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Project in Lieu of Thesis

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A Member Relations Plan
For
Friendship Association of Chinese
Students and Scholars

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Spring 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Friendship Association of Chinese Students and Scholars (FACSS) is a non-political and not-for-profit student organization registered at the University of Florida (UF). It is run and led by UF Chinese students, and allows students, scholars, and the larger Chinese community to be members of this association.

The organization not only helps Chinese newcomers with transportation, housing, and other basic needs at their arrival in the United States and during their tenure at UF, but also carries out a variety of events for the local community. Moreover, FACSS has a website, a mailing list, a BBS, and a Facebook group page as communication outlets.

With the growing of Chinese community in Gainesville, the organization now is facing a member relations challenge. First, the organization does not have a clear mission, which is an integral part of organizational development. Second, FACSS has a loose membership that does not make a registration compulsory. Instead, the organization simply recognizes every Chinese resident in Gainesville as its member. By operating this membership system, FACSS actually know little about its membership. The third problem of FACSS is ineffective membership communication. Many of the subscribers to the out-of-date electronic mailing list are no more active users and a large number of people who have interest in FACSS do not join in the electronic mailing list. Moreover, the awareness level of FACSS new website is quite low, according to a survey recently conducted. FACSS began to embrace social media since 2006, but those online communities did not create much interaction between the organization and its members.

The proposed project aims to help the organization to overcome the challenges mentioned above and eventually achieve favorable and effective member relations.

Formative Research

Before the project is implemented, some formative research has been conducted. Secondary and primary research provides useful knowledge and guidance for developing a mission statement, maintaining member relations, and adopting social media. One survey and two sets of interview were conducted as primary research methods to gather data from FACSS leadership, members, and other U.S.-based Chinese student organizations. The interviews with the presidents of other U.S.-based Chinese student organizations indicated an overall picture of Chinese student organizations in the United

States, as well as their specific experience on mission identification, member relations, and membership communication. The interviewed officers of FACSS actively express their thoughts on mission statement and member relations improvement. The membership survey was distributed through a Listserv and received 200 responses. The findings would allow the organization to have some specific data about its membership for the first time since its foundation.

A Proposed Member Relations Plan

For project execution, six objectives are set as follows: (1) To register 800 people (300 newcomers of 2010 fall, 300 of 2009 fall and 200 from the rest of the community) for the FACSS membership by April 2011; (2) to manage the information of 800 members in a databank with different categories by April 2011; (3) to have a new mission statement known by 50% of members and 90% of officers by April 2011; (4) to stimulate 200 persons to join Renren group page, expand Facebook network by 60% bigger, and encourage 50 member comments on both pages respectively by April 2011; (5) to increase the visits of FACSS website by 100 % by April 2011; and (6) to organize 10 events and stimulate at least 2,000 attendances in total by April 2011. A set of strategies and tactics are proposed correspondingly.

Strategy 1: To set up and promote a membership registration system.

Policy tactics:

- 1) Design an online system for membership registration (please see the registration form in appendix).

Communication tactics:

- 2) Present the system on the home page of FACSS website.
- 3) Demonstrate the link on social network pages.
- 4) Send the registration system link to 2009 fall comers e-mail list.
- 5) Build the connection with 2010 fall new comers and direct them to the registration system.
- 6) Attract event attendees to fill out the registration forms.

Strategy 2: To establish and maintain the membership databank.

Policy tactics:

- 1) Set up a membership information databank.

- 2) Assign a database manager.
- 3) Build a new member mail list derived from the data bank.

Communication tactics:

- 4) Input the personal profiles and contact information of the registered members into the databank.
- 5) Identify the data and fit the members into different categories based on gender, age, occupation, membership length, and interest

Strategy 3: To develop and publicize a new mission statement.

Policy tactics:

- 1) Discuss the identity and mission of the organization in the committee board meetings.
- 2) Vote and pass a new mission statement.

Communication tactics:

- 3) Educate the staff and keep them aware of the official statement of the organizational identity and mission.
- 4) Present the new statement in all of the organization-own media including the homepage, Facebook, Renren.com, etc.
- 5) Promote the links and changes via email to FACSS membership.
- 6) Print out the statement along with event information on the flyers distributed for advertising upcoming events.

