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Assessing Nationally Affiliated Student PRSSA Agencies: An Approach to Developing Team Leadership

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Nineteen Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) student agencies have met the standards to be recognized as officially affiliated student agencies. Valparaiso University's PRSSA student agency, SPARK, has been nationally recognized since 2009. This means that the Valpo SPARK chapter met professional standards set for nationally recognized student agencies. The study compared and contrasted nineteen nationally affiliated student agencies on the following criteria: 1) student agency infrastructure, 2) team development process, 3) level of client case, and 4) overall leadership elements in the program. Through interviews (e-mail and/or telephone) and analysis of PRSSA and communication websites, the data established a variety of team leadership approaches. The data was examined to identify the key elements in the team leadership profiles. For example, Valpo's agency, SPARK PR, is fully funded by Student Senate. In contrast, most of the other national PRSSA student agencies were not affiliated with their student senate. An examination of this difference indicated the value of student senate affiliation in regard to campus awareness and leadership opportunities.

Information about the Author:

Alex Moulchin is a junior public relations major with a creative writing minor. As a member of PRSSA, she served as the SPARK student agency co-chair in 2010, supervising nine clients. She is now the co-president of the PRSSA chapter. Her leadership includes sponsoring all-campus workshops that train leaders of student organizations in PR. As the public relations coordinator for Student Senate, she coordinates key organizational activities for the Senate organization. She is also a participant in Greek life.

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