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Creating, Collaborating and Adapting: Implementing a Decentralized Youth Policy

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Creating, Collaborating and Adapting: Implementing a Decentralized Youth Policy

Abstract

The first year implementing a new policy on campus comes with unique opportunities as well as challenges in ensuring appropriate controls and protections for minors. A decentralized policy can often highlight these barriers, but can also create space for innovation. When a policy is located in departments like human resources and risk management infrastructures designed to bolster policies and manage liability are present. For policies in non-traditional areas of higher education, the journey to a sustainable policy model requires a different approach. Virginia Commonwealth University's policy, Safety and Protection of Minors, is located under the Division of Community Engagement, within the Mary and Frances Youth Center. The Center directly facilitates youth programs while also serving as a hub for youth development best practices through our policy work and training programs. We will share our experience implementing this policy during its' first year and the ways in which we strengthened through key modifications. Identifying and orienting policy advocates, designing processes for background checks and non-compliance, incorporating multiple campuses, and creating partnerships with campus departments can help provide a strong foundation on which to rely. We will also share long term goals for year two of a new policy. This includes creating a process for auditing, developing a database of university youth programs and establishing a plan for policy assessment. The second half of the session will incorporate critical group discussions aimed at identifying key issues in policy implementation with opportunities for feedback and networking. By analyzing hurdles, identifying solutions and offering opportunities for in depth discussion and networking, we hope attendees will leave with strategies to overcome policy challenges.

Keywords

Minors, Policy, Youth on Campus, HEPNet, youth protection policy

Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement | Higher Education



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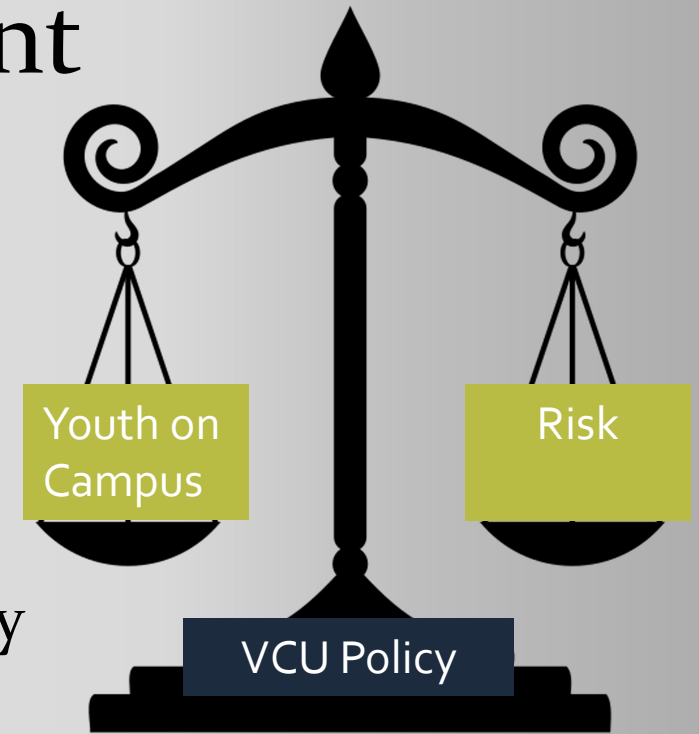


Learning Outcomes

- Learn how a decentralized policy housed in a non-traditional department operates. This includes challenges, solutions and long term considerations.
- Understand strategies to create a more unified approach to policy implementation on their campus.
- Identify challenges on their campuses and receive feedback through round table discussions.
- Walk away with a potential network of individuals with like challenges and policies.

Policy Development

- Iterative and collaborative process
- Diverse working group
- Consultations within and outside of the university
- Focus groups to fine tune the policy and training
- Identifying where the policy lives based on VCU's unique structure



Policy Development

A **Youth on Campus Work Group** was appointed by the Provost, led by Cathy Howard, Vice Provost of Community Engagement, consisting of representatives from:

VCU Affiliations:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Division of Community Engagement | • Health Sciences and Diversity |
| • Human Resources | • Athletics |
| • Integrity and Compliance | • VCU Police |
| • School of Education | • Office of University Counsel |
| • School of Social Work | • School of Dentistry |
| • School of the Arts | • Conference Services |
| • Counseling Center | • Housing |
| • Division of | • Risk Management |
| | • Admissions |

