Strategies for Success

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ABSTRACT

The physical and biological sciences provide a unique platform to attract and retain students interested in medicine, drug development, and basic and applied sciences. At WMU, the development of rational thinking skills and objective analysis of our world and how it works, positions our students to succeed in a competitive environment.

Current WMU students have difficulty envisioning their career path after they graduate from college, yet they have spent years acquiring and developing the tools of success. In order to help our students “see the light at the end of the tunnel”, a program called “Strategies for Success” was developed. Simply put, recent WMU alumni return to their alma mater to share their life stories with others.

“The Strategies for Success” was sponsored by a CAREER grant from the National Science Foundation and by many local companies and individuals.

ACQUISING THE TOOLS OF SUCCESS

From the moment our students step on Western’s campus they are acquiring and developing the tools of success. Examples of success stories of WMU students abound and one of them is related below.

• A local high achieving student chooses Western for the following reasons – close proximity, exceptional value, and breadth of opportunity
• He begins disease-related research in the first summer after his freshman year, giving him an early start in biomedical research
• After the junior year, he accepts a summer internship at Baylor College of Medicine’s SMART program
• As a senior, he pursues a degree in both medicine and research, and accepts an offer from Harvard Medical School
• He returns to his alma mater two years later to share with current WMU students his life story.

TELLING THEIR STORIES OF SUCCESS

Students think they must have high grades and just the right experiences to ensure they reach their goals. Nothing could be further from the truth. Students chosen to participate in “Strategies for Success” come from a variety of backgrounds, yet they all share one common trait – WMU helped prepare them for life and they are willing to share their life story with others.

THE “STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS” EVENT

2006 Participants
• Warran Manyara, WMU ’03, a 3rd year medical student at the University of Minnesota
• Amanda Frick, WMU ’02, employed at Agdia, a manufacturer of agricultural diagnostics
• Alene Haley, WMU ’03, WMU PA-C ’05

2009 Participants
• Ted Hunter, West Indies College ’81, Andrews M.A. ’94, WMU non-degree, 4th year medical student at Wayne State University
• Krystal DeClerck, WMU ’03, 4th year dental student at Detroit Mercy
• Emily Yonker, WMU ’03, WMU PA-C ’06

2012 Participants
• Neil Blok, WMU ’10, 2nd year MD/phD at Harvard
• Jamie Johnson, WMU ’07, 4th year medical student at Michigan State University
• Joel Parraghi, WMU ’07, 4th year veterinary student at Michigan State University
• Irene Murunga, WMU ’04, WMU PA-C ’09

OTHER ACTIVITIES SURROUNDING THE EVENT

In 2012 the Lee Honors College co-sponsored the event and a morning breakfast was held to introduce the alumni to other students, faculty, and administrators. The main “Strategies for Success” presentations were held at noon in a public forum to a packed audience. Food and beverages were provided by Bernard Center staff. Bob Miller, Associate Vice President for Community Outreach has provided comments at each of the events. In 2009, roundtable discussions were held by each alum after the event – this was very popular. WMU Careers services and local recruiters have also attended the events.

EVALUATION OF THE EVENT

Evaluation forms were completed by almost all of the students attending each event. The data collected on the evaluation forms has not yet been analyzed.

Informally, the responses from students, faculty, and administrators, were extremely positive and the event was very well received. Current students found it very uplifting and encouraging. Faculty members were proud to see students achieving their goals.

PRESS RELEASES

At each event press releases were handled by WMU News. The 2006 and 2009 events had extensive coverage in the Western Herald after the event. The 2012 event was advertised also in the Kalamazoo Gazette, both online and in the newsstand copy. An excerpt from the Western Herald of February 26, 2009 reads “Students from the sciences were greeted by alumni speakers on Wednesday from various fields in an event to promote careers in the life sciences industry. Co-sponsored by the Department of Biological Sciences and the Department of Chemistry, “Strategies for Success” aimed at showcasing successful alumni to current and former students, local and national biomedical professionals.”

INNER LEAFLET OF HANDOUT

A roundtable discussion in 2009

Alums answer questions in 2012

FLIERS PROMOTING THE EVENT

Thinking about career directions? Tales of Success

Wednesday, December 6, 2006
6:00 p.m.
Western Michigan University

Helping you find the path that’s right for you.

Speaker:

Dr. Richard Seibel

FUNDING SOURCES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Acknowledgments

Sponsors

Speakers

The response of the audience

During the question

After the question

Sponsors

This event was possible only with cooperation of WMU faculty, staff, current and former students, local companies and generous individuals

DEDICATED TO ALL OF MY STUDENTS