

Name of person submitting report:
Elizabeth Knox

knox@southwestern.edu

210-262-2662

Southwestern University

Disabilities Workshop-Pac Rim Conference

March 30, 2007

Amount awarded: \$1500

I give ACS permission to post the original proposal and summary of the project on the ACS Diversity website.

Report of ACS Mini-grant Funds Usage

1. Original goals and objectives:

The original reason we applied for the grant was to have funds to help increase awareness of disabilities issues on the Southwestern campus. In the past few years, different issues and concerns have arisen about the nature of disabilities on campus that have created a less desirable environment for discussion. The workshop was created as a forum to discuss ways to increase comfort levels and to encourage people to further explore different issues related to diversity.

2. If goals and objectives changed during the course of the project, please state the revised goals and objectives.

Initially we wanted to include representatives from different campuses in order to have a wider range of perspectives, but after considerable thought and discussion with the other planners, we decided to limit it to Southwestern in order to keep the environment small and intimate. The issues we were planning to touch on were rather sensitive and we were unsure of how well people would be exchange ideas with people from other campuses. The intimate environment allowed a very free flow of discussion, which was our initial goal.

3. In what ways were the goals and objectives met? Please give examples.

I attended the Pacific Rim Conference on disabilities in Honolulu, Hawaii the second weekend of March 2007. Attending this conference allowed me to both interact with people who have disabilities and attend different information sessions that focused on disability issues. The workshops covered issues like technology advances, cultural support systems, and etiquette.

These sessions helped me prepare for the workshop that I co-hosted Eric Arias, another Southwestern University student, on March 30, 2007. The purpose of the Southwestern University seminar was to increase comfort levels toward and about disabilities. We accomplished this by doing miniature simulations. For an icebreaker we put stickers with the names of different people who have disabilities. Attendees had to ascertain who they were without mentioning the disability of the person. I am attaching the instructions for the various activities to this report.

We had a lengthy discussion toward the end, and different attendees reflected and shared ideas for improving communication with those who have disabilities. Some of the attendees had disabilities and shared their personal experiences about different interactions they have had.

We summed up the conference by saying that people learn and adapt to different lifestyles—disabilities are not something to be feared. I used the information from the Pacific Rim conference to hold a short discussion about different etiquette issues. The idea of disability as a diversity issue was explored also, as the idea of disability culture was discussed.

We were very pleased that we had 35 people sign up. All of the attendees actively participated in the activities and contributed to the end discussions. Some had to leave early, but provided insights about their personal experiences before leaving. We

had about five staff members and one faculty member in attendance. The rest of the attendees were students from Southwestern.

4. Describe the evaluation/assessment used. Summarize the results of this process.

After the workshop I sent an email to all of the participants with a survey asking different things about their individual experiences. I have attached the survey and the responses.

5. If you were to redesign the project, what would you do differently and why?

If we were to redesign the workshop, I would have invited a guest speaker from the local community to discuss disabilities in the post-college setting, but since the focus was on how we could work at the campus level, we emphasized the stories provided by members of the campus who have disabilities.

6. How have you shared the results with ACS colleagues and beyond ACS?

We were originally planning to involve other ACS campuses, but decided to keep the project smaller in attendance. Other institutions are free to use any of the handouts and activities we created for the event.

7. What are the next steps in your project?

Some people have asked to make the event an annual one. Because I will no longer be attending Southwestern, I am leaving the binder created for the event in the Office of Academic Services for anyone to use as future reference. Planning the workshop allowed me to better understand how important disability awareness really is. So many people have unanswered questions about how to interact with those who have disabilities, and I think that providing an open forum for people to discuss these issues is one way for people to better connect and relate with others about issues that might have been uncomfortable in the past.

8. Financial statement attached.

Most of the money from the grant was used to fund the trip to Hawaii, but \$501.19 was spent on actual supplies for the workshop. We had door prizes to increase attendance and had different supplies to enable each activity.