Strategy 4: To make online social networks more usable and interactive.

Policy tactics:

- 1) Assign a social media specialist to manage the online networks.
- 2) Register a group page on Renren.com.

Communication tactics:

- 3) Update the pages of Renren and Facebook on a timely basis.
- 4) Invite members who have an account of Facebook or Renren to join in the networks.
- 5) Make the network pages truly online communities by stimulating discussions, uploading visual materials, adopting more applications, etc.
- 6) Respond to members' inquiries and comments in a timely manner.

- 7) Promote the group pages on FACSS website, via emails and through other printed media.

Strategy 5: To improve the FACSS website in terms of content, features, and management.

Tactics:

- 1) Have technicians to incorporate new features including newsroom, online album, blog, and BBS.
- 2) Assign a communicator to manage and update newsroom, BBS, and online albums.
- 3) Encourage officers to elaborate the organizational blog by awarding active bloggers.
- 4) Update the website periodically.
- 5) Respond to members' inquiries and comments in a timely manner.

Strategy 6: To design and execute more customized and satisfactory events

Tactics:

- 1) Propose a list of potential events and activities for next FACSS year.
- 2) Invite the members to vote on the list and choose the favorite events by using the "vote" application on Renren network.
- 3) Encourage the members, especially non-students to show their own ideas on activities via emails, website, and online community pages.
- 4) Conduct sufficient formative research and make a comprehensive plan for each event.
- 5) Use all of the channels to effectively communicate the event information to the membership.
- 6) Involve more experts, volunteers, members, and non-members into the events and activities.
- 7) Operate an evaluation for each event.
- 8) Make relevant news, photo, video, or other recording forms available for members to review.

The evaluation methods and stewardship plan are proposed as two important parts of the project. Both of these components of the plan could offer evidence for further developing the member relations efforts and techniques.

RESEARCH

Historical Background

The history of Chinese student encountering the United States of America has been an intermittent set of events because of changes in the country's policies (Ning, 2002). Since the first Chinese student Yung Wing, left for the American continent on January 4, 1847, the door to study in the United States was shut and reopened repeatedly during this treacherous time. The number of students studying abroad increased steadily from 1932 to 1936, but dropped sharply when the breakout of revolution in the People's Republic. After the foundation of the People's Republic of China, the door to the West was shut until its reopen in 1978. The number of Chinese students studying in the United States increased every year during the first decade and reached 29,040 in 1989. The latest number, for the 2008/09 academic year, was 98,510 with an increase of 21% from the previous year ("International Students in the US," 2009).

There are a couple of reasons for the significant increase in the number of Chinese students in the last decades. "Lots of universities are becoming more and more aggressive to attract Chinese students. Every day I receive contacts from universities in the US expressing the desire to come to China to recruit students," said Frank Joseph (cited in Wang, 2009), a commercial officer from the U.S. Embassy in China.

Chinese students have three advantages for U.S. higher education institutions: behaving themselves, working hard at their studies, and paying big amounts for tuition. And this last aspect seems to be the greatest attraction ("Chinese Students Are College Prize," 2009).

According to Wu (cited in Wang, 2009), deputy secretary general of China Education Association for International Exchange, a total of 200,000 family-funded Chinese students will be studying overseas in 2009, 20% more than the number of last year. Chinese students, especially in the United States paying high-tuition fees and living expenses, could relieve the tough financial situation of those international institutes to some extent. Thus, another key reason for that more Chinese students study abroad is the booming economy and growing middle class.

As other international students, Chinese students studying in the United States also are confronted with various difficulties. According to the study of Sun and Chen

(1997), three dimensions of difficulties Mainland Chinese students encountered in the process of intercultural adjustment: language ability, cultural awareness, and academic achievements. They explained each of the dimensions respectively. For the language barrier, although most Chinese students came to U.S. universities with high scores in language tests, they lack good speaking and writing skills. It deters their effective communications with Americans and people from other cultures academically and socially. The second problem, cultural differences, is another factor which negatively affects the interactions between Chinese students and U.S. students. Finally, academic achievements are the major concern as well as the main difficulty of Chinese students. It is uneasy for them to get accustomed to a different teaching and learning style on U.S. campuses (Sun & Chen, 1997).

