

# CH AN GE MAKERS



PHI THETA KAPPA  
HONOR SOCIETY

Journal of Student  
Leadership

2021 Edition

# About Phi Theta Kappa

Phi Theta Kappa is the premier honor society recognizing the academic achievement of students at associate degree-granting colleges and helping them grow as scholars and leaders. The Society is made up of more than 3.5 million members and nearly 1,300 chapters in 10 nations.

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# A Letter from the Editor

Phi Theta Kappa is pleased to present the inaugural edition of *Change Makers: Phi Theta Kappa Journal of Student Leadership*. Our mission is to recognize academic achievement of college students and to provide opportunities for them to grow as scholars and leaders. The articles printed in *Change Makers* highlight our commitment to cultivating and acknowledging student excellence and scholastic success. We are proud to publish the work of community college students who, under the direction of their college administrators, planned and implemented leadership- and service-based projects that support the mission of their colleges and generate positive changes on their campuses.

Each of the articles published in *Change Makers* demonstrates exceptional planning, leadership, and service activities carefully designed to improve the college community and campus environment. These College Projects begin with carefully planned meetings between the students and the college administration. Here, students explore the college's mission and offer voluntary service to complete projects that the administration deem both crucial and necessary to support the college and its overall mission.

We received 429 submissions for possible inclusion in this journal. We are honored to publish 15 of those submissions. The selected articles represent an intentional and direct response to the diverse needs of community colleges across the nation. They also represent students' commitment to projects focused on leadership, service, and providing practical solutions for presented problems. The articles presented here not only demonstrate the ability of community college students to enact positive change through leadership and service, but also their capacity to persevere in the face of challenges, uncertainty, and hardship. Although these projects were completed amid a global pandemic, they are no less impressive in content and scope than projects students have completed under less dire circumstances.

We are proud of the students admirably representing their Phi Theta Kappa chapters who accepted the challenge to develop, implement, and write about their College Projects this year. They are indeed engaging in leadership and service that will positively impact their campus communities and benefit the faculty, staff, and students at their colleges. We offer a special congratulations to the chapters whose works are published in this year's journal. Your published projects underscore the fact that community college students are strong and committed leaders, dedicated servants, and active and engaged scholars. We are honored to include your work in the inaugural edition of *Change Makers*.

With sincere pride,



**Johannah B. Williams, Ph.D.**

Associate Vice President of STEM & Workforce Programs  
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

# About the College Project

The Phi Theta Kappa College Project is designed to engage students in leadership and service that support their college's mission and establish a positive rapport with the college administration. The process of completing the College Project fosters student growth and helps fulfill our mission to provide college students opportunities to grow as scholars and leaders.

## Learning Outcomes

Planning, developing, and implementing a College Project contributes to personal, professional, and soft-skills development. It also provides opportunities for students to have a positive impact on their college campuses by implementing projects that support the college's mission.

Members who engage in the development and implementation of a College Project will be able to:

1. Design, organize, and implement a plan of action that results in a project that supports their college's mission.
2. Demonstrate leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, and reflective skills throughout the project process.
3. Form and develop teams that collaborate and communicate with college administrators to determine and implement an appropriate project.
4. Engage in professional written and verbal communication.
5. Provide evidence of project impact using quantitative and qualitative assessments.
6. Compile a report using clear, correct, and effective language.

Achievement of these learning outcomes builds the analytic and collaborative problem-solving and leadership skills necessary and valued in advanced academic pursuits, workplaces, and communities.

# Editorial Board

The *Change Makers* Editorial Board is comprised of officers of Phi Theta Kappa's Association of Chapter Advisors (ACA). The ACA board includes four ACA officers, one from each of Phi Theta Kappa's four divisions. ACA officers are responsible for providing feedback to Phi Theta Kappa Headquarters staff on a variety of Society programs and priorities. The ACA board is made up of Phi Theta Kappa chapter advisors. ACA officers are nominated and elected by fellow Phi Theta Kappa advisors.

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# Approaching Environmental Sustainability and Reducing Campus Waste in a Global Pandemic

Alpha Rho Pi Chapter  
Northwestern Michigan College  
*Traverse City, Michigan*

## Abstract

Our College Project focused on environmental sustainability improvements for our campus. Our desire to impact our campus environment aligns with both the mission and vision of our institution, which encompass lifelong learning opportunities and a preparedness to meet future needs of our communities. We met with our new college president, Dr. Nick Nissley, in February to share perspectives on environmental issues. We witnessed the immense amount of waste COVID-19 safety protocols were producing, and we sought to actively work toward a more sustainable alternative. We met with Dr. Nissley again in April to discuss how the campus closure and shift to online learning were impacting us, as well as our suggestions for improving campus sustainability and reducing campus waste. Our first goal was to create reusable face masks for students. Our passion for environmental sustainability gave us encouragement to ask for a garden space on campus. Additionally, we planned to confront single-use utensil and food containers at our cafeteria on campus. Finally, we encouraged our entire community to explore zero waste living by hosting a screening of *The Clean Bin Project*.

## Planning

At our first meeting with President Nissley, we provided lunch using all compostable tableware (Figure 1). These items were purchased with chapter funds to demonstrate our commitment





Figure 1

to more sustainable practices on our campus. He was thrilled we were interested in pursuing green initiatives and offered his encouragement and full support. In March, our chapter president shared with us the documentary *The Story of Stuff*. This film inspired us to look for opportunities to reduce both personal and campus waste and led us to discover another film, *The Clean Bin Project*, which we screened for our community in November.

During a brainstorming session on ways we could promote change, Vice President of Leadership Lydia Henion asked if we could sew masks. Chapter President Amber Marsh then reached out to local seamstresses and organized sewing bees to create reusable masks for students. We presented our plan of action to the campus risk team demonstrating how we could meet safely and adhere to safety protocols for the sewing bees. A request of college staff for fabric donations provided required materials for all four sessions. We collaborated with our residence hall staff to ensure we produced enough masks for all students living on campus.

We requested the vice president of student services and technologies to provide a tour of Northwestern Michigan College's (NMC) new West Hall Innovation Center, which includes our new cafeteria, prior to its opening fall semester.

We knew the cafeteria was a large source of waste and wanted to know how they were considering innovation with regard to waste reduction. A meeting with Food Service Director Chad Schenkleburger advanced our discussion for increasing reusable and compostable materials in the cafe. He also expressed his support for a campus garden. Inspired by our concept for a campus garden, a faculty and staff team spent their professional development day expanding on our idea, giving new life to our project.

## Leadership Development

When the pandemic shut down our campus, we immediately shifted to Zoom meetings and spent time on interpersonal skill building. Each chapter member took the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, StrengthsFinder, and the Hundred Acre Woods inventory to explore who we are and how we work, communicate, and lead together. Understanding each

other's mindset and communication preferences not only helped us work better as a team, but it also showed us the necessity of adapting while working with other individuals. This knowledge proved valuable as Amber reached out to "Seamstresses for Safety," a group devoted to sewing masks for community members and children across the state. Amber petitioned the group for volunteers, coordinated with campus facilities to secure a space for our sewing bees while adhering to our campus' COVID-19 restrictions, and requested fabric donations from the community. These sewing bees contributed to learning, dare we say mastering, a new skill, SEWING! To accomplish this goal, we relied heavily on our new understanding of strengths and communication differences to work as a team to provide masks for our students. Vice President of Scholarship Gabe Hanna gave a standout performance as he took masks home to complete between sewing bees.

Another way we developed leadership skills and abilities was through sharing the responsibilities for each step of our project. For example, Amber connected with the seamstress group, Lydia framed our concerns with cafeteria waste that led to our discussion, and Alex and Lydia introduced *The Clean Bin Project* and facilitated

the discussion afterward, highlighting how they personally enact recycling, reuse, and reduction of their household waste.

## Collaboration

A total of four sewing bees were held on campus to benefit NMC dorm residents. Initial communication with college administration and NMC's risk management team enabled us to move forward with our project while adhering to proper COVID-19 precautions. Our chapter collaborated with the aforementioned sewing group for guidance with our sewing bees. Amber communicated with campus facilities management, and we were able to secure a large, recently vacated space on campus that would allow us to maintain proper social distancing requirements. We disseminated weekly correspondence with our Phi Theta Kappa community, bringing in a respectable number of volunteers.

Prior to the beginning of the fall semester, Alpha Rho Pi members secured a private tour of the new West Hall Innovation Center, which includes our dining service. This allowed us to learn about the functionality of the building and uncover a need for an evolution in our cafeteria. We were given the opportunity to speak with our director of food services, where we addressed the single-use container system and the necessity of reusable or compostable alternatives. Our chapter then participated in the Michigan Campus Earth Day 50.5, a Michigan Campus Sustainability Collective where attendees engaged in a virtual event with faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders. This event helped provide a course of action for campuses to create awareness and advance environmental and social justice. One way to address these issues would be to discover ways to improve food security on campus, which tied in well with our desire to have a garden on campus. A meeting with several Student Government Association members led to collaboration with NMC staff and faculty, and we were able to form a general outline for moving forward with this goal.

For our final event, we hosted a virtual screening of *The Clean Bin Project*. This event was made possible by Chapter President Amber Marsh reaching out to the creators of the documentary to discuss screening requirements, public relations



Figure 2

toolkits, and the possibility of our Educational Media Technology Department purchasing the DVD for the campus. Having communicated with NMC's staff about promoting environmental awareness, our chapter then reached out to the student body. With Vice President of Public Relations Alex Swainston promoting this event on social media, we were able to reach a wide range of individuals. Officers, community members, and NMC's President Nick Nissley all attended. President Nissley expressed how inspired he was to share the experience with others, watching it again the very next night with his family.

## Impact

Quantitative outcomes for the four sewing bees are measured in 260 masks being sewn for the 230 residents for the Fall of 2020 (Figure 2). We worked collaboratively with chapter officers, members, prospective members, community members, NMC staff, and a prior Michigan Regional Officer to create the masks. A note accompanied each of the masks with instructions on use and words of encouragement from our chapter. This gave us an opportunity to provide visibility for our organization to the resident student body, allowing us to grow stronger relationships with them and our community.

An agreement to change the food packaging for NMC's Innovation Center Cafeteria to compostable and eventually reusable products was made with the director of food services. Witnessing the changes on campus when we return to in-person learning will be invigorating. Along with this, our proposal for a campus garden moved toward developmental stages. Our goal for this garden is to have a wide impact across the campus community. Our garden will be a beautiful addition to campus, a great place for art students to draw inspiration, and will serve as a food source for the cafeteria, culinary program, and food pantry.

Through our promotion of *The Clean Bin Project* virtual screening, we were able to reach over 3,700 people on social media. A smaller number of guests including NMC's President Nissley were in attendance. The evening's hosts were Alpha Rho Pi officers Lydia Henion and Alex Swainston. Together they researched sustainability tips and tricks and held a discussion following the event. For our chapter, this event was brimming with the opportunity of leadership growth, presentation skills, research and critical thinking development, and public relations improvements. Facilitating the discussion after the screening gave both Alex and Lydia a chance to talk about the environmentally conscious choices and sacrifices they make daily to a broader audience. This was inspiring for others to create less waste and positively impact the world around them. Hearing feedback from the people who attended gave our PTK members the reassurance that our objectives had been met.

Utilizing our learned skills, the Alpha Rho Pi Chapter was able to work steadfastly on tackling our College Project. This team is leaving a legacy of positive change on our campus, and we have learned the skills to build relationships while working toward the common goal of sustainable practices in our communities. The quantitative effect cannot be fully measured quite yet, but our qualitative outcomes have had a ripple effect within our community. For that, this chapter team is proud to have created such an impactful project.

# Improving Access to Financial Resources

Upsilon Pi Chapter  
John A. Logan College  
*Carterville, Illinois*

## Abstract

Based on a conversation with the college president and subsequent meetings with other administrators, our chapter set out to increase current students' awareness of scholarships offered by the college's foundation. Historically, too many scholarships have gone unawarded because no one applied for them. Simultaneously, tuition costs have been a hindrance preventing some students from completing their degree or certificate. Although first-time students entering college immediately after high school typically applied for scholarships, second-year students, including adult learners, were less likely to apply. We worked with employees from several offices to increase awareness about the foundation's scholarships.

## Planning

The chapter reviewed the college's mission, vision, goals, and core values to prepare for our first meeting with the college's two vice presidents. The meeting focused on a comment the college president made during the annual update meeting with our chapter president. He expressed concern about students' awareness of the financial resources available to help them afford college. The vice president of business agreed with the concern, noting that in 2019, \$1 million in scholarships were not awarded because there were no applicants. The vice president of instruction said that the college does not want cost to be a barrier that prevents students from attending or completing a community college program. The chapter and administration agreed that increasing students' awareness of the foundation's scholarships addresses the college's mission to provide "accessible educational programs."

Next, we worked with the director of scholarships from the foundation to strategize ways to improve the awareness of scholarships among students. We immediately realized that we needed to determine the current level of student familiarity with scholarships, the foundation, and other financial resources available at the college. Working with the scholarship director, a statistics instructor, and the institutional research director, we created and administered a student survey at our college's SpringFest event at the end of February 2020. After the college shifted all classes to online during spring break in March, we worked with the associate dean of educational technology to make the survey available on the opening page when students log in to the learning management system. In the meantime, the scholarship director left the college for another job, so our interactions with the foundation shifted to their executive director. After students completed the survey, we compiled the results and analyzed them with both vice presidents and the foundation executive director.

The 240 students who completed the survey indicated that the top three barriers hindering their ability to apply for foundation scholarships were determining eligibility, not knowing who to contact when they have questions, and lack of awareness about the foundation. The executive director of the foundation noted that updates were already underway to address eligibility questions, so we focused on awareness about the foundation, including contact information for questions about scholarships. The shift to online-only classes and services in March directed our attention to how students access information about scholarships and other financial assistance online. We discovered that there was no cross-linking between the foundation's webpage and the financial aid office's webpage. Further chapter discussions with administration revealed that students intuitively connect these areas together along with the bursar's office, specifically their payment plan – students view all three as financial resources. The vice president of business was grateful for that insight, saying he had not considered that before this project but now realized it made sense and encouraged us to pursue linking the three together.

We met with the college's webmaster, foundation executive director, bursar, financial aid director, and associate dean of admissions to plan cross-linking the webpages for the foundation, financial aid, and bursar. The first step was creating a bursar webpage, which had not previously existed because students accessed tuition payment information through the student portal. Our project brought together the current webmaster and current bursar, who created a bursar page on the college's website. The associate dean of admissions expressed the need for students to access basic information about financial resources from the admissions webpage, and the foundation executive director showed a webpage from another community college that included elements our webpage needed. Chapter members agreed that this kind of webpage would help students access the information that is currently in multiple areas. The webmaster drafted a "Paying for College" webpage that gave a brief description and link to the bursar's office, financial aid, and foundation. The chapter, foundation executive director, bursar, financial aid director, and admissions associate dean provided feedback and final approval when the page was completed and added to the admissions webpage. Our chapter advisor emailed all employees on our behalf to inform them about the new webpage and request that they include a link to this page when communicating reminders to students about registering for classes and paying tuition. We also worked with the director of college relations to promote the page on the college's social media and include it when he sends text messages to students about paying tuition.

## Leadership Development

Members attended virtual Catalyst and virtual Regional Convention and Honors Institute to gain leadership skills development. Members developed communication skills during meetings with administration and other college employees. Members learned the role that preparing a meeting agenda and following up with meeting notes has in keeping communication organized and moving a project forward. While preparing the student survey, members learned how to write survey questions and response options that would best gather the information we needed.