Community Affiliation:

Stop Child Abuse Now

With Consultation From:

Virginia Department of Social Services

Policy & Responsible Office at VCU

- Integrity and Compliance & responsible offices
- Division of Community Engagement
 - Mary and Frances Youth Center



Strengths

- Policy located at a youth center
- Positive youth development best practices
- Proactive support & consultations
- Support from campus partners
- Family resource for on-campus youth programs



Policy Components

The policy applies to all programs and activities that involve non-enrolled minors and are sponsored by the university or conducted by other organizations on VCU's campus.

Program Requirements:

- Annual registration 30 days prior
- Communication & notification plan

Individual Requirements:

- Biennial background checks
- Annual training
- Monitoring and supervision
- Tiered system

Implementation & Year One

Implementation:

- Research and outreach
- Training development
- Website development
- Policy library
- 5 in-person orientation sessions on two campuses

Year One:

- **97** programs registered within the first year
- **820** completed online training sessions
- **8** key campus partners
- **15** online resources

Myfc.vcu.edu/youth-on-campus



Road Blocks

- Multiple Campuses
- Technology
- Background Checks
- Non-compliance
- Hosted Programs



Road Block: Multiple Campuses



VCU Medical Campus

VCUarts Qatar



Monroe Park Campus

Road Block: Technology

Software:

- SoftChalk
- Verified Volunteers
- QuestionPro

Considerations:

- Separate Compliance Tracking
- Working within VCU policy and approved technology

Road Block: Background Checks

- Technology – Verified Volunteers (non-employees) & Human Resources (employees)
- Tracking – Created an attestation form
- Background Checks for Program Supervisors
- Hosted Programs
- Guidelines for reviewing background checks
- Campus Partners:
 - Human Resources
 - Information Security Office
 - Technology Services
 - Risk Management
 - Records Management



Road Block: Non-Compliance

Attestation Form & Tracking



Notification & Recommendations



Probation



Year Two: Report to Vice Provost and Responsible Dean



Disciplinary Action



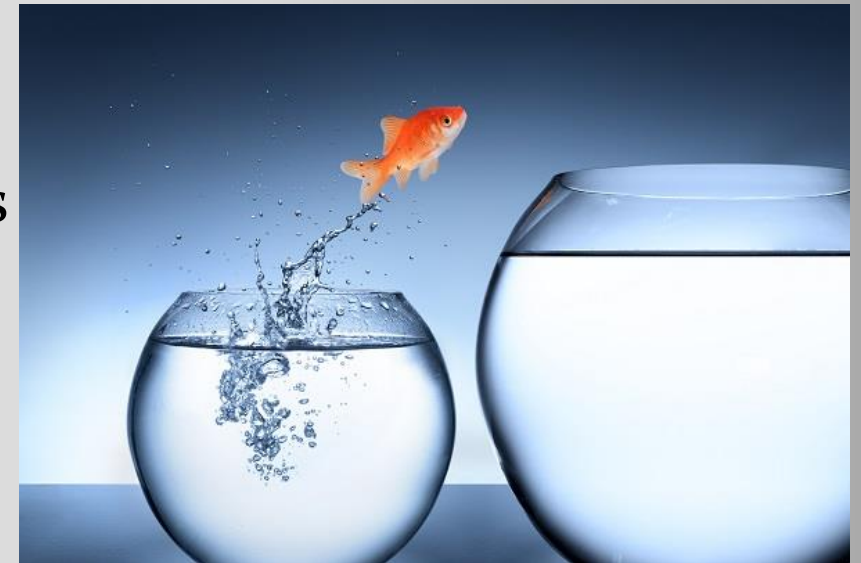
Road Block: Hosted Programs

- VCU Point Person
- Key facility partnerships
- Background checks
- Accountability



Goals for Year Two

- Refine auditing process
- Create a database of university youth programs
- Host events highlighting youth programs
- Create a short & long term assessment plan
- Preparation for triennial review



Group Discussion

- Write down a policy challenge (name and university)
- Discuss with your group and select one to present to larger group
- Brainstorm 2-3 strategies to overcome challenge
- Large group share