



WASHINGTON EVALUATORS

STARTING A CAMPUS AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

Description

Campus Ambassadors are students, staff, faculty, and local residents who provide face-to-face and virtual training, support and advocacy for evaluation research on university campuses, particularly in classes where the instructors are interested in incorporating evaluation into the curriculum (e.g. public policy, education, economics, etc.)

Campus Ambassadors serve as local representatives of the Washington Evaluators community on college and university campuses in the DC Metro Area.

Online Ambassadors serve as virtual mentors, advisors, and helpers to the professors and students who are incorporating evaluation into the classroom.

Familiarization

The most productive way for students and faculty to understand, and begin promoting a Campus Ambassadors program is by being able to answer questions and speak knowledgeably on the topic of evaluation. This is accomplished through:

- Teaching
- Research
- Dissemination of information (through campus listserves, etc.)
- Familiarization with WE, AEA or as a representatives of another body involved in evaluation
- Regular discussion on campus
- Enlisting interested and motivated Faculty Advisors and students

Evaluation Student Organizations

Campus Ambassador can choose to establish a campus evaluation student organization if one does not already exist. Ambassadors would need to check with their university or college about how to register student organizations. At most schools, a new student organization may register any time during the calendar year.

It is at the discretion of each Campus Ambassador to decide whether their program would benefit from the inclusion of officers. It is advantageous to have others in the program who feel included and invested in its mission.

Spreading the Word

A very important part of the role of Campus Ambassadors is to call attention to evaluation and WE throughout the school and the local community. WE may not be well known on some campuses and although the ultimate goal is to have students and faculty become active members, it is important to first create awareness of WE.

E-mail is an excellent way to provide information to interested students and faculty. Many departments or programs may provide the Campus Ambassador with a list of students who are studying evaluation related subjects. Email distribution lists are an effective way to spread the word to hundreds of people with the push of a button. WE has already established an e-mail distribution list of local DC Metro Area evaluation educators and members or potential members of AEA and WE. This is a simple way to open up a line of communication and create a sense of community on your campus.

Another option is for WE to advertise in the campus newspaper or e-newsletters in relevant departments. There usually is no cost to running an announcement in the Campus Calendar of the university or college newspaper.

Recruiting New WE Members

Campus Ambassadors may find some of the following strategies useful for recruiting new WE student members at local campuses:

- Talk about WE and evaluation at events
- Distribute promotional materials and have information about WE on hand to answer questions at all events and presentations
- Promote WE and evaluation by attending undergraduate and graduate classes on evaluation
- Follow-up with students you have spoken to by emailing them the link to the WE website
- Emphasize some of the advantages of becoming a WE member
- Encourage both undergraduate and graduate student participation in social research-related events
- Arrange and supervise evaluation practicums or studies

Event Ideas

Brown bag lunch presentations and discussion sessions on evaluation-related subjects and student topics such as internships have proved to be a successful way to promote interaction. Networking receptions, screening films with social research or analytical themes and community outreach projects are also recommended activities.

Other campuses have found panel presentations or guest lectures by faculty, visiting scholars and community service providers to be popular.

If evaluation-related events already take place on your campus, consider offering to help organize these events and promote student attendance. Collaborate with faculty members and local groups to bring a student perspective to existing events.

Create a Campus Ambassador Binder/Disk/Web Page.

The binder might include general resources, correspondence, sample letters, e-mails, faxes, invitations, meeting packages, attendance sheet, logos, fliers, newspaper articles, advertisements, and announcements. It can be labeled/branded with the university and Ambassador listed. It may help to begin each academic year by preparing a new binder /update in anticipation of upcoming material that will prove worthwhile to preserve.

Campus Ambassadors may also find it helpful to create and maintain a database of all campus members and potential members.

Writing thank you letters is strongly suggested. A thank you letter should be sent to the Faculty Advisor upon acceptance of that position, to each speaker who presents at a meeting or event, to a student who does something special for an event, to a university official who aids you, to campus newspaper journalists who write articles about WE, and to whomever the Campus Ambassador feels should receive a special thank you. These notes should be written shortly after the designated act.

Staying in Contact

One of the best things a Campus Ambassador can do is maintain regular contact with interested individuals. Creating a sense of community among students and faculty members will help retain and expand the local network of people interested in evaluation.