

S.A.F.E. INITIATIVE

STUDENTS AS FELLOW EXPERTS

An opportunity to harness students' expertise in real-time to help solve the complex challenges colleges are facing in fall 2020 and create buy-in for students to engage in their altered campus experience.



CREDO

POSITIONING STUDENTS AS EXPERTS ON THE FALL 2020 STUDENT EXPERIENCE



IDEA

PATH TO
IMPLEMENTATION

AS EDUCATIONAL LEADERS, many of you are preparing to begin the new academic year and are seeking safe, creative, and effective solutions to a host of challenges. In addition to the unique needs of your respective campuses, many of you share common goals: to develop strategies to ensure effective class delivery options, to determine the best course of action for reopening campus, and to provide a safe and healthy learning environment, all while fostering connection and a sense of belonging among students.

Credo associates recently learned about a model developed at Purdue University, **ProjectX Safe Campus**, established to harness the wisdom gained from students' own experiences for creating a "meaningful and safe on-campus experience." The University of Michigan also turned to students for ideas on how to social distance on campus, recently highlighted in this **Chronicle of Higher Education** article. Including students in planning and decision-making has been a best-practice for decades; the practice of positioning students as knowledge experts has the potential to solve some of the most difficult challenges campuses are facing in these critical times.

The following is a step-by-step outline of the initiative, **Students as Fellow Experts (S.A.F.E.)** to consider using on your campuses to capture students' expertise for creating the best experience for your students this fall.

PREPARATION FOR THE S.A.F.E. INITIATIVE

**DEVELOP
TEAM**

**DETERMINE
FOCUS**

**ASCERTAIN
GUIDING
QUESTION**

TEAM :

Develop a S.A.F.E. Initiative team to implement on your campus. We recommend this team consist of the following members:

- > Student Life professionals to lead S.A.F.E. initiative
- > Professional Advisors (Career Development professionals, Business Department faculty, and/or alumni with business/consulting experience) to provide support to the student consultant teams
- > Institutional leaders who will serve as the client to receive the student consultant teams' proposed ideas

FOCUS & GUIDING QUESTION :

Determine the focus and guiding question that student consultant teams will address for your campus. Some ideas for your campus may be students' sense of belonging, student health and wellbeing, a safe return to campus, helping first-year students make connections, ways to connect with social distancing requirements or via online, etc.

SAMPLE PROJECT **FOCUS**

Developing students' sense of belonging and connection with peers given our university will have some students on-campus for fall 2020 while others will be fully remote.

SAMPLE GUIDING **QUESTION**

+ How do we create opportunities for students to build meaningful connections with other students given social distancing and remote learning challenges?

PREPARATION FOR THE **S.A.F.E. INITIATIVE**

CONSIDER
TIME

+

RECRUIT
STUDENTS

+

ORIENT
STUDENTS

TIME :

Consider the length of time needed and available for the initiative. For example, students could participate over a span of four weeks or they could focus on a shorter time frame (e.g., four days) during leaders' training. Although it may be ideal to gather this information before the academic year begins, it may be necessary to delay this initiative until after classes begin.

RECRUITMENT :

Recruit students to participate in teams consisting of 3 – 6 students. Consider advertising the opportunity in the following way: "Students as Fellow Experts (S.A.F.E) - an opportunity for students to serve as consultants to their campus leaders to offer solutions to our current complex challenges"

ORIENTATION :

Prepare webinar to orient students to the project. Include the following elements in the orientation:

- > Purpose of initiative and how it connects to your college/university
- > Explanation that students will be serving as "consultants" to the campus leaders as the "client"
- > Resources provided to students, such as: meeting with the client, support from a professional advisor, PowerPoint template for final presentation

CREDO RESOURCES:

To make this process as simple as possible, we have created a **S.A.F.E. Initiative Resources Webpage** that contains the following downloadable items:

- > A short **How to Get Started video** introduction for those planning to implement the S.A.F.E. Initiative
- > A **Student-Consulting Training Webinar** hosted by Credo consultants
- > S.A.F.E. Initiative **Student Consultant Presentation Template**

S.A.F.E. INITIATIVE TIMELINE

WEEK 1 >>>>>

- > S.A.F.E. Initiative Team host an orientation for the student consulting teams
- > Student consultant teams virtually meet with the client to learn about their needs (this could be included in the orientation as well)

WEEK 2 >>>>>

- > Student consultant teams watch the **Credo's Student-Consulting Training Webinar** and/or meet with professional advisors to learn consulting approach
- > Student consultant teams research, brainstorm, explore, and discuss to understand problem and develop solutions

WEEK 3 >>>>>

- > Students review work with professional advisors for feedback
- > Students prepare **final presentation**

WEEK 4 >>>>>

- > Students present recommendations to client in a S.A.F.E. Initiative Showcase
- > S.A.F.E. Initiative team meets to determine the winning student consultant team

NEXT STEPS

- > Student Life team meet to discuss winning recommendations and develop a timeline for implementation
- > Communicate to all students involved about initiatives that will be implemented
- > Share initiative with your campus public relations/communications team
- > **SEND CREDO** a copy of your winning presentation or a story of how students engaged in this process on your campus



ACTION
FOLLOWS
BELIEF

CREDO is...

the **trusted partner and catalyst** to leaders of colleges and universities providing **customized, comprehensive, integrated services** all around the country to **keep students at the center** of every decision and action during an era when the value and sustainability of higher education is in question.

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