



Overcoming Barriers: Supporting Nontraditional and Underserved Populations

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Career and Technical Student Organization Success:
Overcoming Barriers to Membership and Meaningful Participation

- 3 Introduction
- 4 Objectives
- 6 Process
- 7 Identification & Allocation
- 9 Impact & Results
- 11 Conclusion
- 12 Appendix A. Overview of the Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations
- 13 Appendix B. CTSO Competitive Grant Application
- 14 Appendix C. CTSO Summary Report
- 16 Appendix D. High School Demographic Data

Introduction

Research confirms that [co-curricular] student organizations provide a safe environment to improve academic achievement, promote civic and social responsibility and develop leadership [employ-ability] skills. Yet these outcomes are only possible if young people have the opportunity to participate and engage in them in meaningful ways.

Career and technical education in conjunction with an integrated career and technical student organization (CTSO) are highly effective in decreasing dropout rates and keeping students engaged in learning. 81% of dropouts stated that more “real world” learning would have influenced them to stay in school.¹

Students who participated in a CTSO earned more A's and B's (as well as fewer D's) than those who did not. Students in a CTSO were also more involved in more extracurricular and volunteer activities.²

Why Participation Matters

Co-curricular student organizations provide countless benefits to students:

CTSOs allow students to see the relationship between academics and industry through hands on activities;

- They encourage students to achieve high academic and occupational standards. Most CTSOs have academic requirements and provide skill assessments;
- CTSOs provide an opportunity for students to gain confidence and knowledge through peer competition at the local, state and national level;
- And they provide scholarship opportunities and many competitions offer prizes related to their education and program of study.

That said, there are real discrepancies in access to and participation in career and technical student organizations. While a school may have one or more CTSOs and the student may even be a member, they may encounter significant barriers to meaningful participation including financial support, transportation, and other support factors.

Issues of participation are particularly important for high school and post secondary students who must make choices about productive and nonproductive options, which go beyond school and structured programs to include employment, responsibilities at home and “hanging out with friends”. CTSOs must receive the necessary support to be competitive with other school and community based activities.

1 Bridgeland et al., 2010,

2 NRCCTE Alfeld et cl.,

Once enrolled in a CTSO, sustained involvement is a key factor in generating a positive outcome. To really benefit from the participation in the CTSO, the student must develop connections to the people and activities over a period of time; ultimately acquiring the skills for successful transition into the workplace.

In the 2011 Annual Report, the Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO) Board of Directors identified Underserved and Nontraditional Populations as a priority. The MFSO would seek to identify the reasons students were not able to have meaningful participation in [or in some cases even access to] CTSOs and create both “real” and financial solutions to overcome them.

In cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Education and the Office of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; the MFSO worked with the CTSOs through a competitive grant process to achieve this.

Objective

To ensure all students have the ability to join AND actively participate in the leadership opportunities within career and technical student organizations; paying specific attention to barriers encountered by underserved and nontraditional populations, including socio-economic, minority and gender status.

Goals

1. Identify specific barriers encountered by students that are current members in career and technical student organizations prohibiting them from [full] participation (i.e. conference attendance; industry certification, technical skill attainment);
2. Identify common barriers of those students enrolled in career and technical programs, not participating in career and technical student organizations where they are currently available (i.e. a chapter has already been established);
3. Identify broad barriers that keep schools/institutions offering accredited career and technical education programs from establishing career and technical student organization chapters to their students.
4. Assist CTSOs in creating real and financial long-term solutions to overcome barriers to meaningful participation.

Methods and Reporting

The career and technical student organizations will have an opportunity to apply for funding through a competitive grant process identifying the program/project and its impact on serving Underserved and/or Nontraditional Populations. If the CTSO is seeking financial support for a chapter, the CTSO must identify the activities the chapter will be engaging in and demonstrate the chapter would not have been able to participate without support.

The Executive Committee of the Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations Board of Directors will approve the grant applications. Once the program/project has concluded and the CTSO has reported on the activities; funding will be issued.

Based on the specific CTSO experiences, the MFSO will identify specific barriers and solutions as outlined within the Objective.

Process

The Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations presented both the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the Minnesota Department of Education with a proposal for funding to identify barriers to meaningful participation within CTSOs and develop solutions to overcome them. The project was approved with the focus being CTSOs as “sub-grant” recipients.

