Connections Subcommittee
Report & Recommendations for the Main Street Initiative
December 15, 2010

Charge from Main Street Steering Committee

Connections Subcommittee: Their charge is to identify programs and activities that bring our students to the attention of others, encourage major employers and graduate programs to recruit on campus, and create sustained networks with large and small companies, not-for-profits, government agencies, and graduate and professional schools.

Guiding Principles

Four principles infuse the subcommittee’s recommendations:

1. Gather and use data to inform program design.
2. Foster engagement with alumni, employers, graduate schools, service agencies, and other relevant entities.
3. Build relationships with academic programs to assure that there is consistency in Main Street programming across all majors and that all students are aware of and have access to Main Street programs.
4. Create appropriate evaluation and assessment tools and processes for each initiative as it is developed, expanded, and/or enhanced.

Recommendations

1. “Centers of Gravity”
   a. Create a model of engagement for defined geographical areas, a model that can be implemented (with appropriate modifications) in various cities or regions.
   b. Elements of each “center of gravity”:
     i. Provide career development resources and advance job procurement in ways appropriate and tailored to the area
     ii. Robust relationships with local businesses, organizations, graduate schools, agencies, etc.
     iii. Internships, Externships, Job Shadowing
     iv. Alumni events
        1. Affinity events (e.g., finance, journalism, health care, social work, church work, education, etc.)
2. Include faculty and CEL advisors in events (to build relationships that can serve students)

v Identify good housing options for current students doing internships, externships, job shadowing

vi Offer alumni contacts to help new graduates get oriented, situated in the area (with such things as housing, community organizations, faith communities, transportation, clubs, etc.)

2 Student Ambassadors Engagement Program
a. Create an alumni engagement program in which students are trained to interview key alumni with the goal of fostering engagement to support Main Street programs, particularly the Centers of Gravity.

b. The re-engagement with alumni that results would help to build connections with businesses, agencies, organizations, institutions, etc. that alumni work for and with.

c. A model for this program is Georgetown University’s “Discovery Initiative.”

3 Alumni Honor Roll
a. Create an annual “Alumni Honor Roll” to recognize all contributions that alumni make to St. Olaf and its students, including monetary gifts and volunteering in CEL programs, alumni programs, department programs, classroom activities, and other on- and off-campus initiatives.

b. Develop both print and digital means of disseminating the Honor Roll

4 Survey of Graduates
a. Expand and enhance our survey of recent graduates.

b. Model the development of the new survey on those done by colleges that have high response rates and that gather useful information (e.g., Bucknell University, College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University).

5 On-line Alumni Connections
a. Expand and enhance our Alumni Directory.

   i. Include regional search tools in the Directory. For example, allow searches in the “Chicago area” in addition to “Chicago,” “Oak Park,” “Schaumburg,” etc.

   ii. Provide training for all students on how to use the Alumni Directory in planning their post-college steps.

   iii. Gather information from alumni and students concerning new features that they would value in the Directory.

b. Expand and enhance St. Olaf’s presence in social media.

   i. Develop appropriate presences on social media such as LinkedIn.
ii Explore opportunities to interface with alumni via Skype and other video-conferencing services.

iii Provide facilities on campus for video-conferencing.

6 Vocation & Career Services for Alumni
   a. Offer these services immediately to recent graduates (previous four class years).
   b. Provide vocation and career services to all alumni when resources to support this are available.

7 Graduate & Professional School Applications and Scholarships
   a. Expand and enhance current support of students who apply to graduate and professional schools.
   b. Promote wide range of post-graduate scholarships and fellowships available in all fields, and support students’ applications for them.

8 “Summits” for all Majors/Programs
   a. Encourage “Summit” programs for all majors/programs modeled on the “Economic Summit” for economics majors and the “Making it in the Arts” for fine and performing arts majors.
   b. Provide funds to support summits.

9 Organizational Link Between the Center for Experiential Learning and the Advancement Office
   a. Examine how other colleges and universities create organizational links to support their vocation & career programming.
   b. Develop an organizational model for St. Olaf that fosters in particular the essential relationship between CEL and ACR.

10 Faculty and Staff Development Programs
    a. Create faculty and staff development programs to support participation in Main Street programs.
    b. Value and support faculty and staff participation in Main Street programs
    c. Provide appropriate funds for faculty and staff development.

Resources

New resources will be needed to support new initiatives and expand or enhance current programs. Resources may be needed for new staff and new offices.