## Collaboration

During weekly chapter meetings, members, officers, and our chapter advisor discussed project tasks, new developments, and next steps. To determine the project, we collaborated with the college president and both vice presidents. After the project was selected, we collaborated with both vice presidents, scholarships director, foundation executive director, statistics instructor, institutional research director, and associate dean of educational technology to create, administer, and analyze a student survey. To implement the "Paying for College" webpage, we collaborated with both vice presidents, webmaster, foundation executive director, financial aid director, bursar, and associate dean of admissions. All employees were informed about the new webpage, and the director of college relations promoted it on the college's social media. The college administration expressed their satisfaction with the page and how it will help students access all the college's financial resources available to them.

## Impact

The survey was completed by 240 students, and their input provided direction for the project. The social media post that promoted the new webpage garnered 455 engagements. College administration and other employees expressed satisfaction with the addition of the webpage. Specifically, an academic advisor was happy to send a link to the page to a student on the day it became available.

Reflecting on the project, we experienced firsthand the dedication that administrators and employees have for serving students and making higher education accessible to all income levels. Even after all college operations changed to online, we maintained momentum on the project, but all our active members graduated in the spring. Our chapter, like most other student groups at our college, typically regains activity in the first month of the fall semester. However, there was an electrical fire on the first day of fall classes that affected the entire semester by eliminating a space of 175,000 square feet. This event, on top of COVID, derailed our usual work of cultivating members into active participation. In October, a new member stepped forward to actively

participate in our projects. This high school junior became chapter president and worked with our chapter advisor to continue the project. All of this taught us that even when we fall short of meeting our original goals, we can still succeed. We adapted to our situation, revised our goals, and achieved success by moving forward instead of giving up.

# Hosting a Student Resource Fair

Omicron Psi Chapter  
Grayson College  
*Denison, Texas*

## Abstract

Members reviewed the college's mission and strategic plan in preparation to meet with the college president. Understanding community college students' tremendous economic barriers, our college president was concerned the pandemic had exacerbated those challenges. To help mitigate these hardships and support the college's mission, the president and chapter members decided to plan a resource fair to connect students with campus and community resources. The chapter was tasked with coordinating all participating campus departments and community agencies, marketing the event, and serving as host. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the resource fair had to be planned, marketed, and conducted virtually. Members worked closely with administrators to coordinate the various college departments that provide student support services, as well as to identify community partners that offer services most applicable to student needs. Members collaborated with the marketing department to promote the event through all available communication channels to best reach students. This work also improved members' communication and networking skills. Members and administrators hoped these efforts to connect Grayson College (GC) students with available resources would help students overcome economic barriers and persist in meeting their educational goals. Equally important in this project was strengthening the relationship between members and the college's administration.

## Planning

Before meeting with the college president, members discussed GC's mission and strategic plan. "The mission of Grayson College is student success." The strategic plan, "Connect, Commit,

Complete,” is designed to help GC connect with students early so they may commit to and complete their academic goals. The team understood any project implemented would center on these objectives.

Our community reported a 15.7% food insecurity rate, which is higher than the 12.9% national average. This number increases to 42% for community college students. Understanding that food insecurity is an indicator of economic barriers, and that these challenges increased due to the pandemic, the president asked members to host a resource fair. Members agreed this would be valuable to students and would support the college’s mission and strategic plan. The president directed members to coordinate with the dean of student affairs (dean) to plan and implement the project.

The team worked with the dean to develop the following project objectives:

1. Host a resource fair to share available college and community resources with students.
2. Identify resources most beneficial to our students.
3. Develop marketing materials to promote the resource fair.
4. Improve members’ communication and networking skills.
5. Develop a stronger relationship between college administrators and chapter members.

When brainstorming about the project, the dean explained that all parts of the planning and implementation would need to happen virtually. Furthermore, the dean suggested members collaborate with the student life director (SLD)

and the director of counseling and social services (DCSS) for both support and guidance on identifying the campus and community resources most relevant to students’ needs. Members asked the dean for guidance on marketing the event, and she connected them with the marketing director.

Members met with the SLD and DCSS to plan the event’s structure and select the date. Members decided to host the event as a Zoom webinar and start with a select panel from participating campus resources and community partners. A PTK member would serve as moderator and ask questions of each panel member that would allow them to highlight information on the resources available and how to access them. After the panel, attendees would have the opportunity to meet with representatives from GC resource programs and community partners to learn more about specific services offered. Members asked the DCSS for contact information for community partners so they could invite them to participate in the resource fair. The SLD and DCSS asked for biweekly updates on the planning process.

In one of the weekly meetings with the dean, members shared the contact list the DCSS had provided. Most of the agencies listed were affiliated with United Way (UW), and the dean suggested members work through UW to extend invitations. The dean arranged a meeting between members and the UW director, who agreed to help with the outreach.

Members met with the marketing director to receive training on effective event marketing. The marketing director assisted in creating the graphics used on social media and helped the chapter promote the event through the college’s social media channels, while members promoted it on the chapter’s social media, GC Student Life Facebook group, and on their personal social media pages. Members sent event information to all GC employees and asked faculty to share the information with students. Finally, members asked the marketing director to post an announcement in GC’s learning management system.

Members reached out to the GC Foundation to ask if they would donate a prize for a drawing to



incentivize student attendance at the event. The foundation offered two \$500 scholarships.

While working with community partners, UW, and 211 members, we were surprised to learn about the many different services that were available and sought to promote them beyond the resource fair. When meeting with the dean, members asked if they could create TikTok videos to promote each, hoping TikToks would connect better with students. The dean supported the idea and asked for the videos to be added to the project's marketing plan. Members collaborated with an alumna who had experience creating TikToks.

## Leadership Development

Members took on significant roles to plan and implement this project. COVID-19 restrictions required a virtual event, so members received training from advisors on using Zoom webinar and breakout rooms to prepare for hosting the resource fair. Members were responsible for maintaining communication with the dean, SLD, and DCSS throughout the project. Responding to members' request for training, the marketing director taught members how to market a virtual event to the student population successfully. Later, she provided training on how to increase visibility for the TikTok videos. An alumna trained members on how to film their clips to create a cohesive video. Select members were responsible for coordinating social media posts based on their training, and all members were tasked with sharing the posts on their personal social media accounts. A member was responsible for sending event information to GC employees and ensuring an announcement was posted in the learning management system.

Advisors trained the event moderator on how best to manage the panel participants, when to ask follow-up questions, and how to manage time. The DCSS taught members how to identify participants successfully based on the resources GC students requested most. Members were responsible for identifying campus resources and inviting representatives to participate in the event. One member served as the liaison to UW to help identify community partners to join the resource fair.

## Collaboration

Members worked closely with the dean throughout the project, meeting virtually with her weekly to provide status updates and receive feedback. Members also worked closely with the SLD and DCSS, meeting virtually with them twice a month to provide updates and receive guidance on the campus resources and community partners being selected to participate. Members met virtually with the UW director for an initial introduction and planning meeting. Afterward, members stayed in contact via weekly emails to coordinate invitations to and confirmations from community partners. The marketing director met virtually with members on three occasions to provide training and assist the chapter in the development of marketing materials. Members met virtually with the alumna to receive guidance on recording the TikTok video clips and submitted those clips to her via text message. Members communicated with campus representatives and community partners via email to extend invitations, provide event details, and share the Zoom information for the event.

Members communicated with the student population through social media posts on both the college's and chapter's social media channels, as well as their personal accounts. Members answered questions from GC employees and students via email. Some professors offered their students extra credit for attending the event. Members shared attendee lists with those professors via email. Members also collaborated with the GC Foundation about the two \$500 scholarships they offered. These scholarships were awarded to attendees through a drawing. Members corresponded with the foundation and with the winners via email.

After the resource fair, members met virtually with the dean to debrief and reflect on the project.

## Impact

The project's greatest outcome was connecting students with campus and community resources. Financial barriers often disrupt students' educational progress, so informing them about available resources, many of which were unknown to them, could help them overcome these barriers and persist.

Seventeen campus representatives and community partners participated in the resource fair to share their information and sign students up for their services. Fifty students attended the two-hour event, and many contacted participating agencies after the event for assistance. The two TikTok videos received over 600 views, helping to spread this information across campus and into the community.

The chapter received positive feedback via email from all participants in the resource fair. In fact, the UW director asked the dean if we could host the event again in the spring, and the college administration expressed interest in supporting another fair.

Members improved their communication and networking skills throughout the project. More importantly, though, members appreciated the opportunity to serve fellow students and help them mitigate challenges that could prevent them from achieving their educational goals. The project also enabled members to strengthen the existing relationships with the college president and dean. It provided opportunities to work with the SLD and DCSS, as well as the marketing director, helping to build stronger champions for Phi Theta Kappa. All of this contributed to the support of the college's mission and the strategic plan by helping to "connect" with students so they may "complete."

# Establishing Institutionalized Systems to Mitigate Students' Basic Need Insecurities

Phi Beta Chapter  
College of DuPage  
*Glen Ellyn, Illinois*

## Abstract

Our committee endeavored to foster lasting and supportive relationships with college administration and the community at large. College administration charged our chapter with the mission of mitigating basic needs insecurities (BNI). As proposed by administration, we conducted research to develop a proposal and establish sustainable solutions for a permanent BNI committee consisting of administrators, faculty, staff, and students; free healthcare services and legal clinics; pantry drop off days and assistance with food insecurity; childcare; housing; transportation; emergency aid; free textbooks; and educational materials. We are centralizing BNI resources on campus and externally by developing a database to be included on the college website. We envision our project serving as a foundation for this work to be built upon and carried on for years to come to help overcome barriers for our students.

## Planning

Our chapter scheduled meetings with our college president, assistant provost, and dean of students. In preparation for our first meeting, we studied our college's strategic plan, core values, and all materials pertaining to our college's mission, both historically and as it was shaped today. We spoke with those three administrators regarding the PTK college project mission and asked how our chapter could best serve the college. They collectively proposed that Phi Theta Kappa conduct research to develop a proposal for supporting students' top 10 basic needs, establish initiatives for students to spread

awareness, create solutions, mitigate basic need insecurities in our college community, and help create a centralized website with basic needs assistance resources on campus and in the community. Building on last year's project, college administration also asked that we collaborate with the Office of Financial Assistance to launch a campaign promoting financial literacy resources available on campus as one of the ways of supporting BNI for students. Our committee reported to these administrators once every three weeks, and they continually shaped and helped build all aspects of the project.

Our College Project Committee consisted of officers, members, and provisional members. We held weekly meetings, developed strategies to accomplish said goals, conducted research, and created institutionalized solutions. We formulated our project into a research study and pursued opportunities to publish our work in our college's research repository. This initiated an awareness, paving the way for further study and work to mitigate BNI. We gathered cross-campus support for our project and created a research-based proposal by developing relationships with administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

### Leadership Development

We engaged in the literature review process, examining existing research on BNI and policy by conducting database and web searches, studying literature and articles on the topic, and informing our survey questions based on our findings. We also worked with experts on campus to inform our work. These experts included faculty, librarians, the Open Education Resource

Committee, and College of DuPage (COD) Pantry staff. We attended BNI conferences and webinars hosted by the Association of Community College Trustees and worked with COD's Pantry staff to gather information about BNI initiatives worldwide, which informed our research practices and interview questions' formulation. A faculty member we collaborated with was working on a doctoral dissertation on BNI on college campuses and shared with us best practices pertaining to BNI advocacy and manifestations. We plan to continue seeking advice from faculty and research experts to inform our work and will reach out to experts at other colleges.

In preparation for members to lead the Student Success and Wellness Fair sessions, our officers reviewed general guidelines and best practices for presentation. We circulated information on social media and created group chats and email lists to increase involvement. Members reached out to faculty members regarding the project and requested that they advise the work of our committee and help us reach students. Faculty members promoted our project and encouraged participation in our research study and the Student Wellness Fair.

### Collaboration

We collaborated with Student Council, student clubs, and cohorts to promote our project initiatives. These groups launched an email and multimedia campaign, distributing the survey and circulating flyers. In our regular reports to the College President, we mentioned that the hotspots loaned out to students by the college were maxing out. Immediately upon sharing this information with administrators, action was taken to resolve the issue, enabling hundreds of students to access the internet for spring classes. We requested for the director of athletics to require athletes to attend the Student Wellness Fair, complete our BNI survey, and utilize Fair recordings, which he enthusiastically supported. We also promoted resources reaching 500+ students regarding the availability of free hotspots, laptop loans, and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funding covering tuition costs.

We contributed to the Illinois Board of Higher Education's Strategic Plan for all sectors of Higher

Education by advocating for basic needs policy and for the plan's priorities to be centered on affordability and access. We also contributed to the Illinois Advocacy Day Committee by proposing that BNI under the pandemic be addressed at this year's Advocacy Day, an event where all Illinois community college students visit legislators from the Illinois General Assembly to advocate for state funding to support community college programs.

Committee members reached out to faculty members and requested their input on project initiatives, asked them to share information with their students regarding the overall project and Student Wellness Fair, and encouraged them to complete the BNI Survey. The college newspaper published an article about our project, promoting our research study and work with the administration. We also spoke with the college's general counsel regarding legal clinics and are learning more about how free legal clinics could potentially be implemented at COD.

Our committee conducted 40+ student, faculty, and staff interviews and collected 110+ student survey responses. We are in the process of scheduling interviews with other colleges regarding basic need initiatives that exist on their campuses that we could potentially bring to COD (i.e. legal clinics).

Our project evolved into an institution-wide effort with cross-campus support. All individuals we interviewed — students, faculty, and staff — were willing to include their names on our proposal as supporters and collaborators. We met with the Office of Financial Assistance to discuss financial literacy as a way to equip students with tools to manage finances. At their request, we created a video series to promote free resources offered by their office to students. We also created guidelines to help students navigate and maximize these resources. These guidelines will be published on COD's website. Through a partnership with the Open Education Resource (OER) Committee, we are promoting free textbooks and resources for students, spreading awareness about OER, and conducting research. We are working with the Career Services Center for our members to serve in leadership roles while receiving service-learning credit required for courses.

## Impact

We organized a three-day Student Success and Wellness Fair, a critical event during which students learned about basic needs and resources available to them on campus and in the community. We developed a marketing campaign and connected with faculty members, all COD's Offices (i.e. Student Life), our college's Marketing and Community Relations Departments, student clubs, and cohorts.

Wellness Fair recordings will be distributed to all 27,000 students in early spring through several channels including faculty members; all COD's offices and departments; college newspaper; department newsletters; and student clubs and cohorts. We'll be tracking and recording views. Our committee is also planning a student led Basic Needs Awareness Panel in spring to present our project findings and increase awareness surrounding assistance and resources on campus and in the community. We identified students' most critical needs through the creation of a comprehensive research study that entailed interviewing and surveying faculty, staff, students, and other colleges. We also searched our college library's peer-reviewed article databases and worked with community experts in the area of BNI.

We developed a proposal for a BNI statement to be included in our college's strategic objectives, admissions packet, and faculty syllabi through interviewing faculty, staff, and students collegewide. We spoke with college constituents who served on the Strategic Long-Range Planning Committee and collaborated with the Admissions Office to pursue these ideas further.