The MFSO provided the CTSOs an opportunity to apply for the funds through a competitive application process. All applications were required to be received by October 1st, 2013 to allow for review and approval prior to the program/project occurring.³

The MFSO Board of Directors elected to designate the review and approval process to the Executive Committee (Co-Chairpersons, Secretary and Treasurer). Prior to being reviewed by the Executive Committee for content and impact, the Executive Director reviewed each proposal to ensure it met basic federal Carl Perkins guidelines. The Executive Committee presented its findings to the MFSO Board of Directors⁴ in quarterly program reports.

3 Application for the Underserved Populations Project, Appendix B

4 MFSO Overview, Appendix A

Identification and Allocation

The following were barriers identified by the MFSO through the application process:

1. Financial. Students are not able to participate in a meaningful way in CTSO activities (including those related to TSA and leadership skills) due to prohibitive costs.
2. Nontraditional Gender Related Education and Career Paths. There remains a gender bias with particular career areas. This bias stigma inhibits nontraditional students from meaningful participation in co-curricular activities including CTSOs.

In reviewing all of the applications and approving projects; the majority of the need was financial hardship of the individual school/district/CTSO chapter. The CTSOs have been unable to recruit/begin new chapters or fully engage current chapters due to socio-economic status.

There were also three workshops/seminars approved that would be addressing nontraditional gender related careers. The speakers would be addressing instructors/advisers, administrators and students; providing “real” information on how to address and encourage equality in education and in the workplace.

The following CTSOs and programs/projects were approved:

DECA Secondary

The mission of DECA is to enhance the education of all students with interests in marketing, management or entrepreneurship. DECA assists students in developing skills and competencies for marketing careers, while building self-esteem, experiencing leadership, and providing community services.

BPA Secondary

The mission of Business Professionals of America (BPA) is to contribute to the preparation of a world-class workforce through the advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic, and technological skills. BPA provides educational experiences that further develop social intelligence, civic consciousness, leadership skills and self-esteem for its members

FCCLA

The mission of FCCLA is to promote personal growth and leadership development through Family and Consumer Sciences education. Focusing on the multiple roles of family member, wage earner and community leader, members develop skills for life through: character development, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication, practical knowledge, and career preparation.

SkillsUSA High School and College

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA helps each student excel. SkillsUSA's mission is to empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens.

HOSA

The mission of Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) is to enhance the delivery of compassionate, quality health care by providing opportunities for knowledge, skill and leadership development of all health science technology education students, therefore, helping students to meet the needs of the health care community.

FCCLA-HERO

The mission of FCCLA-HERO is to promote personal growth and leadership development through service occupations education. Focusing on the multiple roles of family member, wage earner and community leader, members develop skills for life through character development; creative and critical thinking; interpersonal communications; practical knowledge; and vocational preparation.

In keeping with the requirements of the federal Carl Perkins Act, the CTSOs were awarded funding only after the activity was complete and the MFSO Executive Committee had received a satisfactory report of the results and impact of the activities.⁵

Impact and Results

The Overcoming Barriers to Participation project directly impacted the following schools⁶:

Roosevelt High School
Dakota County Technical Center
Cooper High School
Elk River High School
Tartan High School

Each of these schools was profoundly impacted through meaningful CTSO activities. In many cases the CTSO had not previously been accessible to the students and instructors/advisers for financial reasons:

“We are excited to continue working with our Student Organization, and want to thank you for the opportunity to access funding through the Special Populations Grant for our new chapter...directed at getting non-traditional and minority students into opportunities related to career and education. Our chapter is made up of 100% students of color, and 65-70% free and reduced lunch. This is an outstanding group of young people who have tremendous things to offer...and would not have this opportunity otherwise.”⁷

95% of educators surveyed found CTSOs to be an effective tool in keeping students engaged in the classroom.⁸ The CTSO benefits to educators include :

- They provide instructional strategies used to develop and expand occupational competencies;
- They are an extension of the CTE program which enriches and enhances learning. CTSO curriculum is updated every year with the assistance of industry professionals;
- And CTSOs offer skill assessments which measure the students skill competencies against current industry standards. This can act as valuable instructional tool to the educator.

