



REPORT

From the office of the...

MSU Horizons

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Michael Coulson
SUBJECT: MSU Horizons Report 1
DATE: June 23 2015

UPDATE

Currently, Horizons planning and preparation is in full-swing. The Planning Team is working hard at the individualized tasks to ensure the conference can run as smoothly as possible. We are currently in interviews, and by the time we meet, we will have hired our entire staff team. This year we experienced an incredibly high interest in Horizons staff, at a record breaking number of applications (246 applicants), which is both exciting and challenging for the Planning Team. We are confident in our interview and selection process, which we have put a lot of time and effort into optimizing. The logistics of the conference and dealing with supporting services is well underway. Most of the projects that I intended on doing are either done, or in the works, so this report will have a lot of content being that it is my first report (I will try and make it as concise as possible).

SERVICE USAGE

Delegate Registration has just recently opened, with a total number of 35 enrolled students. We have yet to start our promotional plan for registration, this will commence after June 22. As stated above we received a record breaking number of applications (246) this year, which speaks to the success of our promotional plan, students' desire to get involved, and the reputation of the Horizons Conference.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

For a brief whirlwind update of all the large projects in progress or completed, I created a set of sub-headings, so bear with me while I break the format of the outline:

200 Delegates:

This year we are increasing the size of the conference, from 150 to 200 delegates. Hopefully this will allow us to impact more students, and we can provide a template for expansion for future years. A couple of hurdles have already been mounted, including meal logistics, staffing, promotional campaigns, and MUSC session room restraints. The only big thing left on the list is to get the revised budget approved, which I am hoping can happen sometime soon, through EB. Expanding to 200 means increased fee revenue and annual campaign spending.

Delegate Survey:

We have implemented an optional survey during delegate registration to record a baseline for the skills and themes that the conference is known for offering. Delegates are able to answer questions around the themes of campus familiarity, academic and social worries, involvement potential, and thoughts on leadership. After delegates leave the conference weekend, we will offer the same survey again, to see the effect of the weekend on this criteria. This will give us a good indication of the strengths and weaknesses of the conference, and will give us answers classic egg-or-chicken questions like “Does Horizons create volunteers, or is there a bias for volunteers to sign up for Horizons?”

E-Commerce Integration:

In conference past, delegates were required to pay separate to their registration. This posed problems for keeping track of delegate payment. So, working with the lovely Pauline Taggart, we sent in for a back-end survey revamp in order to include things like an auto link to payment, and background templates to make it more appealing. A couple other things were suggested to the developers, but they seem to be still in the works. This has made it a ton easier for me to watch payments coming in, and keep track of registration.

Instalment Plan:

To make the conference more accessible for delegates that may not be able to afford the fee, we created an instalment program (pay now, pay later), and publicized the offer of financial aid. This option has been used by 5 students already, and it seems they have shown gratitude for this option.

Balanced Staff Hiring:

In the past Horizons has sadly been known for its exclusivity in staff hiring. This year the planning team has grouped all applicants into 3 categories of experience. Applicants will then be scored without experience bias, then compared to other applicants in their category. This will be used as a guideline for hiring, ensuring that we have a fairly equal number of each category of applicant on our staff team.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

In the coming weeks, we will be primarily working on our registration promotion, in order to achieve a full conference of 200 delegates. As well, we will be working on a delegate information package, and ordering swag.

BUDGET

There hasn't been much spending out of the Horizons budget, other than the deposit for Housing and Conference.

CURRENT CHALLENGES - Nothing the team can't handle other than expanding the budget.

SUCSESSES – Things are going very well with Horizons.