

Improving the Fun Factor at Valpo: A Student Retention Strategy

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Retention is identified by the university as problem that needs be addressed a part of the overall strategy to improve enrollment at Valpo. This team brainstormed about possible retention issues and discovered that often students describe the campus as “boring” or “uneventful.” Valpo students were polled via the Internet and additional questionnaire handouts on campus. Many students felt as though they lacked information about events on campus and that their RA did not interact with them enough. This data established the extensiveness and the depth of the “lack of fun” problem. Research further revealed that a lot of the events/activities that the students wanted to see at Valpo were already here. So there is definitely a communication breakdown. Students expressed the need for more outreach and encouragement, especially from their immediate authority figure, their RAs, to inform them of what’s going on at Valpo. There was an expressed need for a newsletter that updated students on campus activities via email. (The Torch is too inflexible). Changes need to be made to inform students about campus events. Students proposed a student email newsletter similar to the one sent out to staff (the Campus Chronicle). Students also expressed concern about how the events and activities are promoted to the students, which generally excludes others – the “silo” effect. Since most students must live on campus until they’re upperclassmen, this further increased the issue students have with lack of “fun” on campus. The campaign team will be presenting these research findings to different groups such as IMC and Residential Life.

Information about the Authors:

Our team chose to pursue this project because we all agreed that a prevalent problem on campus among students is the fact that a lot of students have expressed similar negative feelings about life on campus - "It's boring" or "There's nothing to do here." We knew students who went to other colleges/universities who noticed a big difference in student morale. Our goal is to change the way students feel about Valpo by restructuring the invitation to join organizational activities so it's more inclusive as well as improving how Valpo students are notified about the events and activities they can participate in, thus improving their Valpo experience and ultimately retention. Matthew Butcher is a sophomore majoring in public relations. Annie Stanchak is a senior marketing major and communications minor. Rande Collett is a senior.

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