**Alpha Psi Zeta, Spring 2015 College Project: Participation in FRC Cultural Fair**

April 21, 2015

11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Feather River College Campus

**Target audience:** FRC students and employees

**Collaboration:** International students from ICC, the Diversity Committee, campus administrators, chapter advisor, Alpha Psi Zeta members, FRC students.

**Committee:** Alpha Psi Zeta College project committee: Naoki Matsumoto, Noah Vargas, Shelby Stalians, Kelly Williamson, and Alice Thurber.

**Event Setting**

The day of the first annual Feather River College Culture Fair was warm with clear skies; a perfect setting to bring the diverse members of the campus community together. The event, hosted and organized by the International and Cultural student club, was held under a tent that contributed to the festive environment. Students hosted booths with food tasting, games, live music, and information about their countries and cultures. Countries and culture represented were the United States, Scotland, India England, Mexico, Australia, Sweden, Brazil, as well as the state of Hawaii and the local Maidu (Native American) culture.

**Participants**

Approximately 70 to 100 or more people attended the Fair including students, FRC employees, and even children from the campus’s Child Development Center. Attendees visited the booths, answered trivia questions, engaged in conversation with new friends, and colored maps and flags from around the world.

After consideration of these recommendations, Alpha Psi Zeta members, under the direction of Treasurer, Naoki Matsumoto, decided that the Culture Fair was a perfect opportunity be an event that raised awareness about race and sexual orientation (specifically). Members decided to create a booth that provided a glimpse of FRC culture, and raised campus awareness about LGBTQ culture.

**Goals**

The goal of the Culture Fair, determined by the ICC and the campus Diversity Committee (a shared/participatory committee) was: “Learn about the various countries and cultures of FRC students through food, music, dance, and activities.”

From this, the Alpha Psi Zeta College Project goals were developed:

* Raise awareness about the diversity of FRC campus culture, and especially of the LGBTQ community
* Represent the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and provide members an opportunity to creatively participate in and contribute to an important community-building event.

**Process of Determining Goals**

As the plans for the fair developed, Alpha Psi Zeta students became interested in the idea of “an FRC culture.” In other words, what does this significant diversity amongst our student body mean to FRC culture? And, is there more to FRC culture than what is visible in the student body’s international or geographical diversity? With these questions in mind, a few Alpha Psi Zeta students began to explore this campus culture, starting with discussions with other students and then by reading through the 2013 Campus Climate Report. The 2013 Report, available on the campus website under the Office of Research and Planning[[1]](#footnote-1), reveals interesting points about campus culture. The report points out that while there is a high level of student and employee comfort and happiness on campus, improvement to levels of student comfort should be addressed, especially when it comes to women on campus and the campuses LGBTQ culture.[[2]](#footnote-2) Also, the 2013 Report makes a few recommendations that caught chapter members’ attention:

1. Capitalize on the campus’s overall comfort with and support for diversity by sponsoring activities and events that facilitate learning and discussion around issues surrounding race, ethnicity, class, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.
2. Continue sexual-harassment training among employees, and consider including a more robust (re-)training every 3-5 years to avoid complacency and redundancy (i.e., mandatory Safe-Spaces training, guest speakers/trainers, EEO awareness activities). Consider expanding this training to students.

In addition, the topic of LGBTQ culture seemed important considering the size and often isolated feeling that comes from being a part of the small, rural community of Quincy and even smaller subculture of Feather River College where it is often easy to be unaware of the diversity of the world. This context presents an opportunity to combat ignorance which can contribute to prejudice, discrimination, and even hate-crimes against other populations and cultures.

On April 3, Along with the Alpha Psi Zeta advisor, on April 3, 2015, Naoki Matsumoto met with FRC administrators, Kevin Trutna (Superintendent/President), Derek Lerch (Chief Instruction Officer), and Karen Pierson (Chief Student Services Officer). At this meeting, Naoki presented the idea, demonstrated how it aligned with the Campus Climate Report’s recommendations, and collaborated on a few goals for the project. The agreed upon goal was to contribute to the campus’s awareness of diversity, including awareness of the LGBTQ community.

**Leadership roles and actions this project required.**

*Project Leader:* Naoki Matsumoto. Coordinated members, booth vision and implementation, communications with Fair organizers, communication with College Administration. Lead research into issue and oversaw data gathering. ]

*Project Participants:* Chapter members collaborated on organizing information and what to include on the display board under the creative direction of project leader.