Another completely new initiative we identified through research was the need for resources to help individuals recover from addiction. We are working with the Counseling and Advising Office to outline resources that are to be made available on this topic on campus and externally. Furthermore, our committee requested that the Career Services Center administer BNI Assessments to students who visit the Center. Shortly afterward, the Center began administering our assessment and will share the data collected with us.

We are publishing our project as an internal research study through COD's Digital Commons, an open-resource repository of scholarly and creative works. We are creating a PTK website within the Commons, which will enable our Chapter to publish future research as well. We also developed a proposal that a basic needs donation area be included in the Multicultural Center plans, which we presented to the Multicultural Center Committee, and it was approved.

At the state level, we contributed our research to the Illinois Board of Higher Education's Strategic Plan. Because we took the initiative, we were able to help develop a policy to establish student BNI and emergency aid programs statewide in order to make a broader impact. We will present our final report to the administration in the spring, at the Student Library Research Symposium held at COD, and at the Illinois Honors Conference. Our project serves as a testament to COD and administration that our chapter can wholeheartedly be depended on to rise and serve COD.

# Establishing an Alumni Program

Lambda Theta Chapter  
Temple College  
*Temple, Texas*

## Abstract

Our College Project was to establish an alumni program for our college by December 2020. The alumni program would allow the college to provide continuous education and career support to former students while simultaneously strengthening the ties between these students and Temple College. Our project would include laying the foundation of the alumni program, including creating a name, designing a logo, writing bylaws, appointing board members, and designing a website. It was also agreed that our chapter would continue to work with the administration and the alumni program during the first year after establishment. We collaborated with the college president, the vice president of development and executive director of the Temple College Foundation, the director of marketing and media relations, and the senior data analyst of Temple College. We also received guidance from the Austin Community College alumni director, a Lee College alliance board member, and the Tyler Junior College alumni director.

## Planning

After researching the college's mission statement, our chapter officers decided to echo this statement through helping foster student success by providing quality lifelong learning and enrichment experiences that empower students to achieve their dreams and aspirations. After brainstorming project ideas, our chapter officers coordinated a meeting to present our ideas to the college president. While meeting with the college president and evaluating our core objectives, we agreed that establishing an alumni network would support our college mission statement while also filling a need. Our chapter officers and the college president were equally ecstatic about the project. Our college president directed us to the vice president of development to assist



us through the necessary steps of establishing a foundation for the alumni program. We worked closely with the vice president of development on every aspect of this project. We also worked with the director of marketing and media relations and the senior data analyst of Temple College. The director of media and marketing and the Temple College design team assisted us in gathering and creating content for an alumni website, designed the official logo, and supported us in all aspects. The college's senior data analyst helped us send out a survey to former students. This survey gave us valuable insight on aspects we need to consider in our future plans such as membership fees, incentives, and the development of a list of former students who expressed interest in serving on the advisory board.

We also collaborated with the Austin Community College alumni director, a Lee College alliance board member, and the Tyler Junior College alumni director. This collaboration took place in three separate meetings where we discussed the pitfalls and successes that were encountered during the establishment of their respective alumni programs.

## Leadership Development

This project included many components: creating a name, designing a logo, surveying past graduates, appointing an advisory board, and drafting alumni bylaws. In all honesty, this intricate process of laying a foundation for such a massive program was entirely new to our officers. Each component related to building this foundation required an entirely different skill set. With an enthusiastic spirit, our officers embraced these new opportunities to grow and challenge themselves as leaders.

Components involved included utilizing communication skills through conversation and writing, developing the ability to give and receive feedback, and practicing flexibility with fellow students and administration. The senior data analyst assisted us in selecting the appropriate target audience, demographic questions, topics to include, question phrasing, and analysis of the results. This new experience of surveys enhanced our team's research skills. The survey resulted in 400 responses from former students within the last five years. After analyzing the survey

responses, meetings were set up with people who expressed interest in being a potential board member. During these virtual meetings, officers were able to practice public speaking, the vetting of potential board members, and the opportunity to network. While drafting the bylaws, the officers wanted to allow for flexibility for future board members and potential events while also keeping the college's directive in mind.

## Collaboration

In July of 2020, our chapter officers began brainstorming ideas for our college project. After brainstorming, our chapter officers and chapter advisor held an initial meeting with our college president to present our top three ideas. Our ideas launched a discussion of the campus' long-term aspirations, resulting in the college president's request that the chapter assist the vice president of development and executive director of the Temple College Foundation with the establishment of an alumni program. Our college president connected us with the vice president of development.

The development of this project began in September 2020. Our chapter officers held weekly meetings with the vice president of development and executive director of the Temple College Foundation, the director of marketing and media relations, and the senior data analyst of Temple College. In the initial meeting with the vice president of development, we were informed of the college's direction for the project and tasked to create a timeline of goals and objectives. Once a timeline was set into place, the vice president of development tasked our officers with naming the alumni program and allowed our team to have freedom during the creative stage. Our officer team took this task seriously and created a name that best represented the college's direction, Temple College Alumni and Friends. The word "Friends" was chosen by the officer team to reflect the many friends of Temple College, for example families of former students, businesses, and community members. The name was quickly approved by the college president. The Temple College design team collaborated with our officer team in the creation of the official logo of Temple College Alumni and Friends (Figure 1). The logo was approved by the college president. Although the name and logo process moved



very quickly, we realized that the next stages of the project, drafting bylaws and appointing board members, would take more time than initially estimated. This caused us to push our launch date out to Spring 2021 Commencement instead of December 2020. With this extra time, we were able to coordinate meetings with the Austin Community College alumni director, a Lee College alliance board member, and the Tyler Junior College alumni director to gather information about drafting bylaws, appointing board members, and learning about the success and pitfalls that they had encountered.

Throughout this project, our chapter had the opportunity to work closely with the college president, vice president of development and executive director of the Temple College Foundation, director of marketing and media relations, senior data analyst, various faculty and staff, and members of the community. We also received guidance from the Austin Community College alumni director, a Lee College alliance board member, and the Tyler Junior College alumni director.

## Impact

The chapter's goal for our College Project was to lay a foundation for Temple College Alumni and Friends. A portion of this included making decisions about incentives for members, membership fees, and advisory board members. This project can be quantitatively and qualitatively measured by data collected from surveying students who graduated over the last five years.

Our survey was sent to 3,290 former students, and we received 479 survey participants, giving us a 15% return rate on the survey. From the responses, we had roughly 91% express interest in joining a Temple College Alumni program. The remaining 9% were asked to leave comments explaining why they would not consider joining an alumni program. Popular responses included "not interested" and "I don't have time or money." However, some of the less common comments gave us valuable information to consider such as "What's the point?" and "It is a waste and there is no benefit to me." When we asked students to consider what benefits they find most beneficial as an alumni member, 66% said



Figure 1

they would be interested in networking events, 61% said they would be interested in discounts on products and services, 57% said they would be interested in mentoring opportunities, and 47% said they would be interested in social events. Survey participants were asked about the maximum dollar amount they would pay for yearly and lifetime membership fees. When it came to yearly membership, responses varied from \$0-\$100. However, 49% of responses selected \$20, and the most common response made about yearly membership fees was "depends on what's included." When asked about lifetime membership fees, responses ranged from \$0-\$500, yet 57% said they would be willing to pay \$100. Comments from participants concerning lifetime memberships included "\$50 if it's valuable for me" and "it would depend on what the membership includes and where the funds would be used." Finally, 68% of students surveyed expressed interest in serving as an alumni board member, and 186 participants said they wished to be contacted about this opportunity. We were excited for a chance to show our pride for Temple College and solidify a positive relationship with our college administration and staff. Our officer team learned that leaders ask for assistance when learning new skill sets. This positive journey was a huge learning experience that provided knowledge we could not have gained in the classroom. It was a real-world experience in patience, endurance, flexibility, and teamwork. Our chapter president described her experience with this project as being "transformative to my leadership abilities."

# Helping Meet the Needs of Our Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Iota Zeta Chapter  
Northeast Mississippi Community College  
*Booneville, Mississippi*

## Abstract

Our administrators asked Iota Zeta to help the college better meet the needs of our students during the COVID-19 pandemic. We accepted the challenge by adopting a four-part College Project (CP):

1. "Run with Ricky" virtual 5k raised \$8,000 toward constructing an outdoor classroom/pavilion where classes and student groups can safely meet.
2. Tiger PAC 2.0 modified an existing mentoring program between Phi Theta Kappa and Special Population students by sponsoring virtual events that allowed mentors and mentees to interact.
3. Northeast Mississippi Community College (NEMCC) Community Canvas Course offered alternatives to campus visits by providing online information to the community, prospective students, and parents of current students.
4. Tiger Den Food Drive collected necessities for students and their families facing economic hardship during the pandemic.

## Planning

The College Project (CP) team began organizing via Zoom in June. Our focus quickly turned to our administration's efforts to maintain student services despite COVID-19 restrictions. Since the campus remained closed, we communicated with the vice president of instruction (VPI) and vice president of student services (VSS) through emails and one virtual

meeting. As we worked with these administrators exploring possible projects during a pandemic, we increasingly concentrated on how our chapter could help meet student needs while supporting the college mission during this difficult time.

Due to the pandemic, students had limited access to the union and cafeteria, so discussions with the VSS focused on increasing outdoor gathering places. We offered to raise money to construct such an area. As school opened in August, we met face-to-face with our college president. He asked us to broaden our idea to an outdoor classroom/pavilion that could be used for both learning and gathering. To meet this goal, we needed a fundraiser we could complete with social distancing. After much deliberation, we chose "Run with Ricky," a virtual 5k named after our college president, an avid runner who enthusiastically promoted the event (Figure 1). We borrowed the idea from the Beta Tau Rho Chapter at Fletcher Technical Community College, who we met at Regional Convention, and their advice influenced our planning. The VSS also offered valuable insights.

Meanwhile, the counselor who administers services to Special Population students contacted us. Last year our chapter established a Phi Theta Kappa mentoring program with these students, but it relied on personal interaction. We accepted the challenge to alter the program so it could continue despite COVID-19 and worked closely with the counselor to find appropriate modifications to help them engage in campus life.

Our communications with the VPI led to the development of a Community Canvas Course to share important college information online with the community, prospective students, and parents of students in place of campus visits. Our planning involved meeting with the VPI about content and scheduling training with an eLearning specialist about course design.

Finally, our chapter continued its tradition of restocking the campus food pantry each fall. We collaborated with the instructors who oversee the project under the supervision of the VSS. When the administration decided to relocate the pantry, they asked us for assistance, which we provided.

## Leadership Development

Iota Zeta members emerged as leaders by helping maintain quality student services during the pandemic. To accomplish our four-part College Project (CP), we first learned the value of committees. The vice president of leadership delegated responsibilities for each component, monitored progress, and coordinated efforts.



Figure 1

Our biggest challenge was finding a fundraiser so we could make a meaningful contribution to building an outdoor classroom/pavilion. Generating revenue is one of our chapter's strengths, and we typically raise \$7,500-\$10,000 each semester with a sales project that was not available due to COVID-19 restrictions. Led by Vice President of Service Josh Haley, we researched many possibilities before deciding on a virtual 5k. We analyzed the necessary elements for success and realized we needed an attractive website with online registration. One of Josh's

strengths is his computer skills. With online tutorials, he taught himself to use a website builder and form creator. Another key to the project's success was the marketing committee studying and implementing creative promotion.

Tiger PAC, an existing mentoring program between Phi Theta Kappa and Special Population students, depended on gatherings now deemed unsafe. Recognizing these students needed even more support with changes necessitated by COVID-19, we met with the Special Populations counselor. Our goal was to discover safe alternatives that would allow us to help these students feel a part of our college community and offer support navigating an increasingly virtual learning environment. Building relationships between mentors and mentees under COVID-19 constraints required creative and strategic thinking, but our group met our goal by planning a Zoom movie night, organizing a socially distanced meal, and requiring mentors to maintain contact through phone calls or other electronic means. To evaluate these changes to the program, we learned how to write and administer surveys.

The committee developing the Community Canvas Course understood the importance of working closely with administrators to strategically plan course content. They received training in our learning management system from an eLearning specialist. As they faced specific issues, they sought assistance from instructors.

For the food drive, we built on past successes by relying on a collection method developed previously by our chapter. Our challenge was motivating members to participate. Previously, we accomplished this through friendly competition impractical in a virtual meeting. One of our strengths is a large membership, so we increased publicity to remind them of the problems faced by their fellow students due to COVID-19.

## Collaboration

From planning through completion, the College Project (CP) team communicated with administrators. Officers and advisors established contact with the vice president of instruction (VPI) and the vice president of student services

(VSS) in early summer. After discussing options, we agreed to provide financial support for an outdoor classroom/pavilion. This led to our biggest obstacle: finding a new fundraiser. We met this challenge with intensive research, including seeking advice from a sister chapter. As we developed plans for the virtual 5k, our team maintained contact with our college president and VSS, providing them with regular updates.

To meet the needs of our Special Population students during COVID-19, we met with the Special Population counselor to design programming that could create opportunities for mentors and mentees to bond. She and a Phi Theta Kappa advisor paired each participating Special Population student with a mentor. We also depended on her to help administer the evaluation survey.

The CP team worked with the vice president of instruction to develop the Community Canvas Course. She was pivotal in selecting this component and advising us on course content. Communication between the eLearning specialist and the Community Canvas Committee ensured quality site performance.

Our food drive depended on cooperating with a group of instructors who sponsor the pantry. They advised us on needed items. When the administration agreed to move the pantry to a more discreet location, the teachers asked us for assistance. Our CP team provided much of the manpower for relocation.

Primarily using electronic communication, we kept the administration, other stakeholders, and our chapter informed throughout the semester. By providing regular updates, they always knew the status of the various project components. The climax of the project was presenting an \$8,000 check to the college president for the outdoor classroom/pavilion (Figure 2).

## Impact

Iota Zeta aided the college's response to COVID-19 with four projects. The virtual 5k had 1,000 website visits, 301 participants, and 22 sponsors and raised \$8,000 for the outdoor classroom/pavilion. The Tiger Den Food Drive





Figure 2

saw 187 Phi Theta Kappa members donate approximately \$4,000 in essential goods, which helped 150 families.

The Tiger PAC 2.0 program enlisted 23 Phi Theta Kappa members to serve as mentors for 12 Special Population students. In a survey, the following percentages of mentees reported the program led to:

- A positive effect on their attitude toward school (41.7%).
- Greater interest in participating in campus life (41.7%).
- Higher comfort levels communicating with instructors (50%).
- Higher comfort levels communicating with students (58.3%).
- Higher comfort levels using Zoom for communication (58.3%).
- Improvement in their experience as a NEMCC student (66.7%).
- Greater ease communicating with others on campus (66.7%).
- More positivity about attending the college during COVID-19 (41.7%).

When asked, "What specifically about Tiger PAC 2.0 made the difference in your attitude?" one mentee responded, "It was good. It made me grow up more." Another answered, "What was

the most impactful part?" by stating, "Learning that all communication is good and to always listen to what someone has to say. I've learned to be comfortable around other people." Members participating in the program reflected on the meaningful impact they can have on those who struggle with socializing and reported enjoying their new connections.

Since the Community Canvas Course will not launch until spring, we do not have those outcomes. Its completion shows the chapter met all four goals to help the college meet the challenge of serving students during the pandemic. Additionally, the chapter saw unprecedented membership activity this semester by having 228 members participate in at least two service projects, many related to the CP.