The chapters that received funds for basic operations were able to reallocate some of their fund raising efforts to assist students with financial hardships engage in activities they would otherwise have not been able:

“The State Conference was an experience I will carry with me forever, especially since it is the only competitive activity I have ever been a part of. I am so proud of myself and the people I had the honor of working with. It has changed my life.”⁹

“It has helped me gain confidence in my speech, my tests and my character. This conference will forever be a part of my professional career.”¹⁰

6 High School Demographic Data, Appendix D

7 HOSA Over Coming Barriers to Meaningful Participation Report

8 Journal of Workforce Education and Development Ullrich etcl.,2007

9 DECA High School Over Coming Barriers to Meaningful Participation Report

10 BPA High School Over Coming Barriers to Meaningful Participation Report

The project indirectly impacted more than 80 high schools and colleges through seminars and speakers, including many CTSO chapters in rural Minnesota. A broad spectrum of students were surveyed following one of the events:¹¹

- 76% of those surveyed said they are more goal oriented [as a direct result of the event];
- 83% of those surveyed are more able to set priorities [as a direct result of the event];
- 84% of those surveyed had developed better communication skills [as a direct result of the event];
- 65% of those surveyed said they are better aware of career and educational opportunities [as a direct result of the event].

Historically, once a school has had the opportunity to participate in a CTSO in a meaningful way [attend leadership and competitive skilled conferences] they are able to see immediate results in the students academic performance and in chapter membership growth. In a recent national study, 93% of school administrators found CTSOs to be effective at developing leadership skills and 90% of the administrators found CTSOs to effective in improving academic performance.¹²

11 FCCLA Over Coming Barriers to Meaningful Participation Report

12 Journal of Workforce Education and Development Ullrich etcl.,2007

Conclusion

The MFSO was able to support to 7 career and technical student organizations, who in turn were able to provide both direct and in-direct support to students and instructors in more than 80 institutions [high school, technical centers and colleges] across the state. The impact of this support was immediate for the student; the student who would otherwise not have had this opportunity. The leadership tools they received will be with them throughout their educational and professional careers.

The long term impact for the career and technical student organizations, academic institutions and the state as a whole will continue to reinforce the importance of CTE, particularly with integrated CTSOs:

- The CTSOs will continue to experience the growth of new chapters and meaningful participation in mature chapters;
- Instructors have TSA and Industry Standards more readily available to educate and prepare students · for the workforce;
- Administrators will see the value of meaningful participation in a CTSO as a true performance measure within the student body;
- CTSOs will bring an increasingly positive image of career and technical education throughout Minnesota;

And finally, fostering participation through CTSO leadership opportunities within career and technical education will create an employable and sustainable workforce for Minnesota's economy.

Appendix A.



Overview of the Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations

The Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO) is the collective umbrella co-curricular Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) reside under in Minnesota. The MFSO was created in 1996 by the Minnesota State Legislature to bridge the public and private funding of Career and Technical Student Organizations. The MFSO is an independent state agency whose primary purpose is to support co curricular career and technical student organizations. The MFSO acts in an advisory capacity to the MDE and to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities in allocating legislative funds to the CTOS. The MFSO provides assistance to the Career and Technical Student Organizations it serves in the following areas: Leadership Training, Conference Support, Board Development, Legislative Initiatives and MDE Legislative Grant Management. The MFSO also seeks and allocates additional state, federal (including Carl D Perkins) and private funds to the CTOS.

The MFSO serves the following career and technical student organizations:

Secondary

- BPA – Business Professionals of America
- DECA – Marketing Education
- FCCLA – Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
- FFA – Agriculture and Agribusiness education
- HOSA – Health Occupations
- SkillsUSA – Technical and Industry Occupations

Post Secondary

- BPA – Business Professionals of America
- DECA – Marketing Education
- SkillsUSA – Technical and Industry Occupations

Mailing Address: PO Box 25212 • Saint Paul • MN 55125

Physical Address: 1500 Highway 36 W • Roseville • MN 55113

www.mnfso.org

Appendix B.

Application for Support

Underserved, Special Population and Nontraditional Student Support in Career and Technical Student Organizations

Grants will be awarded to CTSOs seeking to support “active and meaningful” participation for underserved students in nontraditional and special populations. This may include chapter attendance at skilled and/or leadership events*; educational materials relating to special and nontraditional populations incorporation into CTE programs of study; and chapter development with an emphasis on nontraditional populations in CTE programs of study. This grant is not specifically limited to these areas but the activity must meet the grant criteria.

Organization Information

Date of Application:

Legal Name of Organization:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

Telephone/Fax:

Executive Director:

Request for Support

What is the activity the funds will be used for?