Chinese student organizations are established to assist their accommodation to the new lifestyle in the United States. There is little academic data and research on Chinese student organizations and we could only find organizational information. Following is a brief introduction about U.S.-based Chinese student organizations on a web page (2010):

Chinese students at many universities in the United States have long maintained their own organizations. They are often named Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA), or something of that nature. Some CSSA's are very active, and organize various events throughout the year for Chinese students and their families. Most of them also have a mailing list, BBS, or discussion forum for members to exchange information, such as moving sales, apartments, tickets, soccer games, etc. For this reason many non-students also become members, making their CSSA effectively a social network for the entire local Chinese community. Another important function of CSSA is to provide assistance to new students coming from China. Many CSSA's will answer questions from prospective students and scholars, and may offer airport pickup and temporary housing through volunteer program. ("List of Chinese Students, and Scholars Associations in the U.S.," n.d., ¶1)

The web page also provides a list of 118 Chinese student organizations' websites in U.S. universities.

Organizational Research

Overview

FACSS introduces itself as a non-political and not-for-profit student organization officially registered at the University of Florida. The organization is led by a committee elected in April or May each year. All committee members are volunteers from a variety of UF colleges. FACSS has a loose membership that does not make a registration compulsory and allows Chinese students, scholars, and the larger community to be a member of this association (“FACSS of UF,” n.d.).

The organization was founded in the early 1985. At that time, the main purpose was to help new Chinese students with transportation, housing, and other basic needs. With the rapid growing of UF Chinese community, FACSS has become one of the largest Chinese organizations in the state of Florida, and the largest Chinese student body in the Southeastern region of the United States (Zhang, personal communication, August 29, 2008). At the same time, FACSS gradually improves its organizational performances. In particular, FACSS not only offers airport pickup to the newcomers, but also carries out many kinds of events for the Chinese community in Gainesville and those interested in the Chinese culture. Moreover, FACSS has a website, a mailing list, a BBS, and a Facebook group page for their members to communicate online.

Status

FACSS has the features of a student organization as well as a nonprofit organization. There are various definitions for the term “student organization.” Most of them are made by different universities and colleges. After reviewing a number of the definitions, the student organization in my understanding refers to an organization led and run by students at a university, whose membership consists of students or sometimes non-university students. It usually aims to pursue and fulfill specific goals and missions aligned with the spirit of the university.

FACSS is run and led by students at UF as a student organization, but recognizes the whole Chinese community as its membership which makes it more than a student organization. For that reason, we would like to treat FACSS as a non-for-profit

organization in the proposed plan and draw on the experience of the development of a nonprofit, although it is not a registered 501CC (3) organization.¹

Defined by the ratio of benefits provided to members to the benefits provided to others, not-for-profit organization can be divided to four categories:

Member Driven: those focused on providing benefits to members.

Mission Driven: those providing benefits to society through members.

Mission/Member Mix: those with a mission to benefit both members and society.

No Members: those that do not utilize members. (Futter, 2002, p. 338)

According to the self-definition of FACSS, the organization well fits into the first category. Although FACSS also tries to positively influence the larger Gainesville community, the Chinese membership is its primary concern.

Brainard and Siplon (2004) proposed a more comprehensive way to classify nonprofit organizations. They stated that there are two models of nonprofit organization roles in today's world: the economic model and the voluntary spirit model, based on the fundamental assumptions they embody about the nature of organizations and individual motivations and how those assumptions manifest in their internal organization; their missions, priorities, and activities; and their acquisition and use of resources.

In terms of organizational missions, priorities, and activities, the nonprofits oriented to the economic model are more likely to have them set by the boards and implemented by the staff. In this case, members do not participate in decision making about priorities and goals, but rather are informed these initial choices and decisions. By contrast, the goals and activities of voluntary spirit nonprofits emerge from the membership.

Turning to the acquisition and use of resources, the nonprofits oriented to the economic model consider experts' information and money as their primary resources and, therefore, to some extent, make members and volunteers a secondary resource. On the other hand, the organizations oriented to the voluntary spirit model see their primary

¹ In the United States, nonprofit organizations are usually defined based on their eligibility for tax-deductible or tax-exemption according to Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Treating FACSS as a nonprofit organization in the plan is because FACSS has the same status with some nonprofits whose experience might help the proposed member relations project.

resource as their membership, as well as the interactions within it (Brainard & Siplon, 2004).