Through our College Project, our team discovered the positive effects that hard work and determination can have on our community and campus. We learned that true leadership does not mean acting alone but instead cooperating with others. To bring about meaningful change, we now know to reach out to those in positions of responsibility and volunteer whatever we have to offer. The COVID-19 pandemic created many hardships, but we now realize those types of obstacles can lead to new opportunities. By rising to those challenges and joining others, our chapter was able to serve our campus.

# Transformational Leadership: Developing Equity-Minded Change Agents

Omicron Beta Chapter  
Mesa Community College  
*Tempe, Arizona*

## **Abstract**

In alignment with the college's value initiative toward Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Transformational Leadership: Developing Equity-Minded Change Agents was chosen as the College Project. A student-facilitated 21-Day Race and Equity Challenge was the action-oriented activity of the College Project.

The College Project Team (the Team) led and facilitated the 21-Day Race and Equity challenge that included daily activities for participants to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Team researched and provided resources to promote and support our college's vision statement on equity (creating systems, environments, and interactions that welcome, engage, and keep all learners). The challenge extended over four weeks, with each week exploring a different topic: Civil Discourse and Self-Reflection, Racism and Race, Whiteness, and Self-Care and Support. At the end of each week, the Team conducted deliberative dialogue sessions with participants to discuss what they learned from this experience and how they might use this new knowledge in their everyday lives. The Team was composed of chapter members, officers, and advisors from the college's two campuses.

Participants were provided resources to engage with for 15-30 minutes a day, during their own time, such as reading articles, listening to podcasts, or engaging in thought-provoking activities. Members and participants in the challenge included administrators, faculty, staff, students from multiple colleges with the

Maricopa Community College District, and community members.

The Team collaborated closely with the college administration to ensure the project conformed with the college's priorities and mission. With guidance from the college interim president, senior associate vice presidents, the DEI Council leadership, and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) members, the team implemented the 21-Day Race and Equity Challenge project. This project contributed to the college's new mission and DEI values by engaging participants in dialogue on the specific topics.

## Planning

Over the initial few weeks, the Team reviewed the college's mission statement: To create an inclusive and vibrant learning community where everyone is supported to achieve success. To learn about the college environment and initiatives, input was sought from various college administrators and faculty – senior associate vice presidents, college interim president, dean of institutional effectiveness, interim associate dean, library faculty, Guided Pathways to Success Initiative leadership, and DEI Council leadership.

Based on the input received, the Team generated possible ideas for the College Project and voted on those ideas to choose the top three possible proposals. Similar ideas were combined as a part of this process. All the possible ideas, including the top three, were noted. The college interim president and senior associate vice presidents engaged in discussion with the team to choose the project based on the college's value statement of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The team involved in the planning process were the officers of Phi Theta Kappa's (PTK) Omicron Beta Chapter. Weekly College Project meetings were held with the team, including chapter officers with the college administration attending periodically. For the College Project, the decision was led by the assigned advisor and officer. The college and district DEI council representatives assisted the team with determining the 21-Day Race and Equity Challenge for the project (Figure 1).

For the challenge, the team engaged in reviewing and vetting identified resources, a combination



Figure 1

of readings and videos, to determine those that could be used as learning tools. This process of curating the resources helped the team members improve their research skills. A website was created for the challenge. The website demonstrated organization and professionalism as a team.

## Leadership Development

The team embarked on a multi-stage study of leadership guided by the book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* written by Patrick Lencioni. Team members shared their reflections on their leadership strengths and challenges at each study stage, thus bonding as a cohesive team. Equipped with the new knowledge, the team incorporated these new skills toward implementing the project. The team gained knowledge for the project through extensive research regarding the inequities faced at the college. Statistics regarding the resources available to students of color guided the endeavor. The team found that students of color need access to more resources on campus to remove entry barriers. Previous College Projects were used as an example to determine the focus of the current project on improving students' lives on campus.

During the process of selecting the College Project, the team individually prepared and analyzed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T.) of their analysis and proposals. These analyses helped the team openly share their ideas with others, promote team collaboration, and identify improvement areas for the project.

The team maintained a shared Google Drive folder and improved organizational skills by frequently referring to shared resources: the college mission statement, team meeting notes, progress reports, shared writing documents, rubrics, insight from faculty and district administrators, and regional project workshops. Large tasks were divided into strategic portions to accomplish individual tasks more effectively. In preparation to lead reflection meetings with project participants, the team strengthened their group moderation skills by creating a script with questions to inspire discussion. A list of responses was generated in the script to create a safe atmosphere. This encouraged participants to interact and reflect on their thoughts and learning.

## Collaboration

It was a challenging year for everyone. However, the team collaborated and created the project to be implemented and facilitated virtually using WebEx breakout rooms. One of the significant challenges the team encountered was implementing the College Project online instead of in person. Despite being unable to have in-person meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions, the team successfully held weekly meetings and created a cohesive team in an online environment.

Change in leadership of the Omicron Beta Chapter became an obstacle. The team faced emotional distress and discomfort among the chapter officers, which led to a few officer resignations. As a result, the team grew smaller in size. Committed members continued the project planning and implementation with the project advisor's support and strengthened their bonds with each other.

The team held weekly virtual College Project meetings open to students from both campuses led by the assigned officer and advisor to plan,

coordinate, and implement the project. These weekly meetings were promoted to those interested in joining and getting involved with PTK to serve as student leaders and ambassadors.

Members were assigned roles throughout the project to ensure their unique skills were used to carry out the project's vision and mission. Skills such as public speaking, interpersonal, project management, leadership, and most importantly communicating and networking with the project's 113 participants were utilized to advance the project. Chapter members used soft skills learned through PTK's Competitive and Research Edge™ to help educate their peers about diversity, equity, and inclusion at a time when social injustice persists. The team also maintained partnerships with community leaders/partners and local college faculty to ensure a diverse population of participants could benefit from the project.

The team created and shared flyers on the college social media accounts and distribution lists to invite participation in the project. A shared spreadsheet was used to track and communicate the involvement of the project participants. The team provided timely communication and updates to the project participants via email. Each week, the college project advisor updated the project website with the weekly topical resources, while the team communicated with project participants. The team reviewed these data and made adjustments with implementation plans. As a resource, the team communicated with participants to acknowledge their participation and linked the project website.

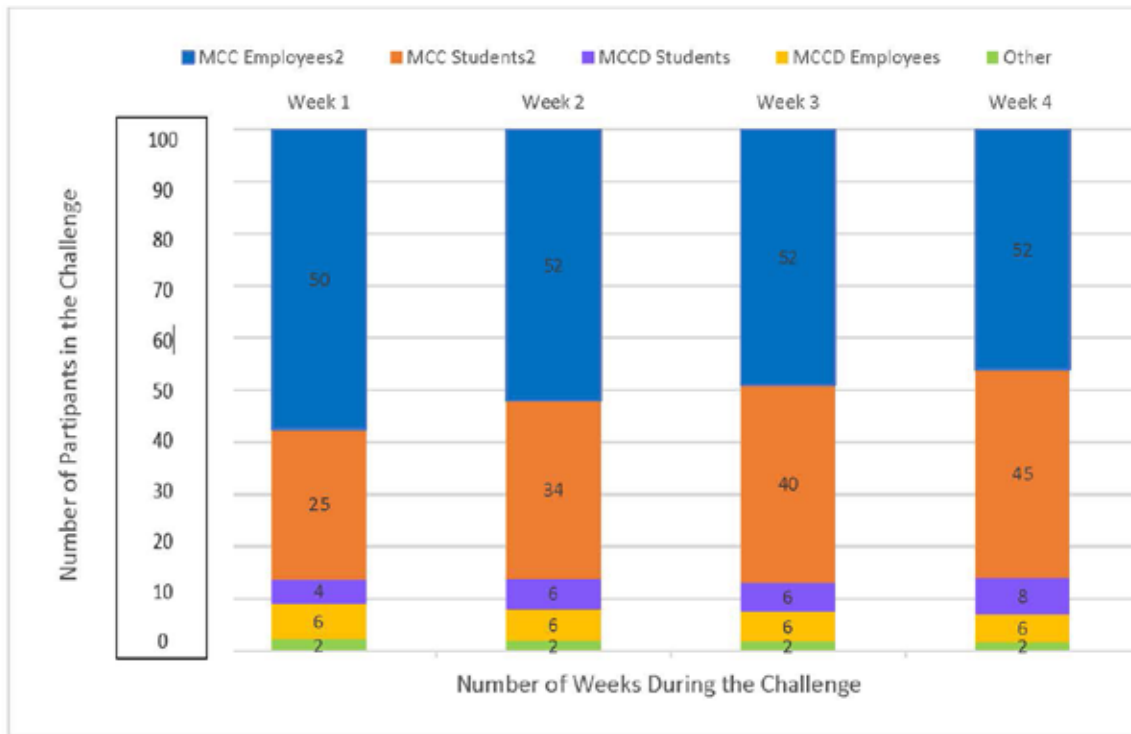
## Impact

The number of participants registered for this College Project totaled 113 individuals; 45 participants were MCC students, 52 were MCC employees, eight were students from other colleges, six were employees from other colleges, and two were miscellaneous participants.

During the four-week challenge, participants were invited to complete two short surveys each week: a pre-survey (before starting the challenge) and a post-survey (after completion of the challenge). The pre-survey focused on the participants' knowledge of the topic before engaging with



21-Day Race and Equity Challenge: Number of Participants Vs. Number of Weeks



Participant Categories	Number of Participants Each Week of the Challenge			
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Mesa Community College (MCC) Employees	50	52	52	52
Mesa Community College (MCC) Students	25	34	40	45
Maricopa Community College District (M CCD) Students	4	6	6	8
Maricopa Community College District (M CCD) Employees	6	6	6	6
Other	2	2	2	2

Figure 2

the topic-centered resources. The post-survey focused on the participants learning from their involvement with the resources and how they might use new knowledge in everyday life.

The total number of surveys submitted over these four weeks totaled 113 pre-surveys and 49 post-surveys. A recurring theme that emerged

from the pre-surveys was open-mindedness and willingness to learn more about the topic issues. Participants shared bold and powerful responses expressing the desire for justice to be done in our communities regarding these topic issues. For the most part, the post-survey responses were very elaborate, and participants reflected on things that they learned throughout

this challenge. They noted what they enjoyed about the process and commented on how the information learned could enhance both personal and collegiate growth.

A total of 80 individuals participated in the moderated deliberative dialogues over the four-week challenge (Figure 2). Two PTK members jointly served as facilitators, one as the lead and the other as the support facilitator. These conversations were open dialogs where participants exchanged their thoughts and ideas about a specific topic.

The team developed skills as facilitators by learning to lead discussions, asking open-ended questions, acknowledging thoughts shared by participants in discussions, and guiding the conversation flow. The team used prior learned research skills to identify and curate the resources for the challenge's specific topics. The project website, created by the team, is linked as a resource on the college DEI council webpage.

Involvement in this project helped the Team and the participants discover how racial and social injustices impact our community and identify ways to dismantle racism and other forms of discrimination.

# Adulting 101: Helping Students Strengthen Their Life Skills

Alpha Sigma Zeta Chapter  
Onondaga Community College  
*Syracuse, New York*

## Abstract

In January we met with our college president to discuss how we could support the college's mission. Prior to the meeting, we researched the college mission and felt student engagement and support were areas where our college could improve. During the meeting, President Crabill asked about our experiences, specifically how well we felt the college prepares us for life after Onondaga Community College (OCC). Although there are many opportunities on campus, we couldn't think of any programming specifically focused on life skills.

Part of the college's mission is to prepare students to be responsible community members and lifelong learners. Our president emphasized that the college has a responsibility to not only help students grow academically, but to grow as adults and citizens. Together we brainstormed a project focused on financial literacy, workforce development, health/wellness, and living independently to help students grow as adults and strengthen life skills. Following the meeting, our team devised a plan to create an Adulting 101 project that would include seminars, an interview contest, a voter registration drive, and an interactive "Game of Life" exhibit. We met with our president again to discuss our ideas. She suggested we strengthen the impact by creating a website so students could easily access resources, even after graduation. We devised a five-tiered adulting skills project including a resource website, interactive "Game of Life" exhibit, voter registration drive, interview contest, and an adulting virtual event series.

## Planning

While planning our Adulting 101 project, we researched existing programming elsewhere to create a list of topics. We met with President Crabill to finalize our topics and collectively decided to focus on health/wellness, living independently, transferring/employment, and financial literacy. When our college moved fully online, we pivoted to a virtual project with online events and platforms. President Crabill suggested campus and community collaborators for each aspect of the project. We created a calendar of events, and each teammate organized a component of the project. We contacted partners and held meetings to discuss our project and how their expertise could help students.

We organized seven virtual events to engage students and hone their adulting skills. To ensure that our project met the needs of students, we decided to end each event with an opportunity for participants to share ideas for future programming and resources. We scheduled an end-of-semester review to examine our progress and adjust our programming for the fall.

Our college president loves to cook and volunteered to lead a virtual cooking class demonstrating two affordable recipes. We shared ingredient lists and costs online so participants could prepare the dishes at home during the event. We partnered with our A/V Department to broadcast the event to resemble a cooking show and with our Hospitality Department who prepped the ingredients and hosted the event in their cooking classroom, allowing three students to cook in the kitchen alongside our president.

We partnered with the CEO of AmeriCU Credit Union, who led a financial seminar addressing financial planning, credit cards, and common financial mistakes. We held an alumni panel of six former PTK leaders to discuss the transfer process and adjustment to a four-year college. We led three Wellness Wednesday events to help students unwind, including sessions on meditation, art, and crafting.

Career Services helped us organize a virtual resume workshop and mock interview contests during the fall and spring semesters (Figure 1).

The contests allowed students to participate in a mock interview for either academic transfer or the workforce. Each student received detailed feedback, and the top interviews won prizes.

We gathered over 50 online resources and worked with our marketing/media VP to create an adulting website to help students become better adults, adding resources throughout the year. We moved our "Game of Life" exhibit online to provide access while the campus was closed. We worked with the Media office to create and share an interactive flyer with QR codes, simulating life choices/paths.

In the fall semester, our college partially opened, allowing some students on campus. We received permission to hold one in-person event, and we partnered with a political science professor to host a two-day voter registration drive.

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Figure 1

## Leadership Development

Identifying experts to lead our adulting programming and administrative partners to help build our website was essential. To strengthen our communication and soft skills, our Leadership VPs led a Competitive Edge™ training, and each teammate completed it before we began outreach. We also held trainings on other Edge programs to better understand topics like transfer and employment. When our campus went virtual, we attended Zoom trainings to learn to present and engage students online. The project required significant outreach to administrators and community members through email, so our advisors helped us craft emails that were professional and concise.

We worked with the service-learning and media coordinators to strategize ways to encourage students to attend our virtual events. Together, we devised a marketing plan, which included encouraging professors to offer extra credit, social media posts, emails, and advertising on the college website. A professor trained us to use Canva to create virtual flyers.

## Collaboration

We partnered with our college president, seven administrators, five professors, a bank CEO, and six alumni to create our Adulting 101 programming. We continuously sought advice from our administration and advisors to strengthen our project and skills. Our team held weekly Zoom meetings and used Google Docs to record our action items, completed tasks, and communication. We made an outline of our events, and each teammate took ownership of one part of the project.

For the alumni, financial literacy, and resume-building events, a teammate contacted each presenter to explain our project and how we hoped they could contribute. We then met to discuss each presentation, topics, and logistics. One week before each event, we sent reminders, and presenters logged onto Zoom to test the technology. After each event we met with our partners to get feedback and communicate our gratitude.

