so cool during childhood? Believe it or not, there was a time when you just had to have a black ball that predicted the future poorly and answered your unanswered questions incorrectly. Things like Beanie Babies, 8 Balls, and Silly Bandz might have been excellent to incorporate into your programming in the '90s or '00s, but we can likely agree they would not be as popular now.
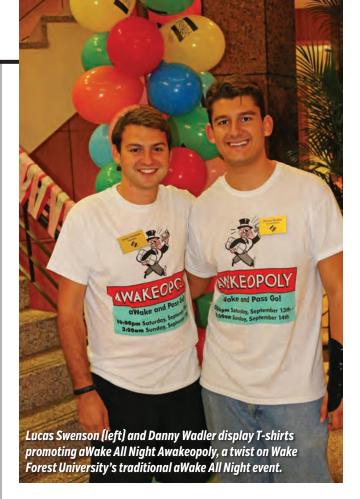
Something similar happens to programming boards all over the country with regard to their campus traditions. If something worked well one year, we often assume it will be a huge hit the following year, too, and maintain every aspect of the event for fear of losing its crowd appeal. We are quick to copy the recipe from the previous year without critically looking at how different elements can be improved or slightly changed to benefit the student experience. Some chairs may pass down notes, old receipts or budgets to you from their tenure as chair. We suggest you start from scratch and map your own goals and ideas before relying on any notes. This is your event and you want it to be better than ever. Therefore, you can't do the same thing and expect different results.

Not only are we who serve on programming boards faced with the task of tweaking events to make them better every year based on how they were last executed, we are also faced with challenges arising from changes in the overall culture and the digital age. We all take pride in our campus traditions, but in reality, traditions often lose their flair as use of technology increases and generational interests change. The current generation of college students thinks and works differently than past generations. We all want to keep our "regulars" coming back to our events while implementing new ideas to engage more students each time.

The Wake Forest University Student Union has found that the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" rule doesn't always apply to implementing positive change to campus traditions. If you want to pack the house, you might have to tweak your programs to create the best experience for students. We'd like to discuss the importance of traditional programs, but also take a traditional program that has been implemented at Wake Forest University and share examples of how we continued its success with a few tweaks.

What's the Big Deal about Tradition?

Tradition and change might as well be complete opposites by nature of definition, but in the case of Wake Forest

Lucas Swenson (left) and Danny Wadler display T-shirts promoting aWake All Night Awakeopoly, a twist on Wake Forest University's traditional aWake All Night event.

University's Student Union, they go hand in hand. By definition, tradition is "an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior" (Merriam-Webster).

Don't forget, though, that traditions can also be created. Many campus events become traditions over time simply because the community begins to expect them. After all, you have to start somewhere. It's important to remember that every four years or so, you have an entirely new student body, unaware of the traditions of the past. This is an opportunity, so take advantage of it. Take time to observe these new members of your community and ask yourselves, "What do they need? What do they like? How are they different?" Use that information to effectively "tweak" your college's or university's most prized traditions.

Campus traditions serve to unite people, weaving our individual stories and backgrounds into a culture that embraces differences and fosters community. On our darkest days, traditions are the light at the end of the tunnel. They give us something to look forward to as we study for finals or crank out that paper we waited until too late to start. Traditions are the cherry on top of a busy year full of campus programs and activities.

Case Study: Wake Forest University's aWake All Night

When Kathy Arnett, Director of Student Organizations and Programs at Wake Forest University, first presented aWake All Night as an idea for late-night programming in the early 2000s, student leaders thought nobody would attend. However, Wake Forest gave it a try in 2003 when senior administration directed the Student Union to create

late-night "alternative" options. Fast forward 13 years and it is not the alternative, but the main attraction for students, faculty and staff.

aWake All Night is virtually an "all-nighter" in our university center once per semester from 10 pm to 2 am with free food, casino games, a photo booth, prizes, an inflatable rock climbing wall, laser tag, obstacle courses, music and more. Over 1,000 people attend this campus tradition each time it's offered and look forward to it in both the fall and spring semesters.

One challenge for the program is finding ways to keep the students coming back. They have the opportunity to attend up to eight aWake All Nights throughout their collegiate careers at Wake Forest. If it provides the exact same experience every time we offer it, student interest will decrease each semester. First-year students are more likely to come, as they are navigating activities offerings with new friends and hall-mates, but seniors will not feel the same urgency to attend the event.

As Vice President of Campus Life Penny Rue once said, "People care about what they help to create." Each year, a new student chair is named to plan this event and alongside a brand new committee of 10-20 students who meet weekly, this event is essentially reimagined year after year. We tweak certain components of it every single semester and rely heavily on the student committee to brainstorm and execute the unique changes that are incorporated.

Tweak #1: Themes Make Everything Better

College parties have themes, so why can't campus activities? aWake All Night has a new theme developed each semester to keep things fresh. Some popular themes have been WAKElodeon (Nickelodeon), Wild Wild Wake (country-western), aWakeopoly (Monopoly), Up Up & aWake (outer space), aWaking in a Winter Wonderland (winter), aWake All Night on Route 66 and many, many more. Some benefits of having a theme include targeted marketing, special food/drink offerings, and theme-related attractions, as well as a unique overall experience for the students each semester.

Tweak #2: Leverage Your Organization

At Wake Forest, we like to say that all of us are smarter than any of us. Work together to offer options and different opportunities for attendees. If your programming board has different members assigned to other types of events, find a way to incorporate them into your event to change it up. During aWake All Night, we have included our Trivia and Games Chair by offering gameshows similar to *The Price Is Right* and *Deal or No Deal*. We also noticed that some students need an escape from the event's non-stop action. A few years ago, we began implementing a Movie/TV Corner for people to relax, unwind or just take a break. With the Movie/TV Corner, students had even more variety in entertainment, as well as a unique place to escape.

Tweak #3: Layout Matters

Always ask yourself and your committee if the event is being held in the location that makes the most sense and truly be open to other venue ideas. Just because it has been an outdoor tradition doesn't mean it always has to be. Sometimes, just changing where activities are going to take place can reinvigorate an entire event. In the case of

An area in the Wake Forest Student Union is decorated for the aWakeopoly event.

aWake All Night, we change where the novelty attractions, food/drink and other components are staged each time. To communicate where everything is located, we craft a creative directory and post it at all entrances and exits. If you have a DJ or microphone, use them to hype your events and provide information so everyone knows where the excitement is going to be.

Tweak, Tweak and Let Them Speak!