Based on the classifications above, FACSS is more accurately seen as a voluntary spirit nonprofit with primary emphasis on membership.

Situation Analysis

Mission

FACSS does not have a clear mission statement. According to its self-introduction on the website, the organization aims to “promote unity, communication and mutual help for students, scholars and their families” (About FACSS, n.d., ¶1). FACSS also tries to benefit the extended Chinese community in the city of Gainesville. Promoting cultural awareness on and off campus is another purpose of the organization (Zhang, personal communication, Nov.18, 2009).

Vision

As the Chinese community grows every year, FACSS of UF is expected to provide quality services for a broader membership as well as achieve further self-development. The organization would like to raise the awareness and enhance the influences among the Chinese community and even the whole UF community.

Value

FACSS of the University of Florida states that it has the obligation to defend the rights of every member within the organization. It upholds each member's equality and encourages fairness and mutual support among its members. The organization, including all its members, will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, and sexual orientation (Li, personal communication, Oct. 2, 2009).

Brief Organizational History

The organization was founded in 1985 by a group of 10 students (Li, personal communication, Oct.2, 2009). At that time, the main purpose of the organization was to help new Chinese students with transportation, housing, and other basic needs at their arrival in the United States and during their tenure at UF. It has grown into one of the

largest UF student organizations because of the significant increase in enrollment of Chinese students at the University of Florida.

Key Publics

The primary targets of FACSS consist of Chinese students, scholars, and their families. By fall 2009, UF has enrolled 812 Chinese students and 50 dependants (Anderson, personal communication, Oct.21st, 2009). The vice president of FACSS Students and Scholars Service reported at the end of the New Comers Welcome Program that his association has provided pick-ups for at least 210 Chinese students, scholars, and their families this year (Zhang, personal communication, Oct 22, 2009).

FACSS's secondary target publics are Gainesville Chinese community and UF community. According to Gainesville Florida Census and demographic information, the 2000 U.S. Census Report indicated that there were 1,372 Chinese residents in the city of Gainesville by 2000, which made up 1.4% of the total population. The latest total enrollment of the University of Florida is 52,112 which consist of 35,898 undergraduate students, 11,756 graduate students, and 4,458 professional students by fall 2008. The number of female students is slightly over than that of male students. In term of ethnicity, the Caucasian population is significantly overwhelming other races with a population of 31,802("Gainesville Florida Census," 2004).

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Currently, the staff of FACSS consists of five undergraduate students, 20 graduate students, and three scholars from different majors and class standing. The diversity of the officers can contribute diverse thoughts and achieve extensive representation of the broad membership.

Ten years ago, the majority of Chinese students who came to the United States were pursuing graduate degrees in the fields of science or engineering. They left for the United States "with an enthusiasm for scholarship and a dedication to academic studies" (Ning, 2002, p. 114). Some of them held a position in FACSS, but they could hardly spend much time on it due to the overload academic work, that caused a few problems within the organizations such as an inactive staff, loose structures, and weak leadership,

which significantly undermined the relationship between the organization and its members (Li, Personal Communication, Oct.20, 2009).

The picture notably changed today. Because more and more officers who had backgrounds in management, event planning, communication, media, or public relations work for FACSS, the organizational operation has been accomplishing at a more professional level in many aspects (Zhang, Personal Communication, Nov.18, 2009). Also, the increase of the officers studying at their own expenses is regarded as another positive change since these people are willing to dedicate more time to organizational projects. The staff diversity of FACSS is actually a constructive basis for the member relations project.

Another strength is the communication mechanism FACSS already using for regular information assimilation. The most important tool is the Listserv. Almost 20 years ago, FACSS built the first email group via Listserv (the first electronic mailing list software application) for Chinese students and scholars to exchange information such as carpools, moving sales, second-hand deals, etc. It became the most popular online platform for Chinese residents in Gainesville. By March 2010, the number of the subscribers has reached more than 1,500. FACSS often employs the mailing list to reach out the larger Chinese community.