To plan our cooking event, we met with President Crabill and the chair of the Hospitality department. We outlined the event and scheduled two follow-up meetings: one with the audio-visual department and one to finalize logistics. Two months before the event, Dr. Crabill sent her recipes/ingredients, which we shared with the campus community to promote the event. We collaborated with Career Services on our mock interview contests. In early spring we met twice to discuss our vision and plan the contest together. After the spring event, we met again to discuss ways to improve the contest. We decided to advertise the fall event for a full month and were able to improve participation. Career Services shared feedback with each contest participant and selected winners.

We worked with our Marketing/Media Department to create our "Game of Life" interactive resource and Adulting 101 website. We met with them four times over the year to discuss our vision, share content, and get feedback on our project. We brainstormed ways to showcase and organize the resources and were given suggestions on links to add or change.

Along with a political science professor, we helped organize volunteers to staff the voter registration drive. We worked with the director of environmental health and safety to ensure all participants were safe. Our advisors helped us create a final report that we shared with our college. The campus was proud that our team did not let the pandemic lessen our impact.

## Impact

Our project helped prepare students for life after college, which aligns with our college's mission to create responsible community members and lifelong learners. We collaborated with 20 partners and 25 chapter members on the project. We created an Adulting 101 webpage incorporating over 50 resources. We developed an interactive Game of Life flyer, covering seven content areas. We held seven Adulting 101 events on Zoom, which were well attended: Financial Literacy Seminar (65 attendees), Alumni Panel (54 attendees), Resume Workshop (35 attendees), three Wellness Wednesdays (20 attendees), and Cooking with Casey (55 attendees). Eleven

volunteers registered 30 students to vote during our registration drive.

We learned that we should continue providing virtual events. Both attendance and student feedback suggested that virtual events are more accessible. The chat feature showed that our speakers were engaging and informative, and attendees asked relevant questions. We were also able to reach additional students by emailing the recordings of our events. Consequently, we received many emails asking for similar programming in the future. Further, we learned that students needed programming now more than ever. Virtual events allowed for meaningful connection when we were otherwise isolated.

In the spring, six students participated in our mock interview contest. After some improvements, 28 students participated in the fall. We are working with our Career Services partner to create an interview preparation seminar next semester, using the feedback from the interview contests.

Through this project, we learned that skills developed outside of the classroom are just as important as what we learn in class. To close each event, participants shared their biggest takeaways in the chat. Students seemed surprised to learn so much about the topics. They admitted they're lost when it comes to financial literacy, which our chapter will focus on in the future.

While we did not meet with our partners in person, we learned that relationships can be built in other ways. Our team adapted to the virtual world and grew together despite masks and screens. By working on this project, we strengthened our own adulting skills, becoming more responsible and better communicators. We learned that even when administrators are dealing with crises, they are willing to make time to help us create vital student programming. Our college president told us that working on her cooking event was the highlight of her semester and a nice break from the stressful tasks she manages daily.

# Outreach: Providing Resources for All

Xi Pi Chapter  
Polk State College  
*Winter Haven, Florida*

## Abstract

Due to COVID-19, Polk State College (PSC) closed in mid-March, and all students were moved entirely online. Shortly thereafter, Xi Pi's officer team conferred with PSC President Dr. Angela Garcia-Falconetti and her administrators via Zoom to determine our 2020 College Project (CP). Dr. Falconetti suggested we develop a project to help our students, faculty, and their families find supplemental resources during the pandemic. Together we decided to create a Canvas shell that would house information about non-profit organizations, in addition to local, state, and federal programs to help our PSC family with any need or stressor encountered due to COVID-19.

## Planning

Before meeting with our administration, we researched PSC's mission statement and core values to ensure we clearly understood our institution's goals. The initial meeting between the Xi Pi's officer team, Dr. Falconetti, and her staff (provosts, vice presidents, and directors) occurred in early April, at the pandemic's beginning. We discussed multiple ideas on what would best support PSC's students during this challenging time. The college's emergency closure and urgent transition to online learning impacted PSC's students and faculty profoundly. Concerned for the well-being of her students and staff, Dr. Falconetti recommended we gather "informational resources" for those who need assistance. Her initial suggestion was that we create a digital handout or pamphlet with these support sources. We took Dr. Falconetti's recommendation to heart but did not know what resources would be considered helpful



since her directive was fairly vague. A CP team composed of the officers and several members was established. With COVID-19 being a novel situation, we researched what effects other large-scale emergency scenarios (hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.) had on students and what resources proved supportive in the aftermath.

Our team compiled an exhaustive list of aid sources across an array of issues including financial assistance, food, clothing, mental health, medical aid, addiction support (for all types), abuse support (for all types), child entertainment techniques, K-12 educational help, scholarships, financial aid, and other academic resources such as tutoring and free computer programs. The sources of this relief widely varied, deriving from a mix of local and national non-profits, then extending into federal, state, and local government grants and programs, privately funded groups, and religious affiliated organizations.

We returned to Dr. Falconetti and her staff with an initial array of 84 assistance sources. They were surprised by how many resources we had assembled. Vice President of Service Camille suggested we create a centralized, online resource hub for both students and faculty to access, possibly a website linked to PSC's main page. Dr. Falconetti endorsed our project, believing it would provide an excellent service for struggling students and faculty; however, creating a website was detailed work that the college could not readily conduct, particularly during COVID-19. Dr. Lee Thomas, vice president of academic affairs, suggested we utilize a Canvas shell to house these resources since all students and faculty members already have access to Canvas. We agreed, noting that something similar had been previously applied to PSC's online tutoring program. Given its potential for outreach, Dr. Falconetti granted us permission to create and develop a Canvas COVID-19 Help shell. This project directly addressed three of PSC's core values of service, knowledge, and leadership, while using innovative strategies, one of PSC's missions.

## Leadership Development

The officer team were relatively inexperienced members, except for Chapter President Heidi. Prior to meeting Dr. Falconetti, Heidi requested each officer complete Competitive Edge™ to increase

their understanding of leadership and meeting soft skills. After this initial meeting, our team realized they also had novice research skills and improving these would be vital. Therefore, before beginning research, each CP team member completed Research Edge™. Since most team members had not previously conducted research at Polk, Vice President of Leadership Victoria contacted Jarrod Jones, PSC librarian and database expert. Together, they created a Zoom-based research workshop to enhance our team's research abilities with PSC's specific resources. To keep organized, we divided the 14 assistance categories among the eight team members. This allowed us to conduct focused, issue-based research. Once the initial research was complete, we examined each resource, noting any overlap into multiple areas of assistance.

Due to COVID-19, our CP team met online weekly during project development. We frequently discussed the difficulties of balancing course loads, the pandemic's inherent stress, and the effects of isolation, while trying to maintain a positive mindset. Following our project's approval by Dr. Falconetti, our advisor, Professor Cornett, pointed out that our research, while based on previous catastrophes, was likely influenced by our personal experiences during this pandemic. To ensure that we included every potential need, each team member approached their course instructors and requested they post an anonymous survey in their Canvas shells for both students and faculty members to fill out. Developed by Chapter Secretary Ashley, this questionnaire inquired about what assistance that student or professor felt would be most beneficial to them or their family. In all, over 20 faculty and 83 students across multiple campuses replied, which assisted our effort for accurate issue representation. Our team compiled this data, using it to conduct more focused research. Inundated by an overwhelming number of requests for support dealing with mental illnesses and stress, we amassed a substantial list of meditation and relaxation apps and websites, as well as help hotlines and licensed counselors who could professionally address such problems.

When PSC created the COVID-19 Canvas shell for our resources, Public Relations Officer Lianne was entrusted with instructor access. She taught herself how to utilize Canvas with various YouTube tutorials, including page modifications, file organization,



and the best methods for attracting and engaging students. She also designed the shell's front page, making it appealing and easily accessible for users by adding pictures with interactive links. Before uploading any data, team members reviewed each resource, in categories other than their own, to ensure all necessary information was present and uniformly arranged. Once verified, Lianne created a tutorial for our team, instructing us on module creation and how to upload each resource.

## Collaboration

Initial meetings with Dr. Falconetti and her staff were arranged through our advisor, Professor Cornett. Once connected, we contacted her and other project stakeholders directly via email. Dr. Falconetti's desire to care for Polk's students became very apparent. Our progress was regularly verified and encouraged, by her or Dr. Thomas, either through email or Zoom conferences. After presenting our extensive research, Dr. Falconetti indicated that we should include more programs that PSC offers, noting a particularly large decrease in enrollment. Camille emailed Dr. Thomas, inquiring about the scholarships, grants, and academic programs PSC can offer students in need. He introduced Camille to Tracy Porter, director of the PSC Foundation, Ronshetta Howell, director of Financial Services, and Joyce Bentley, director of TRiO programs, each of whom provided information on various programs and services they could provide existing and incoming students.

For a more personalized experience, we approached several PSC faculty. Humanities professor Mary Ann Murdoch is a yoga instructor. We arranged for Justin Rheiner, PSC videographer, to record and edit six introductory yoga lessons to be included in the mental health and stress relief sections. Dr. Greg Harris, psychologist and Social Sciences department chair, recorded several interview-style videos with Vice President of Scholarship Seleste, describing various coping techniques. New Xi Pi member Molly-Grace Moore described her connections to several national suicide prevention and self-help groups from similar high school projects. She arranged for several motivational speakers to present via Zoom, including Carmen Tarleton, the first woman to successfully receive two face transplants. The final step involved publishing our shell and

providing access to all PSC students and faculty. This could not be accomplished by our officer team. Professor Cornett and Cody Moyer, director of learning technology, met via Zoom to ensure a smooth implementation. With our COVID-19 Canvas shell published, our CP team met with Dr. Falconetti and her staff for a final report, revealed the shell to all administrators, demonstrated how it functioned, and discussed future applications for the shell's service to students in need once the pandemic concluded.

## Impact

Thus far, our team has compiled 141 easily accessible resources to assist 21,041 PSC students, faculty, and their families cope with nearly any area of their lives that has been impacted by the pandemic. Our Canvas shell is considered a work in progress and is constantly updated as new opportunities arise. Extending far beyond the initial assistance PSC could provide, this project embodies the vision Dr. Falconetti expressed for helping our students and employees. It serves as a testament of PSC's willingness to help the less fortunate and the incredible accomplishments that can result from determination and cooperation.

As PSC student leaders, we understood we needed to demonstrate perseverance and adapt to hardship, despite isolation restrictions. Our team was largely inexperienced in leadership and research skills before this CP. Forged in the pandemic's fires, we learned vital lessons from the Edge programs, developed online communication capabilities, and created deep connections with PSC's administration, professors, and staff. We successfully provided fellow struggling students with assistance, comfort, and confidence during COVID-19. As member Molly-Grace Moore has stated, "My family was barely hanging on early in the pandemic. A few of these resources helped us go a long way toward recovering." Molly-Grace was so impacted, she will be the 2021 Vice President of Service and vowed to have a prominent role in next year's CP. With the guidance of PSC's administrators, Xi Pi hopes that all PSC students can continue their education safely and receive aid to assist with any obstacles. This project symbolizes our solidarity with those in need and what solutions are possible through administrative collaborations.

# Don't Let the Pandemic Get You Down: PTK Alumni Present Advice for Transfer Success

Beta Zeta Nu Chapter  
Cañada College  
*Redwood City, California*

## Abstract

With the help of Cañada College President Moore, Beta Zeta Nu (BZN) developed a College Project consisting of four Zoom-based sessions designed to support students from across the college during the process of writing their transfer applications to four-year universities. The series consisted of three uniquely themed workshops and a drop-in session for transfer application writing advice. BZN found this topic pertinent because the college had moved all courses and college activities to a virtual format, and students found it more difficult to access application help. In response, the chapter decided that informative, virtual workshops during which students could ask questions of alumni who had first-hand experience of transferring would be most helpful to the college community. These workshops included: How to Write a Winning Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship Application featuring Homero Sosa Mendoza, Jack Kent Cooke Scholar; How to Transfer to Cal and Thrive featuring BZN alumni Diego Zevallos (2020), Katherine Ramirez (2017), and Autumn McMahan (2017); Attending an Elite Private School – You Can Do It! featuring BZN alumna Benita Kayembe (2018); and Transfer Application Writing Workshop featuring BZN alumni and advisors. Combined, these workshops were intended to provide a complete overview of the transfer experience: formal applications, scholarship applications, the transfer process, and the four-year college experience itself.

## Planning

We began by brainstorming ideas for our College Project that would suit the needs and

current priorities of our college. During these brainstorming sessions, members, officers, and advisors reflected on past projects and reviewed Cañada College's mission, which had recently been updated. We also considered working with international students. Several officers were international students who had witnessed the isolation that their cohort had experienced on campus. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to a virtual college, we realized that this idea would not work since international students were busy navigating the changes to student visas and residency requirements. We then discussed the possibility of mentoring students in the College for Working Adults, a committed but marginalized cohort-based program, to promote access to college resources and community-building as well as creating Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)/BZN awareness. However, this idea was not possible due to limits on student activities.

Under the guidance of President Moore, through multiple email threads and a Zoom conference call, BZN designed a College Project that uniquely utilized our chapter's strengths and met students' needs. President Moore highlighted the importance of tailoring the scope of our College Project. She suggested that our workshop series complement and differentiate from those offered by the Transfer Center. This suggestion inspired our chapter to focus on inviting student speakers as the Workshop panelists. Thus, the student-to-student perspective was initiated. In the end, BZN settled on hosting a series of workshops about the transfer process, application completion for competitive scholarships, and ways to thrive after transferring both to public and private universities in this remote world. Fundamentally, these workshops supported Cañada's mission to ensure students had equitable opportunities to achieve their transfer and educational goals.

## Leadership Development

After identifying the College Project, we divided the overall implementation of the project into several tasks and delegated them to corresponding chapter officers. Advisors Hall and Roscelli recommended guest speakers from the BZN alumni and Cañada graduates. President Milla and the Vice President of Service Zhang

contacted each of them to discuss the content and the workshop schedules. Once the dates of the workshops were identified, Public Relations Secretary Chen designed the flyers and the Instagram and Facebook ads announcing the workshops. The flyers were then shared with the college marketing department and distributed through our chapter Canvas webpage. Officers hosted the workshops while advisors McMahon and Ramirez facilitated the event, provided tech support, and collected feedback from the audiences before and after the workshops.

To carry out the College Project effectively, members participated in a variety of activities to improve our team cohesion. Due to shelter-in-place orders, our face-to-face fellowship activities, such as a visit to the Lemos Pumpkin Patch and a local Escape Room, were cancelled. Even though we could not participate in these in-person events, the chapter still created a great community via Zoom. We scheduled Zoom meetings to play games like Jeopardy and chat with each other. Several members attended the Spring Regional Virtual Leadership Conference, where we learned and greatly improved our leadership skills.

The unprecedented situation of the pandemic made the promotion of our workshops much more difficult. We posted the flyers of the workshops on all our social media pages and utilized the help of college programs. Even so, we did not get the turnout that we had hoped for. Only one student came to our first workshop in addition to BZN officers. After the first workshop, we scheduled a Zoom meeting to address this issue and strategize how we could attract more people. We contacted the marketing department and asked if they

could help us. They included the workshops in the weekly college newsletter *What's Happening?* and emailed the announcements to all students. Additionally, Chapter Public Relations Secretary Chen reached out to the Associated Students of Cañada College and found they were willing to help us promote the workshops by posting the flyers on their social media outlets. With these efforts, the number of participants in the second and third workshops increased. This action taught us the power of social media outlets and collaboration with other college departments and programs.