After you've tweaked, and even while you are tweaking, always seek feedback from your board and the students you are serving. Although you do not have make every tweak and change they might request, students do like to know they have a voice and that your organization cares. This can be completed in many different ways, no matter whether it is via a verbal poll at a meeting, relying on a suggestion box, or distributing a formal survey after your event's conclusion. The most convenient way to do this is likely just asking your event attendees if they are having a good time and what aspect is their favorite. Your event participants really want to know that you put them first, and these simple actions really send the message that your board listens and cares.

Now What?

It is important to note that while tweaking traditions can be exciting for most, there are some roadblocks you might encounter. Keep in mind that change is best executed through thorough communication. Although you do not have to share every detail about why the change is occurring, it is important to give insight to those involved in the process about why you are tweaking the tradition and what the new aspects will bring to the program.

We all know how easy it is for our words to be misconstrued in the process, so we find the best way to communicate to the entire team, using a united message. It may make sense to have a communications plan to release drastic tweaks to the larger community. For campus-wide supported traditions, make sure you gather all the appropriate people involved beforehand to see if you will be able to tweak the event or whether there will be red tape involved.

Think about utilizing promotional videos, marketing messages and logos that can add to the hype and excitement around an anticipated change. Also, keep in mind that the great thing about programming for college students is every year you receive a new first-year class and have the opportunity to make the tradition exciting for them. And hopefully, in their time, just like you, they will have a chance to tweak a tradition and leave their mark on campus, as well.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jonna Greer is Assistant Director of Student Activities at **Agnes Scott College (GA)**. She previously served as Assistant Director of the Student Union at Wake Forest University (NC), as well as the Graduate Assistant for Weekend Programs at the University of West Georgia. Her volunteer history with NACA includes serving as the Graduate Intern for Diversity Programs at the National Convention, as the Graduate Student Representative to the National Convention Showcase Selection Committee and as a member of the Student Government Institute-West staff. She also served on the NACA® South Regional Conference Program Committee. She currently serves as the Social Networking Chair for the Southern Association for College Student Affairs and is a recipient of the Jim Rhatigan Fellowship Scholarship awarded by NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. She holds a bachelor's degree in foreign language (Spanish) from the University of Alabama-Huntsville and a master's degree in college student affairs from the University of West Georgia.

Kassidy Sparks served as an intern in the Student Union at Wake Forest University (NC) from August 2014-May 2015. She is pursuing a master's degree in student personnel administration in higher education at **The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**. She holds a bachelor's degree in communication studies from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. She was a delegate to the 2015 NACA® National Convention, where she also served as an educational session presenter.

Lucas Swenson is a May 2015 graduate of **Wake Forest University (NC)**, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business and enterprise management. He currently is employed as a Business Development Consultant with Oracle in Boston, MA. During his time at Wake Forest, he served as Student Union President, as well as the Union's Vice President for Finance and as its Trivia and Games Chair. Active in NACA® South as a student, his programming board was presented the People's Choice Award and Best Themed Campaign at the 2014 NACA® South Regional Conference. He co-presented the session on which this article is based at the 2014 NACA® South Regional Conference and the 2015 NACA® National Convention.

REFLECT, REVISE, REPEAT:
Changing, Enhancing or Even Discontinuing Campus Traditions

By
NATALIE LARSON
and
MARY STANG,
Drake University (IA)

DRAKE RELAYS BEGAN IN 1910. Since then, its student events have evolved and been enhanced from year to year. The Drake University Student Activities Board continuously strives to add new levels of excellence to this tradition to keep students engaged and excited.

Campus traditions are great, but do your students get tired of the same old thing year after year? Drake University's Student Activities Board (SAB) annually plans three weeks of programs revolving around the traditions of the annual Drake Relays, the second largest outdoor track and field event in the country. It allows Drake University students and alumni, along with the Des Moines, IA, community, to come

Street Painting, the 2014 winner of NACA's Your Best Campus Tradition® Video Competition, began as and has continued to be a highly coveted opportunity for Drake University's (IA) student organizations to leave their mark on campus.

together for an event that includes both student-focused programs and athletic events ranging from high school races to Olympic rematches. Drake students kick off Relays with Blitz Day, as they wake up to a decorated campus, enjoy a picnic and games, and learn the Relays theme around which all the student programs revolve that year. During the following weeks, students then experience events ranging from a pancake breakfast to a carnival to a street concert.

The Drake Relays have been running since 1910. Since then, the student events have evolved and developed and have been enhanced from year to year. The Student Activities Board (SAB) continuously strives to add new levels of excellence to the Drake Relays traditions to keep students engaged and excited year round. During the planning process, SAB examines what aspects of the traditions have allowed Relays to be sustainable, specifically looking at the school culture and the support surrounding each individual event. At Drake, we have found that in order for our events to be long lasting, these two components are exceptionally crucial.

The culture exhibited by the tight-knit community surrounding Relays is one of high energy and pride for Drake. This culture, much like that of Homecoming at other institutions, brings the student body, alumni and the Des Moines community together for a common purpose: to embody the character and loyalty of a Drake Bulldog. Furthermore, without support from our students, this event would not be successful, let alone sustainable. The buy-in and personal investment from different groups on campus have allowed for Drake Relays to have longevity, thus allowing it to also be financially supported from year to year. Additionally, the support from administration and the community have allowed for the event to extend beyond the student body and continue to evolve.

Street Painting: Involving the Community in an Award-winning Tradition

Street Painting, the 2014 winner of NACA's Your Best Campus Tradition® Video Competition in the Up to 5,000 Undergraduate FTE category, began as and has continued to be a highly coveted opportunity for Drake's student organizations to leave their mark on campus. Following Blitz Day and the announcement of the Relays theme, organizations submit a design depicting their organization's mission, values and goals through the theme. As there are only 64 squares available and over 160 organizations at Drake, the chance for organizations to have their squares displayed over the course of the following year is highly competitive! This increases student motivation to not only participate in the event, but to design a square that artistically defines their organization. Street Painting is an event to which Drake students and alumni look forward all year long because the freshly painted street serves as a constant visual reminder of what it means to be a Drake Bulldog and the memories and relationships built at Drake.

This event, initiated in the 1960s, began as a small event in which only the members of the selected organizations participated. Since then, it has naturally evolved to include an enormous paint fight involving the entire student body while

As an example of how a tradition can change over time, a previous mud volleyball tournament at Drake University morphed into an off-campus 3k mud run, which reignited student interest.

the selected organizations continue to paint their squares. Additionally, the event has expanded to downtown Des Moines. Downtown Street Painting gives an opportunity to the top three organizations from Drake and area businesses to showcase their squares throughout the community. This tradition has been successful at Drake for more than 50 years due to its ability to incorporate all members of the Drake community, promote collaborations among student organizations, and attract support from faculty and staff.