FACSS has an information databank of about 300 new comers last year. In September 2009, a survey regarding FACSS's newcomer service sent to the mail group of new comers and got more than 100 participants. Bases on that, we probably can assume that FACSS has built an initial connection with a majority of its new members. Additionally, in June 2009, the technical team started the construction of FACSS new website which takes on a more professional look than the old one. Also, a few new features are incorporated to make it easier for the visitors to find the specific information they are looking for.

Weaknesses

First, FACSS does not have a clear mission statement which is yet the vital basis for conducting a member relations program. Unless the organization has a consistent and distinctive purpose, it could know how important membership is to its operation and what benefits it can bring to the members.

Second, FACSS recognizes the whole Chinese community in the city of Gainesville as its membership. All of the events and services are open to them for free. It is a good policy to show the tolerance and open-mindedness of the organization. However, the consequence of this membership system is that FACSS actually does not have any formally registered member. In this case, it would be unrealistic for the organization to build relationship with formal “members”.

The third weakness turns out to be ineffective communication. Many of the subscribers to the out-of-date mailing list are no more active users and a large number of people who have interest in FACSS do not join in the electronic mailing list. Moreover, the awareness level of FACSS new website is quite low, according to recent survey data. The lack of content could be one reason and the website needs more promotion. FACSS began to embrace social media since 2006, but it did not make good use of them. For example, FACSS registered on Facebook.com as a group four years ago, but has been put in use in 2009. Now it serves as a typical one-way communication tool. The publicity team only uses the Facebook page to spread event news. There are only four comments posted since the group page was built and we could not find any interactivity features between the organization and the members on it.

Opportunities

In the academic year 2009-2010, FACSS organized over 10 events attracting more than 1,500 attendances in total. In the Chinese New Year Show, the attendees include government officials, university professors, media specialists, and business managers. The growing awareness and influence will help the organization attract more potential members.

During the latest decade, the enrollment of Chinese students and scholars in the United States has experienced a rapid increase. Alongside this trend, the number and size of Chinese student organizations in the United States is growing as well. Those organizations may have valuable experience associated with member relations who FACSS could learn from.

Threats

As a consequence of the economy recession, the organization is likely to face a financial challenge next year. UF president Bernie Machen warned that more budget cuts

would come in the following three years (Harringer, 2010). That would definitely affect the budget of the UF Student Government that allocates fund to the student bodies. The competition for funding becomes even fiercely among various groups on campus. FACSS with other international student organizations are led by Volunteers for International Student Associations (VISA) and striving for additional financial support with individual efforts. Furthermore, there is still little chance to attract donations from potential sponsors outside the university due to the current economy. Therefore, it would be difficult for FACSS to carry out member relations program with limited money.

Secondary Research

Organizational Identity and Mission Statement

Nonprofit organizations must know who they are before setting successful strategic and structural choices. The clarity and consensus of organizational identity should become an integral part of organizational development for nonprofit organizations (Young, 2001). It is also a principle applying to FACSS's case. Before starting a member relations project, the leadership of FACSS should make sure that they have a clear idea about the organizational identity.

Usually, a mission is seen as a vital component of organizational identity or organizational self-definition. It is not easy to define the mission of a nonprofit organization. Unlike a for-profit organization, the mission of which is clear: to make money, articulating a clear public service mission is a big challenge for nonprofit organizations since it would also be a hard task to set criteria to measure how successfully the mission is achieved (Wolf, 1999).

Develop a good mission statement is to create a text that is sufficiently broad to encompass the many possible activities that the organization may wish to engage in. Professionals have provided a bunch of guidelines for developing a mission statement.

First, a mission statement has to be simple and clear. Although it is required to be sufficiently broad to cover the many potential activities that the organization may want to engage in (Wolf, 1999), the organization must avoid making the statement into "a kind of hero sandwich of good intentions" (Drucker, 1990, p. 5). Second, a valuable mission statement should be operational, in other words, it could be converted into specific guidance on the direction the organization needs to take. Lastly, mission statements

should be reviewed and updated periodically. The surrounding environment or inner situation would change. The individuals or groups who are involved in the organization may change as well. Thus, a regular review process of mission statement is a necessary to keep the organization clarified with its priority.