Relationship

How does the activity relate to CTE and Underserved, Nontraditional and Special Populations?

Measures

Goals; specific objectives; actions that will accomplish your objectives; and time frame in which the activities will take place.

Results

Who will monitor the measures and complete the final report?

Budget

Please use the budget form accompanying this form to outline a specific budget.

* Requests must meet the Carl Perkins Requirements.

Appendix C.

CTSO Summary Report: Underserved Populations

The MFSO (Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations) sought to assist the CTSOs in better serving underserved populations enrolled in CTE (career and technical education). The definition of underserved populations can vary greatly- it was determined by the MFSO Board of Directors that underserved included any student who was unable to engage in meaningful participation in CTSO (career and technical student organizations) activities due to socio-economic, geographic or minority status.

CTSOs were required to fill out an application requesting funding. The funding needed to support participation of a chapter that would otherwise not have been able to participate in the activity OR it was also allowable to provide a speaker or education initiative centered around nontraditional, diverse or underserved populations.

The CTSOs are required to report on the activities they were approved for; this includes detailed demographic information and follow up participation and/or additional results. Those reports are due by August 1st. It is the intent of the MFSO to provide a compilation report of the results of the CTSO activities by September 1st, 2014.

The following is a summary of the applications and the activities that were approved:

FCCLA HERO:

As stated in the request "the keynote presentation at FDA will be addressing non-traditional careers for males as well as career opportunities in working with children in a non-traditional setting". The speaker will address the Fall Delegation at the Leadership Conference.

FCCLA:

There is a request for a keynote speaker. The speaker is a champion of woman's advocacy founding such groups as Girls in Action and was awarded the WOW Achievement Award in the category of individual champion of women for her innovation in creating programs and processes which increase organizational effectiveness and individual performance of women in the workplace. The speaker will address the delegation at the Spring Competitive Events Conference.

HOSA:

The socio-economically challenged chapter of Roosevelt High School is seeking to attend the Fall HOSA leadership conference. This is a chapter that has historically not been able to participate in such activities due to financial constraints.

SkillsUSA College:

SkillsUSA will be assisting students in need in western Minnesota, with the prohibitive cost of attending of the SkillsUSA State Leadership & Skills Conference. This area of the state has not had not been able to participate for socio-economic reasons for several years.

SkillsUSA High School:

SkillsUSA seeks to provide DCTC Special Education and At Risk Students attending SkillsUSA State Leadership & Skills Conference. In the past, Special Needs and At Risk Students had not been able to participate in these conferences due to financial reasons.

DECA:

The socio-economically challenged chapters of Cooper High School and Elk River are seeking to attend the Spring Leadership Conference. These chapters have historically not been able to participate in such activities due to financial constraints.

BPA:

The socio-economically challenged chapter of Tartan High School is seeking to attend the Spring Leadership Conference. This is a chapter that has historically not been able to participate in such activities due to financial constraints.

Final reports upon the conclusion of all activities were received by the MFSO and are available upon request.

Appendix D.

High School Data

Roosevelt High School Demographics: School Year 2013

Grade Configuration: 9-12

Total Students: 827

Native American: 6%

African American: 34%

Asian: 6%

Hispanic: 38 %

Caucasian: 16%

Limited English Proficient: 34%

Special Education: 22%

Free/Reduced Lunch: 86%

Robbinsdale Cooper Senior High Demographics: School Year 2013

Grade Configuration: 9-12

Total Students: 1836

Indian: 1.2 %

Asian: 10.6 %

Hispanic: 9.3 %

Black: 36.2 %

White: 40.8 %

Free/Reduced Lunch: 57%

Limited English Proficient: 7%

Special Education: 14%

Elk River Senior High Demographics: School Year 2013

Grade Configuration: 9-12

Total Students: 1649

Indian: 1%

Asian: 2%

Hispanic: 2%

Black: 4%

White: 93%

Free/Reduced Lunch: 18%

Limited English Proficient: 2%

Special Education: 15%

Tartan Senior High Demographics: School Year 2013

Grade Configuration: 9-12

Total Students: 1683

Indian: 1%

Asian: 13%

Hispanic: 7%

Black: 14%

White: 66%

Free/Reduced Lunch: 36%

Limited English Proficient: 3%

Special Education: 14%

Information obtained from the Pioneer Press Online, gathered from the Minnesota Department of Education.