Evaluating Events for Continued Growth

Regardless of the success of an event, it is important to continue the evaluations of engagement and support from year to year. This is an essential step for the programming board to recall the meaning and purpose behind the tradition. Evaluations may be instrumental in recognizing when traditions are no longer effective and meaningful. It may require the programming board to make minor or even significant changes in an event in order to confirm or regain engagement and support. This also requires a board to be flexible to maintain the tradition from year to year.

For example, SAB has seen a mud volleyball tournament evolve through many different venues and even athletic activities. When the court on campus became part of new institutional renovations, the event moved off campus to a sand volleyball court. This change rejuvenated the tradition for the student body, allowing groups of students an outlet to get off campus. After a few years, SAB noticed a gradual decrease in the number of teams taking part in the tournament. Therefore, in an attempt to take the event back to its roots, but still keep its friendly competition intact, SAB created an

off-campus 3k mud run course. During the first year of the new event, we were excited to see the level of student involvement increase and received valuable feedback to continue to enhance the run for future years.

Knowing When to Discontinue an Event

However, if implementing changes to a tradition are proving unsuccessful or causing it to lose its integrity, the programming board may make the difficult, and sometimes unpopular, decision to discontinue an event altogether. Since the 1930s, Drake had hosted a parade featuring Des Moines area businesses, athletic teams, schools, leaders in the community, and Drake student organizations. This event offered a time for people involved in all aspects of, and from all populations who participate in, the Relays to come together in celebration. The event, once planned by the Athletic Department, began as a large parade held in downtown Des Moines.

When changes in structure and resources occurred in the department, the event was moved to Drake's campus and was organized by SAB. This created a limitation in the attendance and participation the parade attracted. Based on feedback from students concerning the difficulties in finding the time and resources to create a float, SAB encouraged collaboration among Drake student organizations to make the event more manageable and realistic. Despite the many efforts of SAB to engage the community and the student body through different marketing tactics and prize incentives, the turnout continued to decrease each year. Therefore, after evaluating the costs of the event, the level of engagement of students and the surrounding culture, it was decided SAB would no longer host the parade.

Rechanneling Effort for Community Benefit

Although it may be challenging for a programming board and a student body to say goodbye to a tradition, it is an exciting opportunity to channel efforts and resources into enhancing other traditions or even creating new ones for students. After the cancellation of the parade, SAB brainstormed new ways to continue the direct contact and engagement between Drake and the Des Moines community it had provided. In doing so, we noticed an opportunity for service was missing from the calendar of events.

Therefore, we created the DU Blue Book Bash. This newer tradition allows for Drake students to partner with children in the Des Moines community to promote literacy and healthy living. In collaboration with Drake's Community Engagement and Service Learning Office and a Des Moines after-school reading program, a book exchange has been created. This allows participating children to bring in an old book and leave with a brand new book about bulldogs or athletics. Throughout the event, Drake students volunteer to read, participate in crafts, and create positive mentorship with Des Moines youth. This event has grown to involve increasing numbers of area schools and Drake students, thereby enhancing the relationship between Drake and the Des Moines community during Relays.

Making Changes while Staying True to Purpose and Meaning

Whether your programming board is executing an age-old tradition or is creating a brand new one, it is important to start by examining the institutional culture surrounding the events. A positive culture includes an event to which students look forward from year to year, to which they have a deep connection, and that promotes positive engagement towards the goal of the tradition. Once this culture is created, it is important to evaluate the sources of support surrounding the event to ensure there is continued investment and financial resources to ensure its longevity. However, a programming board should never be afraid to implement changes to a tradition or even engage students in a new one, as long as the tradition's meaning and purpose remain intact.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mary Stang (left) and Natalie Larson

Natalie Larson recently earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at **Drake University (IA)**, where she served as President of the Student Activities Board, as its Homecoming Co-Chair and as Drake Relays Co-Chair. Active in NACA during college, she was a delegate to the NACA® Northern Plains Regional Conference in 2012, 2013 and 2014 and to the NACA® National Convention in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Mary Stang recently completed a degree in education at **Drake University**, where she served as the Student Activities Board Relays Co-Chair, as the Campus Impact Co-Chair and as the Organizational Development Chair. She was a delegate to the NACA® National Convention in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

HOW TO PROGRAM WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE A PROGRAMMING BOARD

If the traditional programming board model is not working for you, perhaps you can try a collaborative approach in which students on campus propose and implement programs on their own.

By
JOSH GRUENKE,
Washington University in St. Louis (MO)

Photos by **Bonner Williams,** Vice President for Programming, Washington University in St. Louis Student Union

Students participate in the Nearly Naked Run, an event co-sponsored with the Mr. Wash U student organization. This mile-long run takes place each year on the last official day of programming to raise money for City Faces, a non-profit that ensures art education in St. Louis schools.

GOOD PROGRAMMING SHOULD BE STUDENT DRIVEN as well as student focused. When I was hired as the Assistant Director for Programs at the Danforth University Center at Washington University in St. Louis, programs were happening, but they were being conceived, planned and executed by a staff member. This model led to the realization that we were in need of a student-run programming model. I was hired to create and advise a programming board that would be charged with maintaining an activity calendar for the Danforth University Center (DUC), which is our student center. Upon my arrival, I researched the campus climate and quickly discovered that perhaps a union programming board was not the answer to our programming needs. There was a campus-wide programming board launching the same semester and I didn't see us being able to compete with what they were offering.

Defining Collaboration

Once the decision was made to not assemble a programming board, we had to regroup and decide how we could provide a student-led and focused experience in our building without a programming board. We spent many months at the drawing board trying to build a model that would meet our needs. The major theme that kept coming up in every model we created was collaboration, so we decided to make collaboration the cornerstone of our programming model. In order to build a successful collaborative programming model, it was essential that we defined collaboration in the context of our needs. We settled on the idea that collaboration meant students came with the ideas and the DUC provided the resources to make those ideas a reality.

Pursuing a Simple Idea

It was from this definition of collaboration that the idea for DUC Presents was born. The idea was simple: if your student organization had an innovative programming idea that has not been hosted on campus before, we wanted to hear about it. We very purposely put few barriers in front of those seeking to access our grants. If an idea was new, free to students and could be held on a weekend, we would consider it.