We met with Dafna Kapshud, marketing and communications manager of the College Foundation. She shared her career path in philanthropy and facilitated a discussion on the power of education, planning, and the joy of following your heart in your work. Ms. Kapshud's journey particularly resonated with President Milla, who said, "It was inspiring to learn how Dafna has utilized all the skills and knowledge gained throughout her varying career paths to now engage and promote philanthropy in our community."

## Collaboration

The pandemic made it difficult for us to find speakers for each workshop. Members reached out through email to BZN alumni. One of the two speakers we originally planned to feature for the first workshop on the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship was unable to attend, and we could not find a replacement in time. Coordinating with the second speaker, we were able to compensate for the shorter presentation by reserving additional time for the Q&A section. Overall, this change worked well, as workshop attendees had many questions about scholarship applications and the speaker's experience with transferring from community college to a prestigious university. Collaboration between the speakers and chapter officers was new to us, and we learned a lot about how to plan events and respond to changes as they occurred. We also reached out to the Associated Students of Cañada College (ASCC) to ask if they'd be willing to advertise the transfer workshop series on their social media and website. They were happy to collaborate with our chapter and only requested that we add their ASCC logo and the Americans with Disabilities Act statement to our flyers before

they posted it. This small request helped us learn about the important aspects of access and inclusion.

## Impact

The College Project positively influenced the application decisions of many students at Cañada College. The chapter successfully used the communications channels at its disposal and notified over 3,500 students about the workshops. One officer was inspired by one of the workshops and started the process of applying for the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship. He learned the specifics of the scholarship and maintained contact with the speaker, who was a 2015 Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship recipient. Currently, he is completing his application with continued advice from the speaker. Another student found the motivation necessary to apply to UC Berkeley after attending one of the workshops.

### Selected Quantitative Data:

Cal Workshop Survey:

#### Question 1. How prepared do you feel you are to transfer to Cal Berkeley?

This question utilized a Likert scale with 1 being not comfortable and 5 being very comfortable. After participating in the workshop, the degree of comfort increased by 33%.

Zoom recordings of the three formal meetings were archived on the BZN Canvas webpage where they will reach hundreds of BZN members.

### Selected Qualitative Data:

"Through the College Project, I've gained experience on conceptualizing and carrying out a large project from the ground up. This project challenged me to think on a broader scope, as we had to plan out and distribute the work necessary to finish the preparations in time for each workshop within weekly meetings. I also enjoyed creating the flyers for the workshop series, as well as each workshop. Drafting engaging descriptions for each workshop, assembling appealing visuals on the flyers, and choosing an eye-catching color palette helped me refine my graphic design skills.

– Katie Chen,

Recording and Public Relations Secretary

“By engaging in the implementation of the College Project, my written communication skills and collaboration skills were greatly enhanced. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly all communications between officers and the guest speakers were held through emails and zoom. Communicating with the guest speakers about details of the workshops by emailing back and forth greatly improved my written communication skills. Moreover, the experience of collaborating effectively with other officers to carry out the College Project significantly enhanced my collaboration skills.”

– **Bella Zhang,**  
Vice President of Service

“The College Project provided me an opportunity to enhance my leadership skills, as I had to delegate tasks to officers; consistently communicate with guest speakers, officers, advisors, and college administration staff; and track the progress of our project. Moreover, this project enabled me to further develop my time management skills since I had to organize the College Project while working on our other chapter projects.”

– **Katherine Milla,**  
President

# HGTC Pantry

Alpha Nu Sigma Chapter  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
*Conway, South Carolina*

## Abstract

Alpha Nu Sigma members met with our college president to discuss College Project ideas. Many Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) students were experiencing hardships such as food insecurity. At the president's suggestion, our chapter decided to revitalize the pantries on all three campuses by restocking, creating an awareness campaign, and planning food distribution events. We agreed our project would address the portion of the HGTC mission statement "to provide a student-centered environment." To develop our project, we collaborated with college administration, staff, and the HGTC Foundation.

## Planning

Chapter officers anticipated brainstorming ideas with their college president and researched HGTC's mission statement during training in preparation for meeting with her. Our committee considered members' project suggestions, understanding we would adjust our plan to meet the needs she identified. During our meeting, she expressed concern about student food insecurity and was supportive of revitalizing HGTC's pantries. Following her suggestion, we met with the pantry coordinator to determine pantry needs and how to assist students. HGTC's pantry coordinator explained that the pandemic changed pantry usage and operations due to the cancellation of the work-study program. We shared ideas about distributing grocery store gift cards and doing drive-by distributions because students were not permitted on campus. A committee member contacted 10 locations of four grocery store chains about gift card availability and grant information and compiled



an Excel spreadsheet with her results. We shared this spreadsheet with the HGTC Foundation Philanthropic Coordinator to apply for grants per college policy.



Figure 1

Committee members realized the pantries were not stocked, nor were funds available to restock them, preventing us from organizing a drive-by distribution. To address these shortfalls, we wrote a \$5,000 budget request through HGTC’s Student Engagement office. The request was approved and some of the funds were used to stock one pantry. We were unable to stock the remaining two pantries because they were being relocated to larger spaces. We realized HGTC students still needed assistance and decided to create our own food distribution event called “Gobble Bags” prior to Thanksgiving. We requested \$2,500 of our travel funds be reallocated and this was approved. During a committee meeting, we selected items to include and priced the cost of a single bag to determine how many we

could distribute. We needed additional approval to be permitted on campus while observing social distancing protocols. Once approved, we scheduled shopping and packing days. Throughout our project, we collaborated with the following individuals:

- HGTC Pantry Coordinator
- Director of Student Engagement
- Vice President of Student Affairs
- Director of Student Services
- Philanthropic Coordinator-HGTC Foundation

### Leadership Development

Despite being forced to operate virtually in a pandemic, our committee learned how to be a team by participating in training activities, including the Four Tendencies quiz, communications exercises, and a Hallmark Awards writing workshop. We utilized fellowship activities to develop a rapport with each other, and committee members determined Google Classroom would help us stay organized. Our team learned how to navigate and upload files to this program, downloaded Facebook Messenger for informal communication, and increased our technology skills by using Zoom video conferencing software.

To properly identify administrators, we familiarized ourselves with HGTC’s organizational chart. We requested our advisors review emails before sending them to administrators since we understood the importance of professional communication. Team members kept detailed notes of meetings throughout our project.

We met with the pantry coordinator to learn how pantries receive funding, find out the current reserves balance, and brainstorm ways to obtain funds. Committee members investigated grocery store giving practices and gift cards. We shared this information with the HGTC Foundation because we learned college policy dictates that only they can write grants. They prepared a grant request, which is still awaiting approval. We investigated how student activities funds are allocated to student groups. A team member drafted a \$5,000 request from the Student Activities Funding Committee to support the pantries and it was approved. Our chapter received travel funds from the same committee. We



contacted the director of student engagement to determine if unused portions could be reallocated for this project and were excited to receive permission to use them for our “Gobble Bags.”

## Collaboration

Our college president directed us to meet with the pantry coordinator to start the project. This coordinator attended our weekly committee meetings to share the needs of HGTC’s pantries and develop a plan to reopen them. College administrators and faculty were invited to participate in our project meetings and were kept informed about progress via emails. Notices of our weekly meetings were posted in Google Classroom, and we sent email reminders to chapter members. College Project progress was shared in both chapter and officer meetings. To promote awareness of the pantries, we shared the pantry website link and a brief description with an administrator and asked her to oversee distribution to faculty. This enabled faculty to add the information to their course syllabi. Our initial request to the HGTC Foundation for gift cards was denied because they could not be restricted to food. Committee members clarified the requirements, determined Food Lion could provide restricted cards, and our subsequent request was approved. Much of the progress on this project required approval from administrators to move forward, requiring us to regularly communicate with them. After deciding to distribute “Gobble Bags,” we contacted the director of student engagement to inquire about reallocating travel money. She instructed us to complete an additional request to hold distributions on multiple days and campuses. Once that request was approved, we contacted the vice president of student affairs to obtain permission for our “Gobble Bags” flyer (Figure 1) to be sent to all faculty and staff, and it was approved. We submitted a final report to our administrative collaborators, informing them of the outcome of our project. Several administrators praised us and one commented, “From the Homeless Period Project to the Gobble Bag distribution, each of you have made a positive impact in the community.”

## Impact

Throughout this project, chapter members learned about the many elements required



Figure 2

to operate within a bureaucracy, successfully organize an event, and function as a team. Initially, our plan was to host drive-by distributions on each campus; however, we found the pantries were not properly stocked and the fall work-study program was canceled. HGTC’s pantry coordinator unexpectedly decided to create a leadership team of faculty and staff volunteers during our project, causing administrative delays. Our team realized we needed to create a new course of action that still addressed food insecurity. We developed a multi-pronged approach to overcome these challenges. Chapter members posted 100 pantry flyers on all three campuses to advertise and inform students that hygiene products were also available. One committee member requested and received 100 baggies containing feminine hygiene products from the Homeless Period Project. Team members wrote a \$5,000 funding request from the Student Affairs Office, which was approved. Additionally, six volunteers used \$950 of those funds to shop for grocery and hygiene products to restock the Georgetown Campus pantry (Figure 2). Ultimately, we participated in the December grand re-opening event on all campuses. We were proud to be part of a project supporting the college’s goal to reopen the pantries.

Despite administrative challenges prohibiting college-wide distribution from the pantries, team members developed a Thanksgiving-themed food distribution event. To successfully organize this distribution, we realized we needed to request approval, create a menu, comparison price shop, advertise, and address the logistics of shopping, storing, packing, and transporting the goods in 45 days. Committee members requested reallocation of \$2,500 of chapter travel monies to fund this project. Four volunteers purchased 1,958 items including stuffing mix, instant mashed potatoes, canned vegetables, spices, and other Thanksgiving-related foods. Team members brainstormed and decided to call our initiative "Gobble Bags." One member created a professional flyer for advertisement purposes, which we shared with faculty and staff on social media and through college announcements. We were excited to see the college promote our project on its official social media outlets. The chapter purchased 91 reusable grocery bags, and 10 volunteers packed them. Each bag weighed 31 pounds. We recruited 13 volunteers to distribute bags on our three campuses, practicing proper social distancing protocols. Upon arrival at our distribution locations, we were shocked to find students waiting for us. On one campus, 12 bags were distributed in five minutes! On another campus, a student shared that she set a reminder on her phone to get a bag. We were thrilled to see that our advertising efforts led to handing out all 91 bags. Chapter members felt joyful in helping our fellow students and their families yet expressed sadness because the need is so great. We received emails expressing gratitude for our project from students, administrators, and the pantry coordinator, who thanked us for "eagerly stepping forward to assist in the effort to reopen the pantry at all three campuses." A student emailed, "I wanted to say thank you for the gobble bag we picked up today at the Conway Campus! We greatly appreciate it." She included a picture of her toddler surrounded by the contents of the bag.

Throughout this project, we learned the importance of working with college administrators and each other. Committee members discovered that the funding allocation process was complex and the process of working with administration was a learning experience. We better understood

how policies govern the college's overall operation. We grew as scholar-servant leaders as we learned the value of adaptability. To overcome challenges, team members capitalized on each other's strengths to complete specific tasks. For example, our advertising flyer was designed by a committee member skilled in Adobe Photoshop. Through teamwork, our committee organized and planned a complicated, multi-step project under extraordinary circumstances.

# Helping Students During an Unexpected Transition

Psi Psi Chapter  
Brazosport College  
*Lake Jackson, Texas*

## Abstract

At the start of the fall semester, our chapter observed two major issues: (1) the semester would be different than any other due to the COVID-19 pandemic and (2) student success would be drastically affected by these differences. Online courses were completely new for most Brazosport College (BC) students. Therefore, we set out to ease this transition by focusing on ways we could help our fellow students succeed during this unexpected shift.

To support the college's mission for student success and intellectual, social, and cultural engagement, we formulated a goal to help students adjust to online classes and encourage them to persevere through the semester by providing information about online course success. After meeting with our college president, we set out to develop a website and newsletter that would offer tips and resources to help students succeed in their online courses. Our website included study tips, such as how to create a good study area and the importance of making a schedule. We also researched helpful websites and apps that ranged from educational resources to meditation. We prepared a guide for students on how to form accountability groups. Finally, we provided information to support students' mental health, such as recipes, socially distanced exercise tips (ex. walking, yoga, etc.), and methods for socializing remotely.

Additionally, we published two newsletters that were distributed to all students via email. Our newsletter included "Words of Wisdom" from a BC faculty member, study tips, and encouragement. We also had a "Student Spotlight" section to highlight a student who had been successful

in online courses prior to the pandemic. Each newsletter also featured a helpful educational website for students to review. Lastly, the newsletter included schedule information for campus organizations that were meeting virtually to encourage students to stay engaged.

## Planning

In preparation for our meeting with the college president, Dr. Valek, we reviewed the college's mission, vision, and core values. Together, we considered the college's priorities and formed three ideas to present at our meeting with Dr. Valek. Our ideas centered on helping students succeed during altered operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While Dr. Valek did not bring any specific ideas to the meeting, she was highly receptive of our ideas and shared our concerns about the challenges students face in online courses. She suggested we consider a way to combine our three ideas into one project since they overlapped in topic.

Next, we brainstormed ways to combine our ideas into one project. We decided the most efficient way would be to create a website. We then started the process of outlining the details of our project prior to sending them to Dr. Valek for feedback. She suggested that we collaborate with the Office of Student Life, since they were also working on a website idea that could easily tie into ours. We reached out to the director of student life to determine our website's content and assign responsibilities for individual webpages. Once the website outline was designed, we sent the materials to Dr. Valek and two of the college's vice presidents for review and approval. This step in our project was significantly delayed because all details needed to be discussed with the Marketing Department to ensure our site aligned with the college's branding and website approval processes.

Once we received final approval from Dr. Valek, we met again with the director of student life to discuss and create the timeline for our project. As the final step of the planning process, we communicated with the webmaster to set up the website and worked with the social media specialist to create our newsletter format.

## Leadership Development

One of the biggest things we learned as officers during this project was how to navigate the college's processes. We learned how many steps it takes to successfully implement even good ideas. Throughout the project, we had to wait for approvals or assistance from the college president, Marketing Department, and Student Life Department, which at times took a few weeks because everyone was working in a remote environment with varying priorities. We learned that the college's processes can slow momentum, but we persisted and were happy with our end product.

Second, we realized that we would have to research student success tips and other resources that would aid us in confidently and comprehensively helping students succeed in their online courses. Simultaneously, this research helped strengthen our own abilities to study for online courses.

Third, our chapter learned how to delegate responsibilities. One of our first steps after making an outline and getting approval was to divide responsibilities. We split the portions of the website and newsletters between two officers and recruited past officers and members to help, too.

Fourth, at our virtual PTK Texas Leadership Conference, we learned to be better leaders. During the breakout sessions, we met members from other chapters and practiced communication and presentation skills. We also learned leadership techniques that helped us implement this project.

Last, since we relied primarily on virtual communication to coordinate our project, we strengthened our email etiquette. We researched the best ways to prepare an email and implemented this knowledge through communications with each other, administration, students, and faculty.