Advertising – Chapter member made flyers, distributed emails, and chapter advisor posted this information on the chapter’s Facebook page.

*Report Writer:* Project leader worked with committee members to collect questionnaire result, and write follow-up report. Report was then finalized and sent to FRC administration.

**Leadership Skill Development**

*Time management* was key to the project organization and success. This included coming up with a project vision and identifying the tasks necessary to accomplish this vision. This included respecting the busy schedules of the contributors while also remaining diligent about communicating responsibilities and deadlines. Team work was also a skill developed in this project. Working and collaborating with others is key to success in any community, and a leader must be a model in such endeavors. Members were reminded of the importance their tasks had to the outcome of the project. An important lesson from this project is the recognition that tasks are sometimes unequal, and leaders should recognize this and attempt to bring equity in task delegation in and not unduly burden any one individual. This is always a difficult balance to achieve, and this project highlighted the importance of this leadership skill.

*Communication* – Presenting the information to FRC students who participated in the Culture Fair, and delivering the information clearly was key. In evaluating the successfulness of this skill development, it is clear that more could have been done in terms of communicating the College Project idea to the chapter members. In this sense, the project leader and committee members can develop this skill from the lessons learned.

**Service/Advocacy Component**

The service component of this project was to educate and bring awareness to FRC students. The alpha Psi Zeta chapter provided the educational information about the diversity of the FRC campus and LGBTQ community. For the booth, we used the Campus Climate Survey results from 2013 and included information about FRC student comfort levels, sense of equal treatment on campus, and campus including charts depicting campus race and sex demographic breakdowns. The booth also included a poster that broadcast information about LGBTQ definitions, history, and issues of equity and acceptance, all intended to enhance awareness which will contribute to a more accepting and safe campus environment for all students.

**Publicity**

To support the fair organizers, Alpha Psi Zeta members took charge of campus advertisement for the event and publicized it through flyers, email distribution, and social media.

**Resources Used**

*Equipment & Supplies:* Campus facility crews, were needed to supply tables, chairs, tent, and audio-visual equipment. Poster boards were donated by the chapter advisor, and other materials (paper, pens, printers) were donated by members.

*Cost:* $0

**Impact of the Project and Assessment of Goal Accomplishment**

Please see the attached results of the Cultural Fair Survey, a short survey on project outcomes. Included here is feedback gathered from students who attended the event.

* One student who is gay came to the LGBTQ booth and asked whether FRC has any support or place to talk about issues related to the LGBTQ community. After discussion about the absence of such a space on campus, the student shared his desire and willingness to support the campus LGBTQ community through events and activities.
* There impact on Alpha Psi Zeta members was also evident. This quote shows a latent result of the booth: “what I did learn helping to put this project together was that FRC has a very diverse student population, where most people seem to be accepting of other people’s cultures.”
* Overall, it was a great turnout with more than 50 attendees stopping by the booth.

**Future Implications/Recommendations**

***What is left undone?***

The short survey had a small sample and more feedback could be gathered through follow up meetings with the Diversity Committee. The chapter could extend this survey in an attempt to reach a greater sample size, and perhaps include those students and employees who did not attend the Fair and why.

Since the data was drawn from the 2013 Campus Climate Report, the Report’s information could be updated, providing a more current picture of FRC’s campus climate (“mid-term” data gathering). Some students actually were curious about the information of FRC and asked questions about data beyond the data presented on the poster board, such as whether there was information on student age-breakdown, etc. Students should know where to find such institutional information. For the LGBTQ community, and based on the 2013 Report recommendations, Safe Space education for students remains undone.

**Remaining opportunities**

* Extend Safe Spaces education for students
* Increase the size (scope and reach) of future Culture Fairs.
* Increase the visibility of campus diversity beyond the Culture Fair.

**Planning and Future Recommendations**

* Better planning and organization of the College Project is necessary. Plans should be made much earlier in the year. A standing College Project committee is necessary.
* Publicity for this and all campus events needs improvement. More professional and polished posters should accompany campus events. Digital production is recommended.
* Event planning is an important skill that students should have more opportunity to learn. This will include the enhancement of leadership skills. The creation of an event planning committee, office, or class should be considered where groups can go to get assistance on publicity (including design and production), outreach, and coordination.
* Improve timelines and deadlines when planning in chapter events. This includes earlier advertising and better broadcasting of the event.

1. http://www.frc.edu/institutionalresearch/institutional-data.cfm [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Queer [↑](#footnote-ref-2)