Once we started getting applications, we realized that "innovative" is a very subjective word and we were forced to stipulate that the program proposed had to be new to our campus and show off our spaces in a way that had not been done before. This automatically disqualified showing movies or bringing in a speaker. Once students began to understand what we were seeking, we quickly were flooded with new and really neat ideas that often showcased our building in ways we had not considered, or would not have been able to do on our own with the level of success our student organizations were having.

Promoting Our Efforts

Once we had defined our collaboration model, we had to promote what we were doing. We released a great ad campaign using striking images that we displayed throughout our building. We also made sure we had a presence at campus events, as well as visiting student organization meetings to talk about DUC Presents. Internally, we dubbed it the DUC Presents Roadshow, and we launched it a semester before we were planning to launch our first DUC Presents program. During the roadshow, students could submit their applications through an online form. Each application was reviewed by me and judged based on the existing programming calendar.

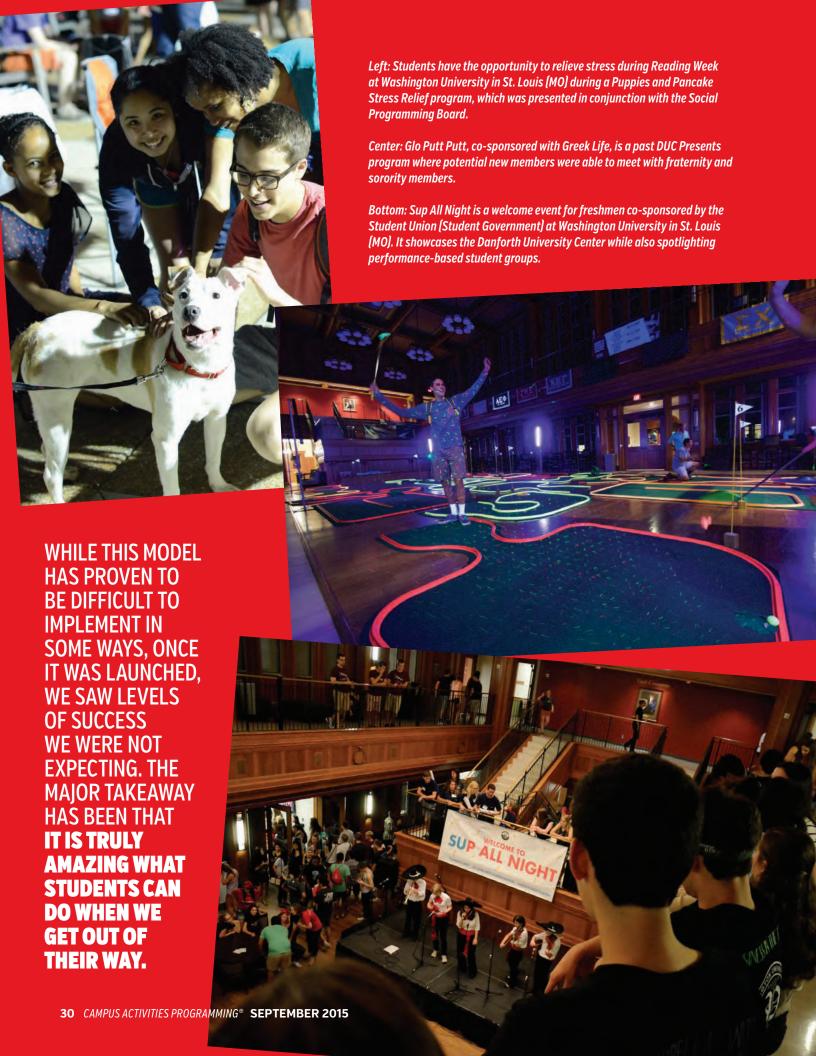## Offering an Effective Alternative

This model of programming is, of course, very different from a traditional programming board model. However, I think if student affairs professionals are looking for ways to alleviate many of the problems we deal with in a traditional board model, this model can be very effective. In many instances, we have student leaders who are passionate about one program and give all of their attention to that one program they love. Once that program is completed, they are difficult to track down and often cannot perform other responsibilities. However, in the DUC Presents model, we expect only one program out of each group with which we work, and it's a program they have originated. Often, these student leaders are students who would not be involved with a traditional programming board and are grateful to have the opportunity to work on a program idea that excites them. We have seen the crucial buy-in factor from the students who are organizing the events translate into numbers, as they convince their peers to check out the program they are creating.

Reaching More and Different Students

This leads to an interesting point about attendance. In my experience, with a traditional programming board, you often see the same faces in attendance from event to event. This can be awesome – you have built an audience that knows to expect great programming from your board and they hate to miss an event. However, that leaves a high percentage of people on your campus who remain untouched by your events. The DUC Presents program has allowed us to reach more students with our programming, simply because more people are working on more diversified programming. We have found that students like supporting their friends, so they often come and check out the events on which their friends have worked.

Creating a Diverse Calendar

The calendar is another positive aspect of the DUC Presents model. Often, in working with traditional programming boards, we find our calendars being formulaic with events being the same from year to year. However, with DUC Presents, this is guaranteed to not happen, as each event has to be new to campus. We have been running DUC Presents for a full year now and have seen new programming efforts each month. This also means we face a difficult decision when we have programs that are successful; we have to ask ourselves why would we not repeat them. So far, we have repeated two programs due to a high level of student demand. We continue to evaluate the best way to handle repeat programs, though, and at what level the DUC will support those programs that are repeating. We have encouraged a few of our successful programs to investigate alternate funding sources (such as Student Government), which allows us to be partners in providing space and technical assistance, but not having the same fiscal commitment we provided when the program was being launched. As DUC Presents grows, we hope to be able support an annual calendar of events while still recruiting the innovative programs we initially developed the program to pursue.

Left: Students have the opportunity to relieve stress during Reading Week at Washington University in St. Louis (MO) during a Puppies and Pancake Stress Relief program, which was presented in conjunction with the Social Programming Board.

Center: Glo Putt Putt, co-sponsored with Greek Life, is a past DUC Presents program where potential new members were able to meet with fraternity and sorority members.

Bottom: Sup All Night is a welcome event for freshmen co-sponsored by the Student Union (Student Government) at Washington University in St. Louis (MO). It showcases the Danforth University Center while also spotlighting performance-based student groups.

