Excellent Sample Award Submission

Nominator: Shasta E. Cullen
Nominator Email: shasta@uh.edu
Nominee: Sasha A. Cougar
Nominee Email: sasha@uh.edu

Award: Outstanding New Professional Award

What makes this nominee qualified for this award? Please include evidence of the nominee's contributions.
Sasha A. Cougar has been a "change agent" since she stepped foot on campus. She came with no real prior knowledge of our processes and immersed herself into our work flow in order to understand how things work. From this experience, she was better able to relay our mission and values to the prospective students in a variety of platforms. She took every email we send and transformed the language to be more appealing and appropriate for each respective audience. In addition to the email correspondence, she has dramatically improved our social media presence for Orientation, Admissions, and Campus Visits. She is very creative and really communicates the Cougar Spirit to our students during a critical time in their college decision-making process.

While partaking in all of these responsibilities in her first year, she has also been coordinating our (Admissions) integration into Radius (CRM). This has been a huge undertaking to which she had very little knowledge beforehand. She has been very thorough and detailed in her question as to make sure she produces the most accurate product possible for us to use. She understands the importance of first impressions and it is a very welcomed spirit of dedication and determination to do things right the first time. She is punctual, collaborative, and simply willing to make all aspects of her job the best for the consumer. I have personally appreciated her feedback and revolutionary approach to communicating with this generation of incoming students. She has a wonderful career here at UH ahead of her, and I can't think of anyone else more deserving of this award than Sasha.

How does the nominee's contribution demonstrate the purpose of the award?
Sasha has demonstrated the purpose of this award by going above and beyond in her role, working to offer her best at all times, and using her creativity and determination to move the needle within our area.   She has been successful in taking our department's marketing to the next level by finding ways to relay our mission and values to our students in a way they relate to. She has developed significant relationships here on campus and her dedication and commitment to be excellent has shown during her time at UH.

How does the nominee's contribution represent the values of DSAES?

Sasha's contributions tie to the DSAES values of innovation and collaboration. Sasha has exhibited innovation by thinking outside the box to create ideas around marketing that engage prospective students in their decision regarding college. She has done a great job developing concepts to better relay our mission and values to the students we serve. She has also exhibited the value of collaboration by forming relationships within our department as well as outside of our area to ensure that we are able to engage students in the best way possible.

How does the nominee's contribution impact student success?
Sasha is able to communicate to prospective students in a way that I have never seen before. She is able to cultivate our division's mission by intriguing all the students into reading our message, UH's message, and ultimately garnering their interest into attending the university. Her writing style is perfectly attributed to "hooking" our prospective students into exploring more about the university.

Her social media presence has afforded us many opportunities to engage with prospective students through Twitter and Snapchat. Very recently at Cougar Preview, she was a proponent of using Snapchat and Twitter to really reach a wide audience and speak to the good work we are doing here at UH. With her direction, we were able to reach over 70,000 people with our #UHCougarPreview tag and Snapchat filter (first time we have done a filter). She has instrumental in coordinating the capture of those metrics to share with our department. Much like Snapchat and Twitter, she is creating our story and people are intrigued and engaging with us in a way we have never imagine. She has not only advanced this mission, she has embodied it and taken it to a level we could have never dreamed. UH is extremely fortunate to have her expertise, and I know she has many more BOLD ideas to push us even further to the top.

Excellent Sample Award Submission

Nominator: Shasta E. Cullen
Nominator Email: shasta@uh.edu
Nominee: Center for Student Success
Nominee Email: sasha@uh.edu

Award: Outstanding Assessment Award

What makes this nominee qualified for this award? Please include evidence of the nominee's contributions.

The Center for Student Success (CSS) has demonstrated a commitment to utilizing assessment in order to encourage student success at the University of Houston. Over the past few years, the staff have worked diligently to capture the data around who is attending our events and how the level of involvement correlates with their success as a student. The data has shown that student involvement corresponds to higher retention rates, GPAs, and more credit hours completed per semester. In FY16, students who attended a CSS event at some point during the year demonstrated a 10% higher retention rate (89.3% compared to 79.76%) than students who did not attend a CSS event during the same timeframe. Undergraduate students who attended a CSS event passed about 6 more credit hours (nearly 2 classes) during FY16 than undergraduate students who did not attend a CSS event. In FY16 and FY17, graduate students who attended a CSS event passed an average of 1.5 more credit hours than graduate students who did not attend a CSS event. During FY16, undergraduate students who attended at least one CSS event had an average GPA of 2.97, whereas undergraduate students who did not attend a CSS event had an average GPA of 2.8442.

In terms of involvement, we saw a 3% increase in unique attendees from FY16 (7,633) to FY17 (9.047), with 20.7% of the UH student body attending a CSS event at some point during the year. We have used our data analysis to determine which students are over-represented and underrepresented in our attendance compared to the UH student population. For example, our attendance is split nearly in quarters with 25.25% freshman, 24.35% sophomores, 23.47% juniors, and 20.01% seniors. The UH population percentage is 12.4% freshman, 17.4% sophomore, 21.6% junior, and 27.8% senior. Our overrepresentation with freshman and sophomores tells us that we are doing a better job of reaching those students than our upperclassman. We are also analyzing our data for comparison against the UH population with race and ethnicity, sex, and residential status.

Per our mission, "Creating an inclusive and accessible environment, the Center for Student Success provides meaningful and diverse learning opportunities to impact student success. Students will gain a sense of self and strong interpersonal skills, while becoming responsible and engaged citizens in their community." We are using our department-wide assessment to explore new methods for marketing in

hopes of having our attendance more accurately reflect the UH student population in the coming years. We want to ensure that our programming is inclusive and a positive experience for all UH students regardless of their identities.