Member Relations

Member relations is communication between the officers and members of a membership organization in which the members are a vital constituency, often supporting and using the organization's services (Hendrix & Hayes, 2007).

In a formal membership, the organization has an obligation to execute regular meetings for the membership and make sure that members receive timely notice of such gatherings. Also, the management of the organization is required to guarantee members' voting rights (Futter, 2002). In addition, the organization needs to organize various special events including conventions, seminars, conferences, and similar meetings for its members (Hendrix & Hayes, 2007).

With regard to communication efforts, the organization should conduct ongoing dialogue with its members and timely respond the complaints, comments, suggestions, and recommendations from membership. Most of member communications are accomplished by controlled media that usually consist of e-mails, websites, newsletters, reports, pamphlets, and other printed materials (Hendrix & Hayes, 2007) .

Evaluation of member relations programs concentrates on their impacts on members' attitude and behaviors. For instance, members' increasing awareness of organizational information is an indicator of success. Membership supportiveness and favorable reaction are often seen desired outcomes of member relations (Hendrix & Hayes, 2007).

Nonprofit Usage of Websites and Social media

The Internet provides unprecedented opportunities for the nonprofit sector and also has brought fundamental changes to the communication structure of nonprofit organizations (Boeder & Hohn, 2003). Nonprofit usage of Internet can be briefly divided into two phases: the website development in the early period and the adoption of social media in the Web 2.0 age.

The three basic functions of nonprofit websites are information dissemination, communication, and fundraising (Hooper & Stobart, 2003). Beyond the simple “contact us” button and unidirectional news letter found on most nonprofit websites, nonprofit organizations also use Listservs, bulletin boards, chat rooms, and forums to foster two-way interactions (Brainard & Siplon, 2004).

In fact, nonprofits demonstrate a growing adoption of these Web 2.0 strategies. As indicated in the first statistically significant, longitudinal studies on the usage of social media by U.S. charities, 89% of charitable organizations are using some form of social media including blogs, podcasts, message boards, social networking, video blogging, and wikis. A majority (57%) of the organizations are blogging. Forty-five percent of those studied report social media is important to their fundraising strategy. This study revealed that social media has become an incredibly important part of the communication strategy for U.S. charities to meet their objectives (Barnes & Mattson, 2008).

Between February 20 and April 15, 2009, 980 nonprofit professionals responded to a survey about their organization’s use of online social networks. Survey respondents represented small, medium, and large nonprofits and all segments including human services, public & societal benefit, health & healthcare, environment & animals, arts & culture, education (K-12 & Higher Ed), international, religious & spiritual, media, labor union, associations, and mutual benefit. When answering the question “Does your organization have a community of this type?” among respondents, 86% of nonprofits have a presence on at least one commercial social network. Facebook is the most popular of the commercial social networks with 74% of respondents indicating that their organization has a presence there. YouTube and Twitter are distant second and third with 47% and 43%, respectively, of nonprofit survey respondents indicating they maintain a presence in these channels. Linked In was fourth with 33%, and MySpace fifth with 26% of respondents (*Nonprofit Social Network Survey Report*, 2009).

Primary Research

The survey and interview were conducted in this proposed project as two main methods to gather data from FACSS leadership, members, and other U.S.-based Chinese student organizations. The aim of this formative research was to identify specific aspects that will become the foundation of a potential member relations plan.

Interviews with Presidents of CSSAs

I randomly selected 30 interview participants from the list of 118 U.S.-based Chinese student organizations and sent the interview requests to the sample via email, resulting in eight responses. The aim of the qualitative interviews was to obtain an overall picture of Chinese student organizations in the United States as well as to learn their experience on mission identification, member relations, and membership communication (please refer to the appendix to see the interview questionnaire).