WHILE THIS MODEL HAS PROVEN TO BE DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT IN SOME WAYS, ONCE IT WAS LAUNCHED, WE SAW LEVELS OF SUCCESS WE WERE NOT EXPECTING. THE MAJOR TAKEAWAY HAS BEEN THAT **IT IS TRULY AMAZING WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO WHEN WE GET OUT OF THEIR WAY.**

Offering Additional Collaborative Opportunities

As I mentioned earlier, the DUC Presents program applies only to weekend programs, which means we still also provide weekday/evening programs. While DUC Presents is the most involved and most financially rewarding collaboration opportunity we offer groups, we also offer many other forms of collaboration with groups to fill the remaining days on our calendar. We offer fundraising opportunities, which fill up quickly throughout the year.

An example of such an opportunity is our monthly Trivia Night series. Initially, we saw small crowds and struggled to get even those. We decided to try allowing student groups to "host" the Trivia Nights, where questions would be catered around their organization's mission statement. We saw a tepid response and were about to ready to end the series – until we had a group ask if they could charge attendees at the door. We decided to try it to see how our students responded, as our events are typically free and open to everyone. The group charged $5 for entry and students could pay with their Student ID (Bear Bucks), cash or credit card. The hosting group filled the space with attendees and made $400 for their group.

We decided that perhaps this model worked for our students and have incorporated the ability to fundraise at Trivia Night into our model. We have offered this opportunity every month for two years and each month has been claimed and attendance has remained high. When student groups know they have the ability to earn cash per head, they have a higher incentive to promote events and get people to attend. This has saved our Trivia Night series and has allowed us to create relationships with groups with which we have never worked before. The groups are then able to implement more programming with the funds they have raised. We have even had Trivia Night hosts use their proceeds to help fund the DUC Presents programs on which they are collaborating with us.

We also partner with a few of our key philanthropic student groups (Relay for Life, etc.) to produce large fundraising events. These events generate funds for the groups' causes and allow the DUC to support them through our programming. In the past, these events have included such things as Human Bowling, Nearly Naked Run and a Vermonster Ice Cream eating challenge.

We also have a weekly series, Tuesday Tea @ 3 (which I believe was borrowed from the University of Kansas) that typically attracts 300 students for free tea and treats every week. We offer a hosting opportunity, which is free for student groups/campus departments, where they get to set up a table and promote an upcoming event. This is competitive and usually fills up within hours of posting the dates for hosting. This is considered a very low level of collaboration for us, as our only involvement is setting up a table for the host. However, it also serves as a gateway for many groups to learn about other ways they can be involved with DUC programming.

Those are the basic levels of collaboration in which we engage with our student groups, although we also believe that flexibility is of the utmost importance and are always willing to listen to new ideas that groups offer. However, we haven't really had anything outside our basic framework that has required us to explore any special setups.

Amazing Student Accomplishments

It has been our experience that collaborative programming has increased attendance at events, has allowed more students to be involved in planning events, has created a more varied and vibrant calendar of events and, more importantly, has allowed us to create relationships with more students. While this model has proven to be difficult to implement in some ways, once it was launched, we saw levels of success we were not expecting. The major takeaway has been that it is truly amazing what students can do when we get out of their way.

For any school that is struggling with programming board structure or management, I would encourage them to take a look at a new approach to programming and maybe give this kind of collaborative model due consideration. It has certainly worked for us.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Josh Gruenke is Assistant Director for Programs in the Danforth University Center at **Washington University in St. Louis (MO)**. He previously served as Program Coordinator at Northern Kentucky University. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in adult and higher education, both from Morehead State University (KY). As a volunteer for NACA, he served as the NACA® Mid America Regional Conference Chair in 2011, as the Campus Activities Marketplace Coordinator for the 2010 NACA® National Convention and as the Business Networks Coordinator for the 2012 NACA® National Convention.

5 STEPS TO KEEP YOUR PROGRAMMING SERIES FROM GOING STALE

Students enjoy the 2013 Winter White Tour, one of several concerts offered each by the Student Union Board of Governors at the University of Connecticut.

The line for One Ton Sundae event wraps around the Student Union. Even in single-digit temperatures, this long-standing tradition draws a huge crowd.

SERIES PROGRAMMING MIGHT BE PART OF YOUR CAMPUS TRADITIONS, but you want to make sure it remains fresh for your campus over time.

Campus traditions, university-wide events, series programming – we all offer them and our audiences love them. Many times, these are events that alumni remember and reminisce about at reunions, and current students look forward to because of how engrained they have become in the school's history and culture. But are we taking the easy way out by calling these events "traditions" and saying, "Let's just do it the same way we did it before," or " ... but this is how we always do it ... "?

When it comes time to plan, we might hear someone say these things. We may even be guilty of having said them ourselves. Especially during the chaos a semester can bring, it can be much easier to simply replicate long-standing programs rather than taking a good, hard look at the work we're doing. However, when we don't critically reevaluate our series programs, we are doing a disservice to our students and ourselves. Our student populations are changing, and to better serve and support them, it is important that we evaluate and transform our programming to meet their needs.

5 Steps to a Successful Series Program

1. Determine What Type of Program to Offer

Series programming comes in a variety of configurations, and with each of them comes a different planning structure.

Are you planning a **short-range**, weekly series, such as a late-night or after-dark program, or a daytime stop-and-go type of event? These programs tend to be smaller or have a homogenous structure, thereby requiring less advanced planning than other series events. They do require a lot of creativity and variety to make sure participants don't get bored and keep coming back each week. Infusing new ideas into these events is crucial to pique the interest of returning and potential participants.

Mid-range programming may occur once or twice a month, or up to a couple of times a semester. This may consist of something such as a lunch-and-learn event, a speaker, a comedy series, or a range of other program types. These events allow for a bit more planning time, so you have the opportunity to really diversify your offerings. Remember to think about each event individually, but also consider the bigger picture – what does the full lineup look like? Are you offering a mid-range series that appeals to the widest audience possible?

Some ways to help participants recognize mid-range and short-range series programming is through effective branding. Through logos, advertisements or program titles – however you want to connect with your audience – branding will help give your series visibility and can help you make the

By
Melissa Arroyo, Salem State University (MA),
and **Kyle Neary**, University of Connecticut-Storrs

All photos courtesy of the University of Connecticut Student Activities Office

The Student Union Board of Governors offers a long-standing film series every Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday in the Student Union. This film schedule shows the variety of films screened and packages the semester's whole film series in an easy-to-read promotional piece.

As part of each Homecoming at the University of Connecticut, a carnival is staged on campus. Here, students enjoy a full-size swing attraction.

most out of your branding strategies.

