

Introduction:

Community Captains is a partnership between Christopher Newport University and Newport News Public Schools. The goal of the program is to assist first generation or students that demonstrate financial need and aid in their transition from high school to college.

The goal of the Captains Afterhours program was to promote socialization and friendship within the Community Captains program. Over the Covid-19 pandemic Community Captains were forced online and were unable to socialize within the program. When compared to the program before Covid one of the big differences was the level of socialization that took place among students. This stuck true after the return to in-person events with students often staying alone or only socializing with the few people they had met before joining the program.

The program intended to have students meet after school with the members from their specific schools. This would allow them to become better acquainted and hopefully become better friends. Unfortunately, due to logistical, capacity, and uncontrollable factors we had to adjust the plan for the fellowship and use this year as a planning year for an adjusted project in the future.

Community Partnership: Newport News Public Schools

The community partner for this project was Newport News Public schools (NNPS) and their professional school counselors. The mission statement of NNPS is: "Each day in Newport News Public Schools the focus is on one mission: Ensuring that all students graduate college, career and citizen-ready."

My faculty mentor for this was Brandon Jones, the Director of the Community Captains.

Methods / Project Plan:

Summer:

Over the summer the original curriculum, rules, and mission of Captains Afterhours were designed. The curriculum was designed to get students talking and learning about each other while still correlating to program days and their development in the program. It was planned as a supplement to the program days for students who were unable to attend the events. The drafts of schedules for the After hours meetings were made after completion of the curriculum.

Fall:

The fall semester for this project was one of working through adversity, adjusting the scope of the project, and reflection. Due to issues Newport News Public Schools faced throughout the year the project was unable to be moved forward. This required us to reflect on the goals and significance of the project and find a way to move forward with our intent. We decided to continue focusing on the social growth of the students while trying to enhance the benefits given to the students. We also decided to find a way to relieve some of the pressure of the project on Newport News Public Schools until they were able to continue to fill the role they want to fill.

Spring:

The spring semester for this project has been solely dedicated to planning and preparing for the implementation of our new initiative. We have shifted the focus of the project to one used to enrich the Community Captains experience. This serves a two-fold purpose of helping the students become closer to their cohorts and program companions while also showing them what social life on college campus looks like. We would invite them to fun, educational events such as: Stroll to the Polls, athletic events, and Best Dance Crew. Events like that will get them talking to each other while also giving them experiences and memories to continue talking about later.

Project Goals:

- Improve socialization between Community Captains
- Increase attendance to the program events
- Promote increased participation in the program events
- Increase the participation in the Community Captains on CNU's campus



Future Steps:

An application for a Ferguson Fellowship has been submitted for the 2023-2024 academic year. The enrichment schedule of events will be completed over the course of the next year and depending on the success throughout the life of the program.

1. Creating the schedule of Community Captains program days.
2. Plan the enrichment schedule of events as the events schedule becomes accessible.
3. Create reflections based on the events and ways we can correlate them to the schedule of program days.
4. Revise the schedule and program based on the needs of the students.
5. Find partner organizations to make a list of standing events we can offer to the students

Project Significance:

The Community Captains having great camaraderie between each other is vital for the program's success. Many of the program days require group participation that are necessary to fulfill their purpose. We have seen that when students socialize together more often, it aids in growing their confidence and abilities to be leaders beyond the two year length of the program. Community Captains wishes to help students with not only college but their social skills and academic ability. Captains Afterhours intended to address these issues, which will now be addressed through the new project being developed, along with other enhancements we intend to make to the Community Captains.



Community Captains at the Cohort 2 Welcome on campus.

Another goal of the reimagined project is to show the Community Captains the social aspects of college. Taking students to different types of social events and activities on campus will help them gain a greater understanding of the full scope of college. It will also serve a dual purpose of adding interest to attend Christopher Newport University. This will help keep a cycle of leaders and impactful community members coming together at Christopher Newport University who are from the local Newport News community, one of the ultimate goals of the Community Captains.

Results:

The main result from my Ferguson Fellowship has been the growth and development of myself. There were many uncontrollable complications that had to be overcome. These complications forced continuous reflections and "uncomfortable" growth that became very beneficial for my development.

Another development from this project was gauging the overall interest the Community Captains have in growing closer as a community.

The Community Captains at the service day, building beds for the bedless.



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