ENGAGING FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS THROUGH LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

An Update on the CBS Dean’s Scholars Program

Meaghan Stein, Coordinator of Student Engagement and Retention
AGENDA

- Dean’s Scholars Program History
- Purpose
- Recruitment
- Program Experiences
  - First Year Experiences
- Outcomes
- Challenges/Next Steps
- Student Voices
DEAN’S SCHOLARS PROGRAM HISTORY

Leadership development program implemented in CBS in Fall 2007

Program designed to:

- Support outcomes in the CBS advising syllabus
- Be consistent with U of M SDOs and SLOs
  - Self awareness SDO
  - Citizenship SLO
- Promote retention and progress toward graduation
- Prepare students for graduate/professional school application process
Purpose of the Dean’s Scholars Program

- To prepare students to be active citizens in chosen professions and communities after graduation
- To help students gain leadership knowledge and skills in areas such as group dynamics, conflict management, and intercultural competence; and
- To engage students in the College of Biological Sciences to promote retention and timely progress toward graduation

Three focus areas:

- **Self-Awareness**: Knowing individual values, strengths, and talents and acknowledging shortcomings
- **Citizenship**: Understanding the responsibilities of being an active member of a community
- **Creating Change**: Fulfilling the responsibilities of citizenship by identifying and addressing community needs
RECRUITMENT

- CBS Freshman Admissions Counselor
- Recruitment based on:
  - Academic achievement in high school
  - Leadership engagement in high school
  - Identification of at-risk populations:
    - Lower ACT scores
    - First generation college students (FGEN)
    - Students of color (SOC)
    - Out-of-state residents
- Target # ~40-55 students/year, increased to 70 students in Fall 2010
- Confirmation of participation has changed
## Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dean's Scholars NHS Cohort</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>Average ACT Score</th>
<th>SOC %</th>
<th>FGEN %</th>
<th>Out-of-state resident %</th>
<th>Honors students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# Program Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year One</th>
<th>Year Two &amp; Three</th>
<th>Year Three &amp; Four</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Self-Awareness &amp; Citizenship</td>
<td>Citizenship &amp; Creating Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coursework</strong></td>
<td><strong>Biol 1301</strong>: Becoming a Reflective Leader</td>
<td><strong>Biol 2001</strong>: Career Planning for Biologists</td>
<td><strong>Biol 2301</strong>: Leadership &amp; Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Biol 2001</strong>: Career Planning for Biologists</td>
<td><strong>Biol 2301</strong>: Leadership &amp; Service</td>
<td><strong>Biol 3302</strong>: Leadership for Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Activities</strong></td>
<td>Peer Mentor Meetings, Nature of Life Study Group Leadership, Spring Service Project</td>
<td><strong>Biol 3303</strong>: Peer Leadership Practicum (fall semester) – if serving as Dean’s Scholars Peer Mentor</td>
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</tbody>
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- Fall and Spring Leadership Seminars
- Fall Welcome Reception
- Spring Celebration
FIRST YEAR OF THE PROGRAM

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand how leadership is socially constructed
- Evaluate personal values and articulate a leadership philosophy; and
- Investigate and reflect on the complexity of a social problem

Experiences:

- Biology 1301 – Becoming a Reflective Leader
- Peer Mentoring
- Nature of Life Study Group Leader
- Spring Service Project
FIRST YEAR CURRICULUM CONTENT

- Overview of leadership theories
  - Introduce different models/thoughts about leadership
- DiSC assessment
  - Behavioral style inventory
- Values clarification
- Group dynamics & leading with others
- Difference and diversity
- Service and citizenship
- Personal leadership philosophy
**How Bridging Serves Families**
- Bridging is the largest furniture bank in Minnesota.
- They’ve served over 56,000 families.
- Bridging helps furnish the homes of families transitioning out of poverty.
- Their mission is to help these families live dignified lives by starting with their basic needs.
- They help instill a sense of stability.
- They work with various local organizations to ensure that the family’s other needs are also being met.
- Bridging relies on volunteers and donations from the community.