## Collaboration

This summer, we met on Zoom to discuss ideas related to the college's mission. During our first meeting with Dr. Valek, we discussed several ideas and decided on a project concept. We then communicated through email with her to finalize the outline of the project prior to implementation. After our outline was approved, we worked with

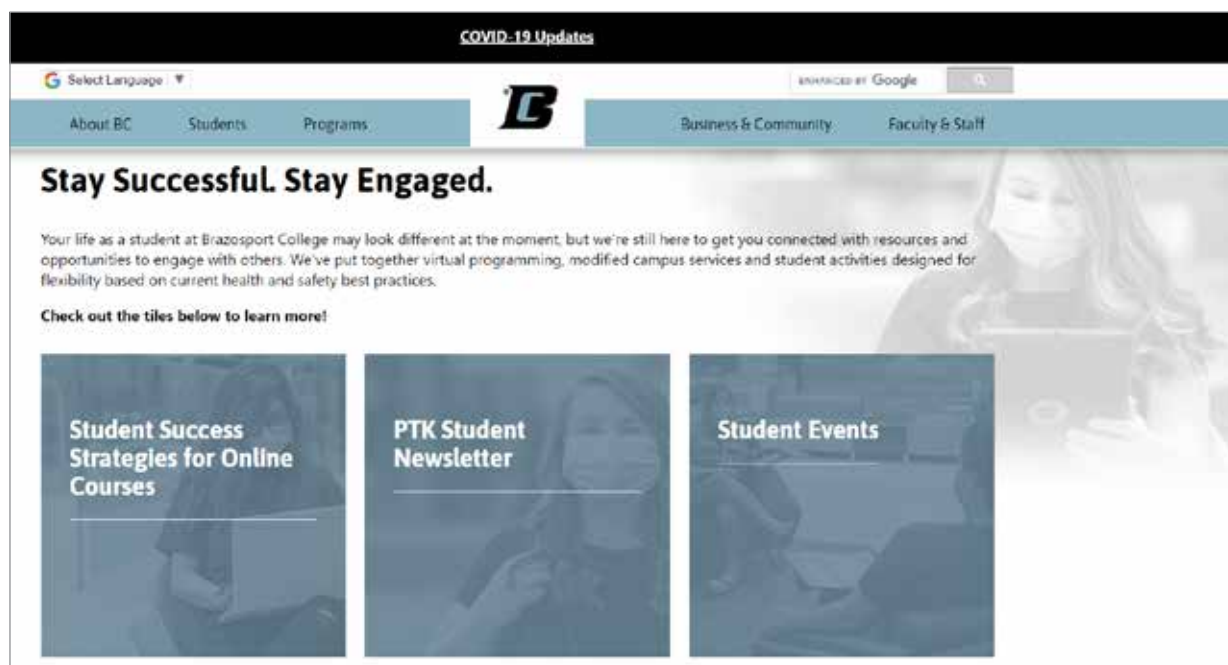


Figure 1

the Student Life Department to create a cohesive website (Figure 1). We also worked with Marketing to develop a visual design for the website. Finally, we contacted faculty and students to compile helpful study tips for our newsletters.

After our website and the first newsletter were published, we sent an announcement email to students. We also shared information about our website on our personal social media platforms as well as our chapter's Facebook page. We then shared the link to the website via text message with our friends and classmates.

During our last Zoom meeting with Dr. Valek, we discussed the results of the College Project, the path we took, and the outcomes we had. The information we shared included the number of website views and how many students opened the newsletter emails. Dr. Valek asked several questions about our findings and the type of feedback we received from students. She was pleased to receive an update on our project, which included quantitative results and student feedback.

## Impact

Data we gathered from our project indicated that we received 38 website views. Our first newsletter had a 24.5% engagement rate with 971 students

opening the email. Our second newsletter had a 21.7% engagement rate with 861 students opening the email. The average engagement rate for student emails at the college is 23.6%. We were excited to learn that our first newsletter had a higher than average engagement rate. However, we were disappointed in the low engagement on both platforms utilized to share this information with students. One of our chapter officers is a student representative on a college committee where committee members had recently discussed that students did not regularly check their email. Thus, the lack of email engagement was not a challenge specific to our project. After informing the committee that the lack of email engagement prevented students from receiving important information from our chapter, the officer was informed that the college was working on a project that could improve student email engagement in the future. Our chapter may look further into this issue in ensuing College Projects.

We received feedback from students that the website helped them adapt to online courses, specifically the information about virtual accountability groups. They stated that our website provided ideas and resources that would assist them in their academic pursuits and helped them determine how to invite other students to join accountability groups. We were excited



to see that students were benefitting from the information we compiled. Faculty members were also impressed with the information and stated that the website and newsletters could help students achieve academic success.

Since we worked directly with Student Life and other organizations on campus, we strengthened the relationship between our chapter and those entities. Our chapter also strengthened its relationship with Dr. Valek by communicating with her throughout the semester.

As student leaders, we learned tips and tricks for becoming successful online students and how to share that information with our fellow classmates. As we researched for the website, we learned useful tips that helped us, too. For example, as one officer gathered information for the study tips section, she learned that it is useful to have a designated area to study and planned to implement this into her own study practices. Another officer also discovered helpful websites through our research.

We are confident that the information gathered will be used as we continue the year and even once operations are back to normal. Even though the number of website and newsletter views were not as high as we envisioned, we learned valuable lessons from implementing this project. We learned new ways to adapt ourselves to online study and how to persevere through challenging times. We also learned how to conduct ourselves in meetings with individuals that may seem intimidating such as the college president.

# Hearing the Voices of Our Students

Alpha Xi Pi Chapter  
Motlow State Community College  
*Lynchburg, Tennessee*

## **Abstract**

Motlow State Community College (MSCC) President Dr. Michael Torrence shared his Achieving the Dream (ATD) initiative with our Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter. After researching the mission statements of both the college and PTK, we were excited to find a natural unanimity between our chapter's own initiatives and the mission statements of both ATD and MSCC: a commitment to a diverse, student-centered learning community.

PTK team members developed a three-phase comprehensive program to be completed within three years that focused on amplifying the voices of our students. Our chapter representatives were inspired by Dr. Torrence's vision during many brainstorming sessions. As a result, the PTK team established long-term goals: bringing the students' perspectives to the table where decisions are being made, reaching beyond what is expected to those who do not typically participate in dialogue, identifying priorities to improve equity based on students' perspectives, and committing to a three-year data collection initiative to be presented to administration. The broad scope of this project presented a formidable challenge as PTK members typically only serve two years. The advantage is that with each PTK induction ceremony comes a fresh wave of enthusiasm and ideas from new members. To facilitate awareness and growth of our college's PTK membership and its benefits, our chapter worked tirelessly to create student engagement events, which also led to opportunities to collect data. We faced our greatest challenge to date as our college was closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. With the support and encouragement of our PTK advisors and MSCC administration, members created new ways to work remotely to complete our plan, fostering a culture of "Yes!" We gave voice to more students this year than ever



before and, although not an imagined goal, we now have a permanent student representative on our college’s Institutional Oversight Committee.

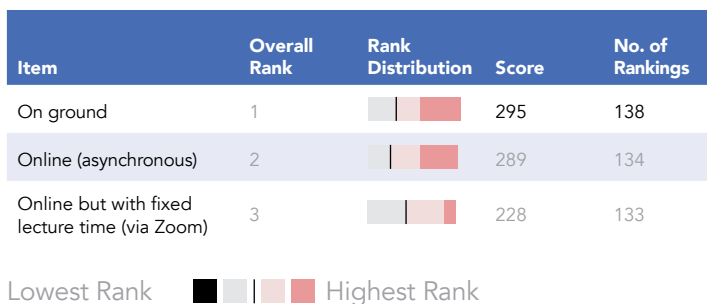
## Planning

Our process began when our chapter vice president prepared to meet with the president of MSCC, Dr. Michael Torrence. It was during the initial meeting with Dr. Torrence that we learned of his hopes for Motlow and his three-

culminated in “Pi Day” and “Halloween Week,” where our members collected data. Sadly, we could not plan any additional events, and in-person survey distribution became impossible after our college shut down due to the pandemic. Drastically changing our approach, we sent out mass campus emails and began working with professors, some of whom gave extra credit, to add the surveys to the college’s learning management system. We would not have been successful without the collaboration of the professors, the college president, campus deans, the ODL, librarians, the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) administrator, the Marketing Department, advisors, and — perhaps most integral to the entire essence of the project — the students of MSCC.

# Figure 1

Question 8. Please rank in order of preference based on the following statement. I would rather take classes:



year initiative entitled, “Achieving the Dream” (ATD), which inspired the focal point of our college project: fostering student voices. By understanding the needs of the students, both PTK and MSCC could exemplify our school’s mission to amplify the voices of its students. In accordance with this mindset, our goal was to ensure that students’ perspectives and voices were heard by crafting surveys that would reflect the students’ opinions. To begin, we met with the department of Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL) to create an effective survey that would give students the opportunity to provide honest feedback regarding the school’s efficiency, ranging from fun social opportunities to the functionality of administration and effectiveness of classroom instruction. To reach as many students as possible, we utilized several different approaches to engage with our MSCC peers. Therefore, after members met once again with Dr. Torrence, both parties agreed that we would host extracurricular activities to facilitate engagement. With much planning, such events

## Leadership Development

Members developed their leadership, knowledge, and critical-thinking abilities to put this project into effect. Advisors helped members develop communication skills by teaching etiquette, preparing us prior to meetings with administration, and allowing us to practice these skills by talking with experts. Members learned how to develop effective survey questions from meeting with librarians, college’s ODL, and a SENSE survey administrator. Distribution of these surveys reached more students after members’ communication with the college’s marketing department and professors. Furthermore, strong relationships developed during the many communications with administration as our project evolved to meet their requests. This increased the impact of our project.

In addition, concentrating on logistics, leadership, communication, and organization played a massive role in our successful events. During these events, members had to be flexible and creative to adjust to the administration’s requests. For example, the “Pi Day” festivities were rearranged because the college president requested involvement — even agreeing to take a pie in the face! The team again remained flexible with scheduling when the dean of the McMinnville campus asked PTK to work with SGA during our “Halloween Week” event to help SGA members grow their leadership abilities.

# Figure 2

Question 4. Do you think we need to have more of these things at Motlow? Please describe the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following. (Select "N/A" if you don't feel it applies to you)

	Strongly Agree Count Row %	Agree Count Row %	Neither Agree nor Disagree Count Row %	Disagree Count Row %	Strongly Disagree Count Row %	N/A Count Row %
Access to computer labs	45 22.3%	51 25.2%	54 26.7%	6 3.0%	0 0.0%	46 22.8%
Access to classroom labs	44 21.8%	48 23.8%	59 29.2%	5 2.5%	1 0.5%	45 22.3%
Libraries	52 25.7%	52 25.7%	58 28.7%	5 2.5%	3 1.5%	32 15.8%
Lounge areas	45 22.3%	56 27.7%	55 27.2%	4 2.0%	2 1.0%	40 19.8%
Laptop rentals	50 24.8%	39 19.3%	52 25.7%	3 1.5%	2 1.0%	56 27.7%
More diverse food options	41 20.3%	44 21.8%	56 27.7%	2 1.0%	1 0.5%	58 28.7%
Activities in your first few weeks as a student	50 24.8%	52 25.7%	52 25.7%	4 2.0%	1 0.5%	43 21.3%
Information about scholarships	80 39.6%	63 31.2%	34 16.8%	2 1.0%	0 0.0%	23 11.4%
Career fairs	69 34.2%	60 29.7%	35 17.3%	3 1.5%	0 0.0%	35 17.3%
Professional development workshops	62 30.7%	55 27.2%	40 19.8%	2 1.0%	0 0.0%	43 21.3%
Interesting speakers	44 21.8%	52 25.7%	59 29.2%	3 1.5%	1 0.5%	43 21.3%
Events celebrating other countries and cultures	53 26.2%	47 23.3%	55 27.2%	4 2.0%	2 1.0%	41 20.3%
Plays and musical events	49 24.3%	49 24.3%	60 29.7%	2 1.0%	2 1.0%	40 19.8%
Resources and/or mentors for ESL (English as a Second Language) students	46 22.8%	41 20.3%	50 24.8%	2 1.0%	1 0.5%	62 30.7%

Total Responses 202

Members' flexibility, tenacity, and creativity were again tested when the entire college shut down due to the pandemic. While the campuses were closed, all of the students' classes moved to a fully online delivery within the college's learning management system D2L/Brightspace. Members communicated with professors who allowed our survey to be embedded in specific course shells to elicit participation. We were again asked to adapt when the Fayetteville campus dean asked for additional questions pertaining to student online class type preferences. We presented her with our results, which had a direct impact on the type of classes available for the Spring 2021 semester (Figure 1). Because of our project, student voices were heard! The members of PTK took on a considerable amount of responsibility to ensure the success of this project. Because of this responsibility, we were able to hone our leadership skills, critical-thinking abilities, and knowledge to implement our College Project.

## Collaboration

Continued collaboration among our PTK members, college president, and campus deans greatly enhanced the success of our College Project. In order to successfully complete this initiative, three separate phases over the course of three years were carefully planned. Arguably, communication is key in any project. Since the primary goal was to incorporate and help bring student's perspective and voices to MSCC, conducting a survey to reach as many students as possible by utilizing different marketing tools was key to this project's success. To engage students and hear the "voices" of the student body, as requested and shaped by meetings with our college president, we designed extracurricular activities to be conducted on different Motlow campuses. We organized "Pi Day" at the Moore Country campus and held multiple engagement events during "Halloween Week."

In order to plan successful events, members consulted a completion coach to learn about setting goals and collaborated with a human resources representative to learn about how strategic planning is used in higher education. Team members recognized the importance of clear communication to ensure fruitful delegation of tasks like researching the mission statements of the college and PTK. For the second survey event, the

McMinnville campus dean offered essential insights for the Halloween activities. During the event, she enthusiastically participated in a costume contest as a fortune teller, wearing contacts to enhance the outfit. She also participated in the cook-off and pumpkin decorating contest, all of which were

# Figure 3

Question 13. Please tell us how you feel about Motlow's response to COVID-19 by selecting one option in response to these statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Count Row %	Count Row %	Count Row %	Count Row %	Count Row %
Motlow responded well to the COVID-19 crisis.	55 27.2%	85 42.1%	46 22.8%	14 6.9%	2 1.0%
Motlow communicated effectively with students during COVID-19.	52 25.7%	79 39.1%	46 22.8%	20 9.9%	5 2.5%
Motlow made student advisement available and accessible during COVID-19.	50 24.8%	76 37.6%	62 30.7%	12 5.9%	2 1.0%
Motlow ensured student registration was open and accessible to students, providing assistance if needed.	54 26.7%	99 49.0%	39 19.3%	7 3.5%	3 1.5%
Motlow used D2L effectively to establish student-lecturer contact and simplify the transition to online studies	56 27.7%	90 44.6%	39 19.3%	16 7.9%	1 0.5%
Motlow tutoring services were readily made available to students.	39 19.3%	73 36.1%	76 37.6%	8 4.0%	6 3.0%
Motlow effectively used Zoom to connect students and staff.	50 24.8%	81 40.1%	57 28.2%	12 5.9%	2 1.0%

Total Responses 202

ways to collect completed surveys. During the student engagement events, members worked with the facilities department and campus deans to reserve iPad carts to collect student surveys — a collaboration that was critical to our success.

