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Leadership Track

Tavi Team Captain

This project was a way for me to share what I have learned about leadership and working with others. I served as a group leader at orientation for freshmen students at Southern Utah University. I did my best to encourage and inspire new T-Birds as they started their journey at SUU. As a team captain, I was responsible for leading a group of students through orientation (also known as Thunder U). Specifically, I was in charge of a group of about ten students throughout all of orientation. I was responsible for answering any questions that these students had and for making sure that they got the most out of orientation by attending as many of the activities as possible that were designed specifically for them. Overall, I ended up spending over forty hours on this project.

My Inspiration for this project: I chose to be a Tavi Team Captain at Thunder U, because of how much of a difference my team captain made for me when I first started school at Southern Utah University. When I first started college, I honestly had no idea what to expect. However, the team captain who I had my freshmen year was so great at answering questions and helping me to find a place on campus. I wanted to be able to do the same thing for the incoming class of freshmen. I hope that I was able to help some of the freshmen in my orientation group to be more comfortable at SUU.

Challenges that I faced: One of the main challenges that I faced throughout this project was trying to get all of the students in my group to show up to events that were not technically mandatory. Although all of orientation was designed to help students understand college and the campus/local community, some of the students in my group honestly did not want to be there. I did my best to encourage them to be there, but honestly it was rather difficult at times to get my whole group to an event. I ended up telling my group that I understand that they are adults and they can choose whether or not they show up to an event, but that each event was designed to help them. This helped a little bit, but I eventually figured out that the best motivator to get my students to an activity was to tell them when there would be free food.



How my project benefited someone else: My entire project was designed primarily to help others. As a team captain, I spent three out of four days welcoming students to SUU and answering their questions. The other day of my project was spent learning how to help incoming freshmen. I helped the students in my group by telling them about things to do in Cedar City, clubs that they might be interested in, and campus traditions. I was able to help the students in my orientation group feel at least a little bit more comfortable in their transition to college. I also



made a group chat where people still ask things if they have questions about any and everything college related. Throughout my project, I was able to help several students feel at home at Southern Utah University.

How my project benefitted me: Although my project was focused on helping others, I was able to learn a lot about leadership from this experience. I learned how to work with students who are only a little bit older than the students whom I hope to teach in my future classroom. After completing this project, I feel much more comfortable with the idea of leading a group of students regardless of age or maturity. I also learned how important it is to be prepared when you are supposed to be in charge of a group activity or lesson. On the first day with my group, I was not nearly as prepared as I should have been, so on the second day I made sure that I had all of the activities prepared and ready ahead of time. This understanding of the preparation that it takes to be a leader will be incredibly valuable now and in my future career.

Reflective quotes from my journal:

- “Thunder U has been incredibly exhausting! I am so tired, but I have loved getting to meet so many new T-Birds. Their energy is incredible and I cannot wait for another school year with so many excited new faces!”
- “The Bell Tower Tradition was so fun even though it poured rain almost the entire time. I stood through the whole thunderstorm and gave high-fives to all of the incoming freshmen as they walked under the bell tower signifying their start as SUU Thunderbirds. They sure brought the thunder and it was amazing to be able to see them start their journey at SUU in such a crazy and memorable way.”