**Why We selected this Social Issue**
- We decided to work with Bridging because it is an organization close to home.
- The issue of furnishing someone’s home sounds basic, but furniture can provide a person with pride and sense of worth.
- With pride and worth comes drive, ambition, and creating a better life: taking care of the necessities will allow a person/family to grow (Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs).
- This issue allowed us to really experience and help fix an issue that is affecting families in our community.

**The Significance**
- There are many families in transition from homelessness or crises.
- Bridging gives families in need a greater sense of belonging in the community.
- These families don’t often receive sufficient aid.
- Bridging establishes a greater sense of community for donors and volunteers as well.

**Reflection**
- We would have been physically unable to serve these families individually.
- Bridging demonstrates how it takes a whole community to change lives.
- Disproves the common misconception that there can only be one leader.
- Instills a better understanding of what it takes to get to the fundamental needs of families.
- Prior to this experience, we didn’t comprehend the importance of basic household commodities.
**First Year Retention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dean's Scholars</th>
<th>CBS</th>
<th>U of M</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>98.00%</td>
<td>91.70%</td>
<td>88.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>96.36%</td>
<td>94.40%</td>
<td>90.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>94.87%</td>
<td>93.20%</td>
<td>89.50%</td>
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**NHS Cohort**

- **Dean's Scholars**
- **CBS**
- **U of M**
## Academic Achievement

First Year Fall Semester Term GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Dean’s Scholars Average GPA</th>
<th>Non-Participants Average GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>3.175</td>
<td>3.350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>3.327</td>
<td>3.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>3.298</td>
<td>3.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>3.443</td>
<td>3.284</td>
</tr>
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</table>

First Year Fall Semester Probation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dean’s Scholars Cohort</th>
<th>Probation %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>2 students = 2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>1 student = 2.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>1 student = 1.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>0 students = 0%</td>
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FOUR YEAR GRADUATION RATE

Fall 2007 Cohort

- 27 students actively participating in Dean’s Scholars program
- 1 graduated in Fall 2010
- 23 have applied to graduate for Spring 2011
- Potential four year graduation rate of 88.9%

Demographics of active participants

- 14.8% SOC
- 14.8% FGEN
- 10 honors students (37%)
“I learned a lot more about myself, including isolating which values are most important to me and how I lead even when I don't realize that I am.”

“I learned that I am a way different person that I originally thought. I have learned that I have a very optimistic view on the world and want to do the best I can in everything.”

“I learned about what my faults were as far as how I attempt to be a leader.”

“I learned about my values and it made me question what I want to do with my life.”

“While I've always thought I know my leadership style very well, I learned this year that there is a lot more to it than I thought.”
SELF AWARENESS
“I have a new found love for volunteering and giving back to the community and cannot wait to develop these skills throughout my undergraduate career.”

“I've learned that I want to be more involved with the community and become a more prominent leader.”

“I learned that I can indeed make an impact in the world and that there is a difference between involvement and engagement.”

“I learned that I have the capability to do make a change in any social problem. All that it takes is the will and commitment to actually pursue it.”
**COMMUNITY**

“I love the community. It is a great network, and I'm honored to be a part of it.”

“This was a good way for me to meet a small group of my peers and form relationships.”

“Part of the hard part of my decision-making came from my love of the Dean’s Scholars program and all of the support I've had and things I've learned about myself through the process.”

“I enjoyed getting to know upperclassman and feeling a part of a smaller community at the U.”
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Teach for America

• “I will definitely be incorporating a lot of the material from Dean’s Scholars and already have. I used my past assignments to prepare for my phone interview and it really allowed me to articulate myself confidently and successfully.”

Pharmacy School

• “I talked about Dean’s Scholars peer mentoring and I listed my 5 strengths and led into how each would be unique/useful for pharmacy and make me stand out at [that school].”
CHALLENGES & NEXT STEPS

- Sustainability of program
  - Four cohorts running at the same time
  - Offering up to 6 courses per semester
  - Balancing the robustness of experiences with the realities of demands on students

- Full assessment of program
  - Rubrics?
  - Portfolio?
  - Standardized assessment instrument – LPI, SRLS, EIL?
  - Pre- and post-test?
  - Retrospective assessment due to response-shift bias?
STUDENT VOICES

Seth Thompson, senior
Nate Fremling, sophomore
Jessie Selinger, sophomore