After the events, our collaboration with administrators continued in a presentation to the college president, which included visual aids and a summary of the project. The Student Success department was given access to the data in the form of a thank you email.

## Impact

Members learned the importance of logistics, critical thinking, leadership, organization, and adaptation to new environments. COVID-19 presented several hardships and opportunities for community growth. The hardships resulting

from COVID-19 made face-to-face communication with administrators difficult. In 2020, college satisfaction fell by 5% reportedly due to difficulties with the college website. Everyone had to adapt to new technologies to continue their education and involvement in meetings for PTK. We have benefitted from using email, GroupMe, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams as now we are proficient in using these resources for education. Meeting in person weekly with the deans and monthly with the college president became exclusively virtual. An unexpected advantage of the lockdown was that students accessed email more frequently, increasing our survey completion number to over 200. Our data showed that approximately 42% of students agreed that mentors for English as a Second Language (ESL) students were needed in 2019, which increased by 1% in 2020. Based on our data (which was presented to our campus deans) the class format of online, on-ground, and online/fixed class time for the Spring 2021 semester was modified for all campuses in response to the students' feedback. The greatest accomplishment of our project is that it gave the student body a voice, influencing campus decisions during a time where communication with faculty was difficult. This was a direct fulfillment of the president's request of our PTK chapter. Another result of our survey showed the professional development workshop usefulness fell from 65% in 2019 to 57.9% in 2020 (Figure 2). Information collected made for interesting chapter discussions and exciting presentations to administration. Our project produced results that taught quantitative and qualitative lessons to members, advisors, and administrators. We also shared with the college's Student Success Department that only 8% of the students surveyed felt that student services did not make advisement available and accessible during the COVID-19 shutdown (Figure 3). Although this number was low, they will continue to improve online advisement.

# Campus and Community Resources Education

Tau Theta Chapter  
Labette Community College  
*Parsons, Kansas*

## Abstract

According to an *Inside Higher Education* article published in November 2020, colleges should commit to educating students about resources, not just academic information. The Tau Theta Chapter worked alongside the Caring Cardinal Committee (C3) of Labette Community College (LCC) to provide information on campus and community resources as well as promote the new Cardinal Kindness Stipend developed to help students struggling financially. The results of the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) along with information garnered from informal conversations with a variety of LCC staff members confirmed that LCC students needed information about college and community resources and the new college stipend. The administration and the chapter engaged staff and students throughout the college to create informational magnets and a social media campaign to promote the resources and stipend. In addition, the Cardinal Villas Housing and Student Life Office collaborated with the chapter and administration to ensure our efforts reached a broader audience. The goal of the project focused on the needs of students outside the classroom so they could focus on being successful within the classroom. The project accomplished its objectives and made an impact on the students and staff at LCC.

## Planning

In early March, after our regional convention, the outgoing and potential chapter officers met and discussed several possible projects to present to our administration. Unfortunately, this would be the last time the group would meet in person in 2020. After ending the spring semester remotely, the potential chapter officers did not return as planned to LCC. Thus, new officers and members



Figure 1

took the reins. The team met with administration remotely in the early fall semester to discuss possible projects to ensure LCC was providing a supportive environment for learning as outlined in the LCC mission statement. Options included mental health programming, substance abuse programming, campus beautification projects, and addressing food insecurity. The team decided to wait until the results of the October 2020 SSI were published to determine which need was greatest.

The results of the SSI indicated that students were unaware of many available resources on campus and in the community. The administration approved the C3 committee to provide a new resource offering a stipend to needy students. The administration and Tau Theta partnered together to collaborate with the Public Relations and Student Life Departments, along with C3 and the Cardinal Villas, to create a campus and community resource campaign.

The college president, vice president of student affairs, case manager, student life specialist, Villas housing manager, and members of both C3 and Tau Theta met virtually to determine the objectives that would ensure a positive impact on students.

To set the objectives, the team engaged in a brainstorming session and implemented the S.M.A.R.T. goal process. First we determined what information should be included in the resource campaign. Then we developed our leadership skills as we learned about advertising and event planning. After gaining additional financial resources for the Cardinal Kindness stipend, we set a goal of reaching at least 150 students during the fall 2020 semester.

After the first social media push, as the team evaluated the current project status, the administration, Tau Theta, and C3 discussed the need to increase funding for the Cardinal Kindness stipend. Further collaboration between these groups, the LCC Foundation, and Student Government Association (SGA) led to the establishment of a fund that would be managed by the foundation office, allowing people to receive a tax credit for donating. In addition, since student organizations could not travel, multiple groups, including a \$1,000 donation from Tau Theta, helped grow the fund. This new collaboration contributed to the success of the project.

## Leadership Development

To begin the project, the team worked with the C3 committee to compile a list of resources to share with students. The process of brainstorming with professionals provided a real-world experience of working as a team. In addition, the public relations director presented tips on advertising while her assistant discussed social media impact. From this, Tau Theta and C3 members developed the communication skills they needed to create engaging social media posts. The team also met with the student life specialist and Cardinal Villas manager to discuss events and activities that would provide more than the digital sharing of resources. During the fall regional virtual conference, members gained additional leadership skills in goal setting, empathy, and listening. Finally, the team developed skills in organization and event planning, especially on using Zoom and other digital communication platforms. The director of admissions, who is a part-time event planner, assisted the chapter with gaining the skills needed to develop and host successful events. These collaborations and trainings contributed to our ability to educate students about available resources so that they could achieve success inside and outside the classroom.



## Collaboration

The team worked with the administration and other partners, including C3, Student Life, Public Relations, Villas Housing, and the Case Manager throughout the project. Also, LCC's website manager assisted with placing the resources list on the website, including a QR code that was listed on the postings (Figure 1). In addition, they gained assistance from Public Relations and Athletics to promote the stipend and resources. Further collaborations came through the support of the Cardinal Kindness stipend by working with the LCC Foundation and Student Government Association.

As discussed previously, the team evaluated their progress and success throughout the process and made adjustments where needed. One adjustment was to focus some of the social media posts solely on the Cardinal Kindness stipend rather than promoting all the resources together. The team had found that applications for the stipend were lacking. Following the modification of our promotion techniques, the first stipend was awarded in December 2020 to a student facing challenges after contracting COVID-19 and not being able to work.

Throughout the project, the team talked with students during campus events and at the campus pantry about accessing the resources. The chapter and administration reviewed the methods used for sharing information about available resources and analyzed statistical data that included information about the number of students accessing the pantry, the number of students engaging in mental health counseling, and other relevant data. By the end of the semester, the number of students accessing the pantry and mental health counseling services had increased because of our promotion of these resources.

## Impact

Tau Theta was able to meet the project objectives through a strong partnership with the LCC administration and staff, while remaining flexible and creative when faced with obstacles. The first two objectives addressed process and leadership development. The students learned many lessons throughout the planning and implementation process. The members grew as scholar-servant

leaders through their leadership in team meetings and collaboration with the administration. In addition, members who volunteered to hand out items in person during Finals Frenzy and at the pantry learned the value of small talk, a smile, and body language to ensure fellow students felt comfortable. Finally, members developed a deeper appreciation for the college administration through the numerous administrative meetings that Tau Theta attended. Peyton Simpson, who helped distribute the informational magnets during a Finals Frenzy event, said, "It has been an amazing process to see how such a great group of people can come together to better the college and its students."

Objectives three and four focused on quantitative and qualitative data for sharing of the resources and the Cardinal Kindness stipend. The Cardinal Kindness stipend gained a half dozen applications, with one award of \$300 being given to a student. The student indicated that without the stipend, he would not have been able to pay his rent and provide food for his 6-month-old child. It is the hope of administration that this student, who formerly served as SGA president, will provide a short testimony so more students will apply and additional money will be raised beyond the funds Tau Theta and others donated.

Finally, we reached over 200 students by placing the informational magnets in the Cardinal Villas mailboxes, handing them out at both the pantry and Finals Frenzy, and providing them to instructors who requested them for students in need. This strategy made the largest impact as it offered a big benefit to LCC students by providing them with knowledge of resources and possible financial assistance. Chapter officer Ashley Horton said, "I gained leadership skills within this project that are helping me as I consider running for Regional Officer this coming spring."

Finally, when LCC Board Trustee David Winchell saw the social media posts, he was impressed with how the information was professionally presented. "This is a great representation of the impact something small can have on our students succeeding in college," said Mr. Winchell.



# Establishing Student Success and Transfer Initiative

Beta Delta Iota Chapter  
Lone Star College — Montgomery  
*Conroe, Texas*

## Abstract

The Beta Delta Iota Chapter collaborated with college administration to create Mavericks Achieving Scholarship and Transfer (M.A.S.T) to help students achieve scholarship and transfer by hosting virtual workshops, transfer sessions, and a transfer advice podcast. Initially, our project focused on the cultivation of synchronous transfer communities based on four-year universities to which Lone Star College-Montgomery (LSCM) students were interested in transferring. For these universities, we first created a student Discord server hoping that it would encourage students to aid each other with application and scholarship deadline reminders, as well as provide a virtual space to make friends with whom they could transfer or transition.

Additionally, we aimed to hold twice-monthly virtual meetings and partner with the Transfer, Recruitment, and Career Center (TRAC Center) on campus for scholarship, essay, and resume workshops. We initially invited transfer representatives from each university to speak with the students and advise them on their academic endeavors. However, over the course of the semester, we shifted our project to an asynchronous podcast format to accommodate students' schedules. Based on the high volume of LSCM students transferring to these schools, we focused on Texas A&M, Sam Houston, University of Houston, Texas State, University of Texas, and Texas Tech. After struggling to attain good student turnout in the Discord space, virtual transfer meetings, and workshops, we decided to create a podcast where students could acquire transfer advice on their own time. This podcast also served as a more personalized tool that the TRAC Center could provide to the students via the school.



Figure 1

## Planning

While preparing ideas to present to the college administration, our officer team met both separately and with advisors to review the college project guidelines and the college mission statement around which we could sculpt our project. We found that our campus focused on encouraging persistence toward advancing equity to achieve higher graduation rates. As a result, the officer team and advisors met with administration to present three possible projects aligned with these goals. After further deliberation, we collaboratively determined that the scholarship and transfer project was the best option to provide students with an easily accessible resource to further our campus' graduation and transfer rates for years to come. We hoped this project would motivate students to continue their education after graduating from a community college by providing them a supportive environment and the information needed to feel confident in the transfer process. The administration recommended we work with the TRAC Center, who agreed to help by hosting scholarship, essay, and resume workshops and transfer sessions for the aforementioned universities. Due to this semester's virtual format, we had to collaborate with the Marketing and Communication department to create a consistent marketing plan and create awareness about these transfer resources to our peers. However, we struggled to attain significant student turnout and engagement at the meetings. While speaking with a transfer representative from Texas State

University, we discussed the lack of engagement we had faced during this virtual semester. The transfer representative mentioned that she had also faced troubles of her own, describing that in a transfer session she hosted for all the high schools in Texas's largest school district, she only had about 10-15 people attend. This conversation helped us conclude that it was not a matter of effort but strategy. Soon after, we organized a meeting with an advisor from the TRAC Center and decided to reconfigure the project's format to gain more student attention. The reasoning for this format change was that we understood students may be feeling "Zoom fatigue" from having all of their classes online. A podcast format, however, would provide a portable form of information that they could access at their convenience. We knew that students would have varying schedules and commitments that could hinder attendance, so this format was more suitable. As a result, we went forward with creating a podcast called the M.A.S.T. Cast, where we interviewed students who have transferred from Lone Star College to one of the six focus universities (Figure 1). In our podcast, we asked questions about the transfer process, academics, scholarships, and lifestyle changes with the goal of making it fun, personal, educational, and useful.

## Leadership Development

Throughout the M.A.S.T. initiative, officers developed their professional communication, media production, organizational, and marketing skills. As representatives of LSCM and our Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter, our officers maintained a standard of professionalism by cultivating good working relationships with our school's partners. In producing this project, officers held substantial email communication and professional meetings with college administration, guest speakers, advisors, and alumni. This communication often had to occur weeks ahead of the planned event to ensure availability and proper advertising. During this project, we sustained advertising by sending out routine Remind101 texts, designing and emailing flyers to student mailing lists as well as posting the flyers on the PTK and Student Life Instagram accounts, and encouraging our PTK members to attend transfer sessions during our biweekly member meetings. We also conducted extensive research to determine best practices and platforms

to employ in preparation for our podcast. We took the advice of many podcast start-up articles through this research and used trial and error to find the best platform to post and distribute our show. We also collaborated with our college's Marketing and Communication Department to promote our podcast and transfer advising meetings.

## Collaboration

Initially, our officer team had many different ideas about how we could aid our campus during this challenging year. We narrowed it down to three equally great projects, and when we met with the college president and her administrative team, which included the vice president of instruction and the vice president of student success, to present our project ideas, it was not easy to choose only one. We received enthusiastic encouragement and support from the college administration about the M.A.S.T. project. The administrative team believed this project fell in line with college priorities and referred us to several departments within the college that we could collaborate with to help organize this project. We decided that the TRAC Center would be our most useful resource because we wanted to virtually revive their transfer information session series that had been held on campus before the pandemic.

After contacting the TRAC Center, we became acquainted with an advisor integral to this entire project. He served as an additional advising resource, accompanying us in every transfer session, workshop, and even our podcast to interview the student hosts. Whenever we had trouble contacting a college representative, he kindly offered his networking assistance.

We also received help from our college's Student Life team, who shared our advertisements on the Student Life Discord server. After our first podcast, one of our members reached out to the officer team, expressing his interest in participating in the recording of our next planned podcast. This member plans to transfer to the University of Houston (UH), so we invited him to serve as a co-host during our interview with a UH Alum. We plan to continue including individuals interested in the selected universities since this has substantially improved the quality of the information received and enhanced the narrative of the college experience.

## Impact

To build awareness of the project, we produced multiple Remind101 texts that we sent to 107 PTK members and shared several Instagram posts and stories that would potentially be seen by our 166 followers. By the end of the four workshops and transfer sessions we hosted, we had a total of 9 Remind texts, 11 Instagram stories, and 6 Instagram posts. Despite our advertising approaches, we continued to garner low student turnout, with a collective total of five students attending our workshops and transfer sessions throughout the semester. However, switching to a podcast format allowed for student schedule accommodation and increased student engagement while using the same advertising methods. When starting our podcast, we wanted to make sure we were still providing helpful information that would continue to encourage students to graduate and transfer. We emailed an electronic form to our chapter mailing list and created a poll to gauge student interest in different universities and what podcast platform they use. We received 12 form responses and three emails. As of January 2021, we have produced and released two podcast episodes: one for Texas A&M University (TAMU) and one for UH. So far, our episode for TAMU has had 13 streams, and the UH episode has had 14, with the majority of streams coming from Spotify, where 42% of our listeners stem from. As the 2020-2021 academic year continues, we plan to create six more episodes to complete our transfer university series, including two personal interviews with advisors at our college.

While our project is still growing and changing, we believe the M.A.S.T. initiative has motivated students to reach graduation and transfer to their desired university. When we were reevaluating our project's format with the TRAC advisor, we realized that the most impactful voices in the motivation of our peers are words of advice and encouragement from fellow students who have shared experiences. He advised us to play to our strengths as students going through the transfer process ourselves, seeing that we can understand the challenges students face and we know what kind of questions they may have. Thus, when we changed our project from hosting workshops to creating a podcast, it was more about generating personal appeal and less about providing cut-and-dry information.



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