How does the nominee's contribution demonstrate the purpose of the award?
The Center for Student Success has demonstrated the purpose of this award by utilizing data to tell the story of how involvement contributes immensely to the success of the college student. By working collaboratively to find the best way to gather the data and using cutting edge methodology, the department has been able to use the figures to make decisions about how they interact with students. Using the evidence collected to build assessment and strategic plans shows the department's commitment to using data to steer their contributions to student success at the University of Houston.

How does the nominee's contribution represent the values of DSAES?
The values of the division that tie with this nomination are transparency, accountability, and collaboration. By using data to determine how CSS will move forward, they are better able to tell the story of how the work is contributing to student success and share the information readily. The data that is gathered also holds them accountable to continue offering programs that contribute to student success. The Center for Student Success uses the information gathered to adjust programs accordingly. Lastly, the Center collaborates with the Assessment Department to ensure that they are using the correct methodology and processes to mine the data.

How does the nominee's contribution impact student success?
This assessment project has directly contributed to the division's mission. If a student is engaged and actively participating in programs on campus, both research and our data have shown they are more likely to be retained to the university, have a higher GPA, and complete more course credits in a shorter amount of time, ultimately leading to a faster graduation. By using our data to determine which students are not currently engaged, we can adjust our programming to meet the needs of all of our students, ultimately having a positive impact on their success as a student at UH.

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Nominator: Shasta E. Cullen
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Award: Student Success Award

What makes this nominee qualified for this award? Please include evidence of the nominee's contributions.

Student employees are often considered the heart of a university department. In our field, our student employees keep us energized, share ideas and insights and are often a key component in our team. The University of Houston strives to provide opportunities for all employees to grow and gain professional development and the Student Affairs unit found it important to find ways to include our student employees in those opportunities. In Fall of 2016, a group of Student Affairs student employees, led by Sasha A. Cougar, were tasked with doing just that. They created a program that maximizes experiential learning by not just providing student employees a clocking-in/out experience, but rather one centered on intentional growth and development that will prepare them for future employment in their desired field.

The Taskforce benchmarked Texas peer institutions and the Urban 21 to see about best practices in student training programs. They compiled the data to identify strengths, themes, and limitations. From the information they gathered, they developed six learning outcomes based on The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). They include Diversity and Inclusion, Interpersonal Development, Career Development, Leadership, Ethics and Values, and Professionalism. Each learning outcome that was selected is tied to a student development theory. The theories they used include: Marginality and Mattering (Schlossberg), Identity Development (Chickering), Cognitive and Intellectual Development (Perry), Moral Development (Kohlberg), and Challenge and Support (Sanford). The taskforce also worked to tie in the division's customer service standard to ensure that students understand the need to provide top of the line customer service to all who frequent the nine departments in the Student Life portfolio.

With more than 100 students in attendance to the first fall retreat sessions, assessment revealed that over 70% of the students who attended felt satisfied with the content that was offered.   Many students stated they had a great time and appreciated the opportunity to meet other students and connect around the Student Affairs unit. Students also really enjoyed the goal setting portion of the retreat and they have been sending monthly emails to both students and supervisors reminding them to connect on the goals throughout the academic year.

For the full assessment of the program, they will be using a pre-/post- test model. The pre-test was administered at the fall retreat, and the post-test will be administered and the end of the Spring semester (April/May). They will also conduct a focus group to be held at the end of our first year with All-Stars to gain student insight and evaluation on the training programs perceived effectiveness. By engaging with the students who really utilized the program, they will be able to see where they did well and where they can improve.

How does the nominee's contribution demonstrate the purpose of the award?
The Student Affairs student employee program contributes to student success by working to transform the students within our area into leaders who will be successful beyond their university years. Sasha worked to ensure that the program was filled with best practices from around the nation, as well as developed in a way that would benefit the student employees completing the program. Her willingness to fill a gap in developing all student employees at the same level has led to a program that prepares our students to be successful in the workplace.

How does the nominee's contribution represent the values of DSAES?
The Student Affairs student employee program ties to empowerment and collaboration. This program empowers students through their employment to help them think beyond their on-campus position. The program works to give them additional tools that they need to ensure success outside of the university setting. Many different campus partners came together to help benchmark and put the program together. We have implemented this program across the entire unit and it has been successful with the help of all departments.

How does the nominee's contribution impact student success?
The program includes fall and spring retreats, training opportunities with incentives, and an etiquette dinner in the spring semester for over 180 student employees. The fall retreat concentrated on information about the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services, Student Affairs staff, customer service, emergency management and setting goals. The spring focused on community building and values, Student Affairs departments and reviewing the goals set in the fall.

For students interested in gaining more development they have an incentive program based around our learning outcomes. Students have an opportunity to tailor their training experience by choosing workshops that they feel connected to within each learning outcome. These are all listed on the customized website for the program, as a menu of options from across the division. Reflection pieces are required to justify how the workshops they attend align with the learning outcomes they designate. Students who attend five workshops out of the six available competencies, with approved reflection pieces by supervisors, will then be considered an All-Star and will receive rewards intended to enhance each student employee's future professional path such as business card holders, pen sets, or padfolios.

The taskforce worked diligently to come up with a program that would be inclusive of all student staff around the unit and help them to grow in a way that would benefit them upon leaving. Each aspect of the program is grounded in student development theory and entwined with our Customer Service Standard and our dedication to diversity and inclusion. This program is going to allow all student

employees to get a common experience, and build a network they otherwise would not have had an opportunity to interact with.