Best Practices of Research

NLA Research Committee at the University of Northern Iowa

Project Goals/Objectives

- ✓ To educate students about research in the workplace with hands-on experience.
- ✓ To make a difference in the community by partnering with local organizations.

Competencies Addressed

- ✓ Future of the Nonprofit Sector
  -T*he critical role research plays in shaping organizations.*
- ✓ Legal and Ethical Decision Making
  -Regulations and professional standards that govern nonprofit sector operations, such as research involving human participants.

Project/Activity Impact

We learn networking and about the importance of research to an organization from partnering with professionals and organizations in our local community. Students gain hands-on experience to better prepare them for the future.

Student Activities

1. Request for Proposal (RFP) for research projects from local organizations.
2. Meet with contact person for each agency and a UNI NLA faculty advisor to make sure that each project aligns with the goals of both the agency and NLA.
3. Research questions developed.
4. Planning and implementation of research methods, including focus groups, surveys, etc.
5. Institutional Review Board (IRB) training and certification for Human Participants research.
6. IRB approval process completed.
7. Collect and analyze the data results.
8. Application to the Intercollegiate Academics Fund (IAF) at UNI for funding for research to be presented at AMI.
9. Develop posters and presentations.
10. Share results and posters with partner agencies.
11. Submit articles about this year's projects to be published in an undergraduate research journal. This is a new goal this year and one we hope to continue from year to year.

Student Outcomes

- ✓ Learn about the research process from a hands-on perspective.
- ✓ Network and learn about working with local partner organizations.
- ✓ Opportunities to present in a professional setting.

Nonprofit Leadership Alliance

Project Outcomes

- ✓ AMI Poster Presentations.
- ✓ Presenting before the Board of Directors of the organization that we work with.
- ✓ Enhanced knowledge of a topic that affects our community.
- ✓ Research results and reports that help the community and the organization.

University of Northern Iowa
Nonprofit Leadership Alliance
Request for Proposals
Due Friday, March 4, 2016

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The Nonprofit Leadership Alliance Student Association is committed to engaging in research that will benefit students in learning research skills, as well as benefit organizations and their beneficiaries by informing practice through potential findings. **Research Proposals are due FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2016. Please submit your proposal to Andrew Juarez, Director of Research, juareaaa@uni.edu.**

Overview

- UNI Nonprofit Leadership Alliance is seeking organizations for proposals to engage students in a research project regarding the work of the organization, with a special focus on one or more of the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance's core competencies (see next page for details).
- Research conducted could potentially result in publication and/or a presentation.
- Research is to be completed by December 2016.

CONTACT DETAILS

Name of the organization: Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls

Address: 2530 University Avenue

Contact Person: Samantha Barrett

Email: jlwcfcommunityimpact@gmail.com

Phone Number: 319-404-0985

RESEARCH IDEAS

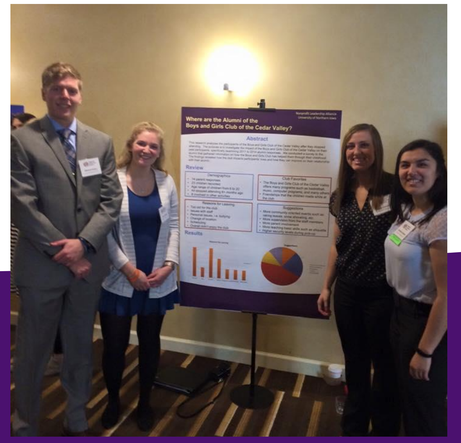
1. What is your research question(s) you want answered?

What are the main issues facing teens in the Cedar Valley?

Which organizations work with teens in the Cedar Valley, and what specifically do they do? Which issues do they address? What programs do they have in place?

2. Please provide a brief description of the research project(s)?

For the first part, we want to identify major issues facing teens in the Cedar Valley. (For example, is the graduation rate in Black Hawk County low? How does it compare to the graduation rate in Iowa and in the United States?) We want all identified issues to be supported by data. United Way completed a community needs assessment in 2013 that could provide a starting point: http://www.cedarvalleyunitedway.org/communityassessment. Other sources could be the School Boards, Community Foundation, DHS, etc.



For the second part, we are looking for a comprehensive list of the organizations in the area that work with teens and a description of what they do. The Volunteer Center of the Cedar Valley or United Way might be good places to start, although there are undoubtedly organizations that may be harder to identify. We would hope that the data would identify community needs for teens and where the gaps are in meeting those needs.

3. Please outline how the research will be beneficial to the students and the organization.

This research will provide students with an opportunity to complete some open-ended research to identify the biggest issues facing teenagers in this area. The students will also have to think creatively to find all the organizations in the area, especially those that may be small and virtually unknown at this point. The Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls recently selected a focus area of teen issues and we are trying to determine the best way to impact teenagers in the Cedar Valley. This research will identify specific areas to target and provide a baseline for comparison. Ideally, this research would show which issues facing teens are not being addressed by other organizations, and JLWCF would attempt to fill this gap.

DATA COLLECTION

4. Do you have the data for this project? YES NO

NO

5. Is the data reported to SuccessLink formerly known as Communities in Schools? YES NO

Unknown

6. Would this research project involve creating a survey to collect the data? YES NO

NO

COMPETENCIES DEVELOPED

7. Please select any of competencies that is related to the research project.

_x_ **Program Development** (Highlights program design, implementation, and evaluation strategies applicable to all nonprofit). By researching all programs focused on teenagers in the Cedar Valley, students will learn about a variety of program designs.

_____ **Volunteer & Human Resource Management** (Highlights the knowledge, skills, and techniques for managing volunteer and paid staff).

_____ **Financial Resource Development & Management** (Highlights financial resource acquisition, budgeting, financial management, control and transparency in nonprofit organizations).

_____ **Communication, Marketing & Public Relations** (Highlights knowledge, attitudes, and activities that nonprofit organizations use to understand, inform, and influence their various constituencies).

_____ **Cultural Competency and Diversity** (Highlights the development of cultural competency preparation for professional practice in culturally diverse settings).