Phone interviews were conducted with Ke Huang, the former president of Chinese Student and Scholar Association of the University of Central Florida (CSSA at UCF); Baolei Li, the president of Chinese Student and Scholar Association of the Duke University (CSSA at Duke); Lu Jiang, the president of Chinese Student and Scholar Association of the University of Central Michigan (CSSA at UCM); Shuai Li, the president of Chinese Student and Scholar Association of the University of Southern California (CSSA at USC); and Chunhui Gu, the former president of Chinese Student and Scholar Association of the University of California, Berkeley (CSSA at UC, Berkeley). E-mail interviews were conducted with Dezhi Kang, the president from Chinese Student and Scholar Association of the University of California at Los Angeles (CSSA at UCLA); Siming Yang, the president from Chinese Student and Scholar Association of the University of Texas at Austin (CSSA at UT); and Hailong Ren, the president of Chinese Student and Scholar Association of Indiana University (CSSA at IU).

Mission Statement

Basically, most responded presidents believe that the key publics of their organizations are Chinese students, scholars, and the local Chinese communities. The primary organizational mission is to serve this group of people in different ways. First, as stated, most Chinese student organizations are established to help their members to integrate to their new lifestyle in the host country. The most important function is that

they provide a sense of belongingness for their members. Siming pointed out that Chinese is a race who can easily adapt to the new environment, but they have significant emphasis on cultural roots. Therefore, CSSA at UT aims to make the members feel the association as “home” (Yang, personal communication, Oct 25, 2009). Hailong also mentioned that Chinese student organizations should play a role of “big family” to get people together to come over “home sick and loneliness” (Ren, personal communication, Oct 28, 2009).

Beside from the mental aspect, the organizations try to physically help members with their cultural accommodation process. Many organizations offer pick-up and temporary housing services to the newly arrived students and scholars. For regular members, the organizations also are willing to help as needed, for example, “to backup the members when their legal rights are challenged” (Kang, personal communication, Jan 16, 2010).

Second, some organizations focus on setting up social networks as their mission. Shuai, the president of CSSA at USC, referred to the primary mission of his organization as “to advocate the communication and interaction among the Chinese students, scholars and local Chinese communities at USC” (Li, personal communication, March 4, 2010). From Baolei’s perspective, CSSA at Duke always takes this mission seriously and strategically. He believes that the Chinese student organizations should build and manage different kinds of networks to meet members’ various needs such as friendship, academy, alumni, career, etc. As the slogan says “Connect People, Serve Better”, CSSA at UT recognize the networking construction among the membership as their main goal as well. They also make efforts on expanding the connection to an even larger Chinese community and other cultural groups and institutions in the city of Austin, Texas (Yang, personal communication, Jan 18, 2010).

Entertainment is the third aspect of the mission statement of these participated organizations. “Sometimes, research and school work can be very stressful; people need to find a recreational outlet,” said Huang, the former president of CSSA at UCF. He believed his organization made great efforts on entertaining its community. Other CSSAs also carry out a variety events, activities or celebrations to enrich members’ life, especially on Chinese holidays like Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese New Year.

Lastly, a couple of the interviewed presidents think that Chinese student organizations should function as a cultural ambassador of Chinese community and the country of China. One part of the mission of CSSA at UT is to “represent the Chinese students and scholars at the university to communicate with other social groups” (Yang, personal communication, Jan 18, 2010). Dezhi, the president of CSSA at UCLA thinks it important as well by stating that “CSSA (at UCLA) devotes itself to promoting the interaction between Chinese and American cultures” (Kang, personal communication, Jan 16, 2010). However, some other organizations did not see many achievements of this kind of effort. Hailong argued that CSSAs should first put their focuses on self-development and therefore grow their awareness and influence, after that they will be able to succeed in “real” cultural communication” (Ren, personal communication, Oct 28, 2010).

Member Relations

Similar to FACSS, most interviewed organizations do not have a compulsory membership registration system. For some of them, anyone subscribing to their Listserv automatically becomes their members while other organizations recognize the whole local Chinese community as their membership.

When asked the relationship between the organization and its members, most respondents believe it is somewhat positive but do not have much data to support this claim. Except that the CSSA at UCLA once did an overall membership survey, other organizations understand members’ thoughts mainly through their officers who are supposed to represent different groups of local Chinese residents. A majority of the interviewed organizations judge the membership satisfaction based on event attendance. “We organize a variety of activities every year and most of them are very welcomed...Sometimes, there are just no empty seats”, Shuai cheerfully described the member relations of CSSA at USC when asked to (Li, personal communication, March 5, 2010).