Finally, **long-range programming**, or an event that happens only once a semester or year, such as a late-night breakfast, finals study break, homecoming, or family weekend, are typically larger, so additional planning time is needed. However, because this type of event happens only once or twice a year, repeating multiple components for such an event isn't a bad thing. Those qualities are what develop these major events into long-standing traditions on campus.

Long-term traditional events are often the most highly anticipated events on campus, but there are a huge number of components to them. The most successful traditional events can accommodate a large number of individuals, are appealing for a variety of reasons, and offer some sort of a novelty. For example, a big reason a homecoming parade may be successful is because students don't see a parade on campus every day. Sometimes, the hardest part of adjusting traditional events is identifying where to start. We say, wherever it's feasible!

2. Keep It Fresh!

Develop a team and make sure to hold a traditional **BRAINSTORM**ing session, where the word "no" isn't used. Let everyone share any and all ideas and put in the time to get all of the ideas on the table right away. Even the craziest ideas can be worked into an amazing event or experience, depending on whether you're willing to put in the time – and remember there is no "bad idea." Once you've had a brainstorming session, look at your ideas and identify which ones your team is most excited about and begin to work them into an achievable event proposal.

Incorporating themes can help you get more mileage out of different types of events. For instance, green screen photos are wildly popular, and who doesn't love a photo with their friends? Incorporating different themes allows you to have green screen photos as often as you would like by simply changing the background image. Themes can help make short- and mid-range programming efforts even easier, which might allow you to switch your focus to other important tasks at hand.

3. Spice It Up

Themes aren't the only way to make things fresh and new. If you have a long-standing traditional event on campus, try adding a new program or component to it to keep it growing. Incorporate launches, countdowns and official announcements to increase the suspense of what the upcoming event will be. An example of this approach might involve an annual

spring show such as a concert, lecture or speaker. Work to create a buzz around the headliner, as this can amplify interest in the event.

There are many ways to promote interest beyond traditional marketing techniques. One of our favorite ways to hype an event includes using ambiguous advertisements, and then, as the event approaches, having a big reveal. If a performer isn't the focus of your event, there are still many other ways to draw interest – contests, door prizes, and games – anything that will bring people in. Small components like these can turn a traditional series program into an interactive, engaging experience for participants.

4. Evaluate

Whether a program is 10 months old or 10 years old, it's important to research its history and discover why it was initiated to begin with. Often, we get so caught up in an event's success that we never really take the time to **ask** the **"who, what, when, where, and WHY,"** to actually identify why a particular event began and why it continues. Knowing why a program exists will help you move forward and adjust the program to fulfill the needs of today's students and campuses.

Evaluation can be exceptionally difficult because of how entrenched you might have become in the event's planning, and if nothing "goes wrong," it may be hard to pinpoint areas to improve. Identify when you should evaluate your events, as well. If your campus has two late-night programs every week, there is no need to beat yourself up if you have one night of low attendance. There are a variety of competing factors at play during every event.

That being said, you can always evaluate the planning,

promotion and execution of your events, and those components can be improved regardless of how soon your next event is scheduled. Find an evaluation system that works for you, and don't be afraid to give yourself a positive evaluation. Areas in which you succeeded and thrived during one series likely have qualities that are transferable to other areas. Just because an event looks different from others doesn't mean you can't use the experience gained from it to improve elsewhere.

5. Try a New Recipe

Sometimes, after evaluating a program, you will see no need to make a change. But more often than not, there is something that can be tweaked or even redone completely. Be honest with the process and really flush out the things that aren't making the program better. Once this is done, start thinking about what you will add or change to **enhance** the program. It is important to remember that with series programming, your goal should be to make things better, not just different.

Also, keep in mind that times change, and technology, pop culture, current interests and issues, along with current events, all change with the times. It is your job to make sure your organization or department and events are changing to stay current. Be sure to keep looking ahead so you can anticipate what your campus community will want as you plan programs.

Ask your colleagues and student population their opinions of your events, if they like them, and what changes they would like to see. Also, make sure you get out into the campus community to attend programs unrelated to your own. Doing this can expose you to audiences other than yours and gives you the opportunity to learn why they might not be attending your series.

A Greek organization at the University of Connecticut offers a Homecoming float paying homage to TV shows from students' childhoods.

THEMES AREN'T THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE THINGS FRESH AND NEW. IF YOU HAVE A LONG-STANDING TRADITIONAL EVENT ON CAMPUS, TRY ADDING A NEW PROGRAM OR COMPONENT TO IT TO KEEP IT GROWING.

Practical Things to Keep in Mind when Planning Series (or Other Events)

- It is important to be mindful of your budget and the frequency of the program you are offering. You don't want to spend your entire budget the first two weeks if you are meant to plan for a six-week series.

- When working on an advertising and outreach plan, it is important to know your audience and know it well. An ad campaign that students will understand and to which they can relate is great for those programs directed at students. However, homecoming and family weekend programs are meant to reach a broader audience than just the students on campus. Your promotional campaign should, as well.

- COLLABORATE! While a committee within your office or organization is great for initiating a program, including other organizations and departments on campus helps to share the workload and can help in generating new and innovative ideas. It is also a great way to reach an audience that may not typically attend your events.

- Remember that series programming is a living and breathing entity. Because of its frequency, the work is never done. Once you have finished one component of a series event, it's time to start again!

- Big doesn't always mean better. Often, people think that a big name or a high-profile event is the best and will draw the most attention. What they discount is that homegrown programing is great. It allows you to make a connection with your school and its mission, vision and existing traditions.

- What works at one school doesn't work at ALL schools. As you look at what's happening in the world and in pop culture, be sure to relate to how it's affecting your campus.

- Push yourself, and the group, to find the resources you need. Just because you aren't an expert on Pokémon doesn't mean there isn't someone on campus who is, and they would be THRILLED to help you plan!

- If a series is struggling, whether it's new or old, don't beat yourself up. Move with emerging trends and accept when an event just isn't happening. Your time, efforts and other resources can be put to better use with other events.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Melissa Arroyo is Associate Director of Student Involvement and Activities at **Salem State University (MA)**. She has worked in student involvement and activities since 2005, having previously served as Program Coordinator in the Student Activities Programs Office at the University of Connecticut-Storrs. An active volunteer with NACA since 2006, she currently serves as the Educational and Professional Development Coordinator for the NACA® Northeast Regional Conference Program Committee. She has held a number of other positions in the region, including Special Events Coordinator, Student Projects Coordinator, Awards Selection Coordinator, CAMP Coordinator and Business Networks Coordinator, among others. She was the 2006 recipient of the region's M. Kevin Fahey Graduate Assistant Award. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education and psychology from Roger Williams University (RI) and a master's degree in counselor in student development and higher education from Central Connecticut State University.