9. Statement included on the cover page.

Attached: Flyer publicizing workshop, Budget, Response surveys of some attendees, Handouts from workshop

Survey Questions and Answers

Hello all,

Thank you for attending the workshop last Friday! We hope that you found it to be beneficial and informative.

Please answer the questions below so that we can evaluate the success of the workshop.

1. What was your reason for attending the workshop?

Next year theatre for social justice is hopefully doing a show on disabilities, and I am disabled.

Our psych professor handed out flyers during class and I thought it would be interesting.

Pairs well with the Survey of exceptionalities course.

To learn and gain new understanding of what it means to live with different disabilities. I have an interest in disabilities awareness and have been involved in Best Buddies (which deals with disabilities) for four years, so I've been interested for quite some time now.

I wanted to learn more about disability etiquette.

In order to help me attain my survey exceptionalities goal of gaining a better understanding of what it means to live as a person with a disability.

2. Was the workshop what you expected it would be?

I didn't really know what to expect

I did not expect the hands on activities. I thought it was going to be a speaker at a podium (I was pleasantly surprised).

No, it was a lot more fun and interactive.

I was thinking it would be more of a panel -- where audience members would hear from different students with different disabilities.

I didn't really know what to expect because I didn't know what kind of disabilities would be covered and discussed.

Yes, the workshop was very effective

It wasn't what I expected it to be. I was not prepared to do some of the things. I had no idea they would effect me the way that they did.

3. Please rate your overall engagement in the activities (1-10). Why did you give this rating?

8, they were fairly engaging, but lasted a bit too long

I was engaged at an 8.

10, I really honestly loved this workshop. I thought it was really great the way things were presented in a hands on fashion and in a creative environment.

8 -- but I was only there for an hour. I'm assigning this rating because the activities were fun, engaging, and designed to help participants develop a sense of what having a disability feels like.

I would give it a 9 or a 10 simply because it gave me a perspective on what life is like for those with disabilities, and how those disabilities give them unique abilities in return.

10.

5. I was very hesitant to step outside of my comfort zone.

4. Did you feel able to freely participate in the workshop activities?

Yes

I felt uncomfortable participating in the blind activity because I'm terrible with names, but that happens, I suppose.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes, it was all very welcoming!

Yes, I did.

I knew that I was more than welcome to participate, but it was hard to make myself step outside of the box.

5. Were you able to get what you wanted out of the workshop? If not, what was left out?

I had to leave before the discussion, and that's what I was looking forward to most.

The information sheets you had on the tables were extremely interesting and the discussion at the end about approaching someone with a disability was something I had never thought about (and as a hopeful teacher in the future, should).

Unfortunately I had to leave early, but I got everything out of the workshop that I wanted for the events I was able to attend.

Given that I could only spend an hour at the session, think I would have preferred just hearing students' perspectives, rather than the activities. If I had more time, however, the hands-on work would be ideal.

My only issue is that I was hoping disabilities such as Down's syndrome, autism, etc. would be discussed and included in the seminar to increase awareness of those disabilities.

I was able to get what I wanted, thanks.

Yes. Most definitely.

6. What do you think the main purpose/point/meaning of the workshop was?

To educate, inform, and help people understand how to work with and act around people who are differently abled than they are.

To display that people with disabilities, while hindered, are and should be treated as respectable members of our society.

Just to raise awareness and encourage people to walk a little in someone else's shoes so to speak.

I think the main purpose (or what I took from it) was that people with disabilities are given abilities unique to them that enable them to do things others cannot. Therefore, disabilities are in no way a bad thing, and do not limit those with disabilities from working hard and achieving their goals.

To make people more aware of the etiquette of disabilities and the different experiences of individuals with varying disabilities.

Help individuals to have a better understanding of what it means to be a person with a disability and how to handle social situations that might be awkward.

7. Do you have any more questions or comments about the workshop?

Great job, I hope you do it again!

I really loved it, you guys did a great job!

Thank you!

I know you're a senior and will be graduating, but I'm hoping that this could become an annual event. Do you know if that would be possible?

Ya'll did a great job!

No. Thank you for doing it, though!