Evidence of Student Learning

Learning Objectives
Students who attend Spectrum Weekend will:

- Demonstrate a greater understanding about their own personal identities by engaging in conversation and reflection in a safe and tranquil space.
- Display a deeper understanding of the significant relationships in their lives, such as family, friends, partners, etc.
- Articulate with greater clarity and specifically the role of faith or spirituality in their lives as a GLBTQ student.
- Be able to identify supportive resources and role models in the Boston College community, including faculty and staff.
- Be able to name new peers with whom they share common experiences, thus building a greater sense of community amongst GLBTQ students.
- This weekend helped me better understand my identity.

Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83.33% of participants agreed or strongly agreed the weekend helped them to better understand their own personal identities.</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.67% of participants agreed or strongly agreed the weekend helped them to better understand the significant relationships in their lives.</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% of participants agreed or strongly agreed the weekend helped them to clarify the role of faith or spirituality in their lives.</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94.67% of participants agreed or strongly agreed the weekend helped them to identify supportive resources and role models in the BC community.</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed the weekend helped them to identify peers with whom they share common experiences.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.33% of participants agreed or strongly agreed the weekend helped build community amongst GLBTQ students at BC.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

The data from this year’s Spectrum Weekend strongly indicate that the retreat is meeting all of its student learning objectives. Spectrum is particularly effective in building community amongst GLBTQ students, faculty, and staff. In addition, participants universally state that they are clearly better able to articulate their personal identities and to understand their significant relationships after attending Spectrum.

The data indicate that student learning in the area of faith and spirituality is less strong than in the other learning objective areas, even though 40 percent of 2014 student participants still indicated that they had learned something about the role of faith or spirituality in their lives. We took additional steps to strengthen this programmatic unit after only 27% of the 2013 participants’ rankings met this criterion. Adding an emcee who is both a Boston College theology faculty member and a gay man infused the retreat with spiritual, religiously diverse elements. Despite this step, the faith and spirituality unit remains a focus for continued improvement. We hypothesize that this is, in part, due to the current activity that we have been using during this unit, which may not be effective in helping students make meaning of their spiritual selves. Accordingly, we plan to change this activity next year. This data could also be due to the complexities that exist in some faith traditions around support of GLBTQ individuals and/or not feeling that Spectrum gave them sufficient space or time for increased personal clarity on this very challenging issue.

In their other feedback, students expressed a desire for greater privacy in small group and one-on-one discussions, more time to meet students outside of their small groups, and more time to ask questions of the faculty and staff mentors. The student leads requested additional training in small group facilitation skills beyond what was provided.

Methods
Undergraduate participants answered a survey that asked them to rate their agreement with six statements on a five-point Likert scale. These statements were derived from the program’s stated learning outcomes. In addition, students were asked to rate how helpful or useful the retreat’s different units and activities were to them. Finally, students answered six open-ended questions to provide qualitative data about how impactful or meaningful this retreat was for participants.

Changes Made

Engaging in conversation and reflection around personal identity
- Expand student lead training with greater emphasis on small group facilitation skills

Understanding role of faith and spirituality
- Eliminate “prayer flag” art activity and replace with guided reflection and journaling for a longer time
- Continue the use of an emcee to integrate spirituality, world religions, art, literature, poetry and music throughout the weekend

Building community
- Intentionally re-group students during select meals to increase student interaction beyond small group activity
- Replace one ice breaker/energizer activity with the concentric circle activity so that participants may further engage in conversation
- Lengthen both mentor panels to give students more time to ask questions of faculty and staff mentors

Physical space
- Consider a new venue that can better accommodate additional students as well as more private small group and one-on-one discussions

Extension Programs

There are many logics of importance to GLBTQ students that cannot be covered during Spectrum due to time limitations and the retreat’s specific emphasis on identity development. Responding to the requests of Spectrum participants, we developed a new program entitled GLTBQ&A that provides a platform for post Spectrum participants to discuss topical and pressing issues facing the GLBTQ community. The April 2014 pilot session, “Coming Out: The Parent Perspective,” featured a panel of parents who discussed what it was like to hear their children come out as GLBTQ. This information provided an opportunity for GLTBQ students to continue the conversation process, anticipate the reactions of their parents, and ultimately play a more active role in working with them throughout their journey of discovery. Given the very positive initial response, we hope to expand this pilot program into a series during the Fall 2014 semester.

Introduction
Spectrum Weekend is a three-day retreat program held in the Spring semester for approximately 30-35 gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ) undergraduate students. Sponsored by the Office of the Dean of Students and originally designed by the Intersections program, Spectrum provides GLBTQ undergraduate students a setting in which they may engage in deep reflection and exploration of their personal identities. Together, with trained GLBTQ student leaders and faculty/staff mentors, the students also gain a deeper understanding of significant relationships in their lives, navigate the role that faith plays in constructing their identities, learn about resources available to them at Boston College, and meet peers with whom to form a supportive community.

Spectrum consists of six curricular units organized into three daily themes, as follows:

- Who am I in relationship to myself?
  - Who am I?
    - Identity development
    - Being My Most Authentic Self (Self-Authorship, Authenticity)
  - Who am I in relationship to others?
    - Family
    - Relationships
    - Faith & What Sustains Me
  - Who am I in relationship to the world?
    - Going out (Living out my authentic self in the world)
- Building community
- Physical space
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  - Learning Outcomes
- Conclusions
- Methods
- Changes Made
- Extension Programs