Kyle Neary is Program Coordinator at the **University of Connecticut-Storrs**. Active in NACA, he currently serves as the Block Booking Coordinator for the NACA® Northeast Region. He has held other positions in the region, including School Swap Coordinator and Assistant Social Media Coordinator. He received the region's M. Kevin Fahey Graduate Assistant Award in 2013. He holds a bachelor's degree in communications from Merrimack College (MA) and a master's degree in higher education and student affairs from the University of Connecticut.

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NAVIGATING YOUR WAY THROUGH WEEKLONG PROGRAMMING

By
EKPEJU ED E-NUNU
Western Oregon University

YOUR MISSION, as student programmers and student activities professionals, should you choose to accept it, is to effectively organize weeklong programming at your institution and not self-destruct. When handling the annual responsibility of arranging Homecoming Week or any other weeklong series of events, consider the Triangle Protocol method.

WITH ITS HERO ETHAN HUNT EXECUTING CLEVER ESPIONAGE TRICKS and daredevil-like feats against the clock to save humanity, the *Mission: Impossible* series frequently has made the impossible look "very possible" (Brayton, 2011). With an obvious nod to the espionage series created, written and produced by Bruce Geller beginning in 1966, each action/adventure film has featured Hunt displaying a superhero-like bravado and swagger (*Mission: Impossible,* 2015). Equipped with a heavy arsenal of resources and advanced technological devices, a vast network of worldwide connections and more, Hunt has entered every covert operation with little fear of failure.

The attention to detail and the committed focus employed by Hunt not only have been attributes of a great cinematic spy, but also are those a skilled team can use in a programming operation. In the films, a tactical team of qualified covert agents, each endowed with a variety of Impossible Missions Force specialties, has supported the mission and Hunt entirely (Brayton, 2011). The storyline of the *Mission: Impossible* franchise remains a favorite for spy aficionados but is also one from which student programmers can borrow. Comparatively considering how intricate committee planning and event execution can be, many can relate to what Ethan Hunt does in the films. For both covert ops planners and weeklong programmers, the implementation of sound strategies and approaches in conjunction with proper planning and execution will help make the seemingly impossible possible.

Your mission, as student programmers and student activities professionals, should you choose to accept it, is to effectively organize weeklong programming at your institution and not self-destruct. For such a specialized mission as this, utilizing your resources is essential to ensuring success and limiting the roadblocks and threats you might encounter. So, even though you are likely to be simply handling the annual responsibility of arranging Homecoming Week rather than performing a recovery operation to prevent nuclear war, consider the Triangle Protocol method. Thematically named after the 2011 *Mission: Impossible Ghost Protocol* film, this three-step method features equally necessary approaches to apply to weeklong event planning.

Triangle Protocol: Laying the Foundation

Virtually all programming begins with the brainstorming of new ideas or a discussion about continuing a long-standing tradition. Be it a student media-led Free Speech Week, a Comedy Week sponsored by the campus programming board, or the annual Pan-Hellenic Greek Sports Week, weeklong programming is no different. The advantage of early brainstorming is the ability it provides organizers to concentrate their efforts on details of the week and how best to highlight its theme. Once the programmers involved have solidified the week's focus, the next step is determining whether you can classify it as being fresh or one that re-invents the wheel. Fresh programming would consist of creating weeklong programming that has no predecessor in the past two to three years and does not currently fall to any other departments or student groups. Reinventing the wheel, on the other hand, attempts to recreate long-standing campus traditions and events.

Discussions with seasoned student programmers, campus partners and peers can reveal how to classify an event before detailed planning begins. Having these discussions early can save resources and the energy of the committee while shifting attention and focus to committee planning. Imagine your student programming board wants to plan a Movie Week, following a suggestion from a board member, but does not realize the student newspaper has a similar event planned during another term. Early conversations would have encouraged a collaborative effort among interested groups or would have at least prevented the presentation of two duplicative Movie Weeks.

The next step stakeholders must take is finding those individuals on campus who can directly contribute to your weeklong event planning. With office responsibilities and departmental committee appointments frequently changing, early communication on newly formed and existing partnerships can help prevent the omission of campus colleagues or hurt feelings. Early conversations with interested committee members can alleviate questions related to the events being planned, and expectations and commitment, and may help reassure those who may be uncertain about their involvement. Planning committees also enable event stakeholders to actively build upon the team's skills while allowing individuals to bring their own complementary strengths into consideration.

- **For fresh, new programming:** Consider you are a professional programmer and you are organizing a Movie Week. Review brainstormed events and activities that might align with various departments like journalism, registered student/Greek-letter organizations, and remote/community practitioners. Finding individuals who can contribute will strengthen the theme of the week, as well as its ability to gain support. Early discussions with other organizations can prove beneficial to networking and to determine if other stakeholders need to be included.

- **For annual, traditional programming:** Imagine you are planning a Greek Sports Week. Connect with on-campus peers and partners who might know the history of the event to make sure all necessary registered student/Greek-letter organizations and remote/community practitioners (i.e. popular restaurants in the community) are at the table. Involving a departmental group like campus recreation can prove beneficial to the event's organization while keeping everyone aware of committee priorities to avoid miscues regarding competing activities.

Another helpful factor in laying the foundation for weeklong programming is creating a flexible timeline. Doing this in the early stages of the planning process enables all committee members to understand the approach set forth by those involved. Knowledge of time restrictions shared in a programming timeline will bring better context to committee-created expectations and decisions regarding weeklong programming. This timeline also encourages committee members by providing an outline as to when various tasks need to be completed.

Committee meetings for weeklong programming, in addition to providing an atmosphere conducive for collaboration, provide opportunities for goal setting. This is an imperative task in laying the foundation, as it gives all stakeholders an understanding of what you are seeking to accomplish by the weeklong event's conclusion. For fresh, new programming, some goals might include creating awareness related to a theme or enhancing existing ideals, while traditional programming might look to increase attendance and support of a theme and to solidify long-standing traditions. Adhering to at least two goals, or perhaps fewer with newer events, will help committee participants designate the structure and direction of the week. This, and taking accurate account of available resources, can help the planning committee better serve its purposes and, ultimately, achieve its programming goals.

