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Promoting VCU Community Solutions

The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Commonwealth University, gehli@vcu.edu

Carlos Brown

Jeff Green

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University, Carlos Brown, Jeff Green, Carolyn Henne, Evelyn Reed-Victor, Cynthia Schmidt, and Amy Unger

Promoting VCU Community Solutions

“Blue” Team Members

Carlos Brown, Jeff Green, Carolyn Henne, Evelyn Reed-Victor, Cynthia Schmidt, and Amy Unger. Team Sponsor: Mr. Paul Timmreck.

Project Description

This promotional project focuses on VCU Community Solutions – the new interdisciplinary initiative for education, research, and service. Since this initiative demonstrates the synergy that students, faculty, and community members can create by working together, the promotional video captures their perspectives. Through interviews and footage of community programs, the video shows how VCU Community Solutions engages university and community partners in addressing critical social issues – creating more innovative approaches by working together.

Project Goals

- 1) To develop promotional materials showing how VCU Community Solutions advances the mission of VCU, with emphasis on these themes from our Strategic Plan:
 - ◆ “provide the highest quality academic programs, services...for students.”
 - ◆ “foster excellence in teaching, research, and public service.”
 - ◆ “provide an environment for working and learning that attracts, retains, and supports outstanding, diverse, and dedicated staff, administrators, and faculty.”
 - ◆ “foster recognition of Virginia Commonwealth University as an innovative leader.”
- 2) To create a sample video that could:
 - ◆ enhance the new website for VCU Community Solutions;
 - ◆ support presentations to potential university & community partners;
 - ◆ help the Office of Advancement illustrate the benefits of VCU’s partnerships in the urban community;
 - ◆ attract new students, faculty, and staff who are interested in innovation and service; and
 - ◆ highlight innovations in interdisciplinary research and applications.

Strategies

To develop this project, we used the following strategies:

- capitalize on the strengths, expertise, and connections of our members
- start with a big idea and focus on a tangible, achievable project
- investigate VCU Community Solutions (status & needs)
- explore promotional methods
- consult with team mentor and VCU Community Solutions director about value of proposed project
- consider potential contributions of video to various university promotional efforts (recruitment, retention, innovation, development)
- focus on primary messages and compelling ways to communicate the value of the initiative
- find resources for video production
- develop efficient plan for project completion

Action Steps

- Drafted preliminary project summary
- Reviewed the existing documents on the Community Solutions Initiative to understand history and current status of program
- Met with the Director, Dr. Catherine Howard, to: gain a better understanding of Community Solutions; determine the value, if any, of our project to the program and to VCU; to gain advice on the appropriate individuals and programs to be in the video, etc.
- Met with Mr. Paul Timmreck to discuss plans
- Developed action plan
- Identified individuals and programs to be filmed
- Identified students to film and borrowed professional video camera
- Coordinated filming of programs and individuals with group members present at each session
- Drafted interview topics of discussion
- Filmed projects and interviews
- Edited video with assistance of Creative Services
- Divided up tasks for project presentation

Outcomes

The group originally wanted to develop a website as a repository for interdisciplinary collaborations among faculty, students, and staff. Following Cathy Howard's presentation about VCU Community Solutions, the team decided to reduce the scope of our project and focus on promoting this new initiative. Our video will be used to "give life" to the new VCU Community Solutions' website.

Recommendations

We are coordinating with VCU Creative Services for additional editing of these video materials into a polished promotional video. Copies of the video will be distributed through VCU Community Solutions.

Conclusions

As a group, we wanted to highlight the synergy that can occur when faculty step outside their disciplinary silos, when students are involved in knowledge production and application, and when community members are active partners in the process. VCU Community Solutions provided a meaningful avenue to promote these ideas and we were fortunate to have team members with varied expertise and connections for moving the project forward.