Working with a knowledgeable team of students and professional peers can provide valuable perspectives and a soundboard for voicing decisions and event ideas. With weeklong programming, a planning committee fully invested in the goals initially set forth will not only build trust among members, but also share ownership of the week. By setting goals early in the planning process, establishing your priorities becomes easier and can assist in holding all committee members accountable to the timeline and events to be included in the week. Shared ownership by those directly coordinating varying aspects of planning will increase the likelihood of success and shift the collective focus to day-to-day execution of the programming and the week overall.

Early in the planning phase, committee leaders should perform an exercise called "checks and balances" to take a holistic view of the week. In this approach, "checks" serve as an opportunity for organizers to take stock of all the behind-the-scenes features related to the execution of weeklong events from start to finish. In this approach, students and professional programmers can review setups for programs, develop precautionary event contingency plans or monitor smaller details of the week. If your campus is hosting its first

annual Movie Week, for example, a check enables organizers to ensure there is a backup location for an outdoor, drive-in movie screening or to review the proposed number of daytime and evening events.

As for "balances," these let programmers review the ebb and flow of the week and how to adjust details accordingly. Attending to balances can limit the amount of burnout and energy expended by committee members throughout the week, as well as during the time leading up to it. Imagine that you realize there are a far greater number of evening activities in comparison to daytime activities in your plans. Using the Movie Week example, making comprehensive adjustments to weeklong scheduling or reassigning duties limits anticipated fatigue and stress. Understanding your committee and those directly responsible for event execution reduces the feelings of confusion and being overwhelmed that might occur.

Together, "checks and balances" can keep committee stakeholders abreast of all pertinent factors that might influence the success of the week.

Triangle Protocol: Executing the Plan

In transitioning from committee work to the actual weeklong event execution, one aspect to which attention must be paid is marketing. Weeklong programming marketing must capture the attention of multiple audiences to be effective and build a positive, yet engaging, buzz on campus and in the surrounding community. For both new and traditional programming, it is important to determine your target audience and those you are looking to keep engaged (i.e. current students, alumni, staff, faculty, community members, non-traditional students, etc.). Once your programming committee identifies the target audience, apply the appropriate marketing strategies. Some strategies to build presence and boost event attendance include word-of-mouth communication, print advertising (mail, posters, handbills), email campaigns (before and throughout the week), social media marketing and any other approaches unique to your campus.

As event planners, keep in mind that the effectiveness of marketing will differ when campus size and scale of the event (small or large) are taken into account. Smaller events of the week might not demand as intense promotion as large-scale components, like sporting events, concerts or parties. But a combination of marketing strategies will influence their successes. Regardless of event size, it is important to consider which marketing strategies work for your campus before you apply them. Understanding that some groups in your target audience might prefer word-of-mouth communication and acknowledging that others prefer social media marketing will be very beneficial to your efforts. Although marketing for weeklong programming will vary with day-to-day events, do not be afraid to explore new options to promote events and actively engage your audience.

Some examples of marketing that can make weeklong programming successful might include:
- **For fresh, new programming:** Identifying your demographics and those interested in the theme of your weeklong programming might warrant marketing strat-

egies that can guarantee engagement and interaction like word-of-mouth promotion and printed advertising. If planning a Movie Week on campus, connect your event marketing with groups that relate directly to media, such as a student newspaper group or film club. Sharing information about events and activities with these groups can build support and attract attention.

- **For annual, traditional programming:** Use of a clever tagline that engages a larger target audience can work to not only spark conversations but also encourage participation before, during and after the event. At Western Oregon University, for example, the tagline of "Calling All Wolves" for the 2013 Homecoming Week proved to be a meaningful call to all current students, faculty, staff and former students and other alumni. Use of the mascot with the tagline helped build upon the existing conversation about Homecoming while connecting alumni from 20 years ago with current undergraduates, all of whom can strongly identify their time as students with the campus mascot.

Triangle Protocol: Debriefing and Assessing

The debriefing period, following the last organized event of the week, is one of the final responsibilities in concluding your weeklong programming. This period entails collecting feedback and comments gathered during and after the week, then analyzing that information. Feedback can range from in-depth conversations with organizers, formal evaluations, and even commentary collected by attendees and casual observers. This feedback can influence the preparation and planning for the following year, especially with regard to potential improvements.

A useful way to collect information about the successes and miscues of the week's programming is through survey questions. You can distribute surveys through Google Docs or by using community management tools like OrgSync to gather responses. Concise survey questions might warrant more responses, but also consider collecting responses post-event during the week as opposed to only post-week. Post-event responses can give organizers vivid, up-to-the-minute perspectives. Some survey questions to consider might include:

- What could be improved?
- Did the event fulfill the purpose/goals that were initially proposed?
- How were students informed about the event?
- Were the objectives set forth at the beginning of event planning met?
- What went well during the week?
- What are some ideas/suggestions for similar programming efforts?
- Should this event be repeated in the future?

Another option to consider is the scheduling of feedback sessions with attendees. Small-group discussions with participating attendees can provide an outlet to elaborate on survey questions and deliver additional insights to your committee.

After collecting all evaluations and feedback, you will need to analyze and review the collected data. Comparing results from surveys or other assessments to expected outcomes can paint a clearer picture of the direction of the committee and established goals. To keep your goals at the forefront of your programming, the intersection of assessment and goals is essential. You must carefully consider any limitations in your programming, the participating populations on campus to whom to direct marketing, and other data related to your week of programming.

In-depth review of assessments and their correlation to established goals, like anticipated attendance for example, will help organizers as they consider revamping or continuing traditions for the following year. For example, information from assessments might reveal that a larger budget for the Movie Week on your campus did not result in increased attendance. You may need to change that or make other tweaks to justify continuing the event. Student and professional programmers who stay engaged with the feedback of their audience will make better use of their resources and be better able to guide future programming towards success.

Again, your mission, as student and professional programmers, should you choose to accept it, is to effectively organize weeklong programming around a new theme or annual tradition at your institution. Good luck and remember to not self-destruct.

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About the Author

Ekpeju Ed E-Nunu is Coordinator for Student Organizations and Activities at **Western Oregon University**, a position he's held since 2013. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of California-Riverside and a master's degree in higher education and student affairs from Claremont Graduate University (CA). His career has also taken him from serving as a research/administrative assistant for the Nigerian American Public Affairs Committee to serving as an editor for Michael Ferrera Custom Clothing/M World Media. In addition, he has been a teach/mentor for College Bound. He co-presented the educational session on which this article is based at the 2014 NACA® West Regional Conference.