On the contrary, some other interviewees concerned the organizational relationship with members. Hailong revealed a recent change in their committee board which resulted that the majority of the staff was mainly undergraduate students. Unfortunately, graduate and undergraduate students have many differences or even

conflicts from each other. Therefore, there is a decline in the number of the graduate student participants of the organizational events and activities (Ren, personal communication, October 28, 2009). Chunhui also mentioned a similar situation in his organization (Gu, personal communication, March 21, 2010). Baolei reiterated that the organization should pay much attention to the growing diversity of the members and try to meet different expectations (Li, personal communication, January 17, 2010).

Addressing the issue how to maintain beneficial member relations, most frequently mentioned strategies are to provide help and organize events as consistent with their mission statements. The interviewed CSSAs do not have many promotion tactics but only communicate with their members via email, website, and limited social media. Following are the comments from interviewed presidents:

I believe that our homepage is the most effective communication channel with our members. We put a lot of time and efforts into its construction... the organization doesn't have a plan to increase the adoption of social media. (Kang, personal communication, Jan 16, 2010)

Our website is effective in term of broadcasting messages. There are some interactive functions such as comments and message board, but not too much interest has been paid on these functions...we try to make it little bit nicer and enrich its function such that we can show more multi-media information. We are also considering making it more integrated in both English and Chinese languages... We have pages on Renren.com², Facebook, Picasa online albums. But we have not yet worked out a good way to use them. (Li, personal communication, Nov 20, 2009)

I do not think that (our) website is very effective now... (it) is just a way for new comers to know there is an organization here and is able to help them out. Most of our questions are asked through e-mails...I think renren.com has the great potential to become the best social media for communication. And most of our advising is done through 'Sharing Status' on that website.(Yang, personal communication, Dec 2, 2010)

² The Renren Network, formerly known as Xiaonei Network is a Chinese social networking site with an interface similar to that of Facebook. It is extremely popular among college students in China.

Basically, most organizations are using emails and organizational websites as main communication tools. They attempt to adopt some forms of emergent media like BBS, social networking sites, and online albums but do not use them effectively.

Interview with FACSS Officers

The goal of this set of interviews was to explore how FACSS staff understands the organization with regard to mission, member relations, and communication. I interviewed seven officers of FACSS including the president, two vice presidents, two department chairs, and two consultants.

Regarding the organizational mission, basically, most officers understand that FASCC is an organization providing services and entertainment to Chinese community. The responses are quite similar such as “serve students and scholars of UF and have fun” (Dan, personal communication, March 15, 2010). “It provides student service for Chinese scholars and students in UF, organize activities to enrich member's study and leisure life” (Tang, personal communication, March 17, 2010).

The majority of the interviewed officers have a favorable attitude towards the existing member relations. But they admitted that the organization did not have enough knowledge of their members. The idea of starting a registration system was embraced by a number of officers while others concerned about the privacy issue. Many officers believe that there is much room for FACSS to improve its member relations. Dan mentioned that FACSS needs to carry out more customized events for the members. She also thinks that it would be quite beneficial to build network with other Chinese student organizations and learn experiences from them. Yang suggested the organization should (1) host periodical events to maintain a stronger connection with its members and (2) offer more education and guidance to the members with regard to academic assistance and career (Yang, personal communication, March 29, 2010). Glen, the vice president of FACSS, stated that “(Besides the current efforts), we should put more attention on helping our members with their career planning and culture accommodation” (Wu, personal communication, March 27, 2010)

Membership Survey

A survey was developed and conducted to understand the members' perceptions of FACSS. The survey also allowed us to understand FACSS members' attitudes towards

each event launched in the academic year 2009/10, and the current communication between the organization and its membership.

After conducting a pilot study of the survey with 15 student members, the survey was finalized and the link was distributed to an estimated sample of 700 active subscribers through Listserv. By March 23, 2010, a total of 200 members attended the survey and 172 out of them completed all of the compulsory questions. The survey consists of 11 questions falling to the categories of member profile, membership motivation, organization evaluation, communication effectiveness, and member expectations. The charts of the survey findings are enclosed in appendix.

Member Profile

Forty-seven percent of the respondents were female while 53% of them were male. Most of the respondents (86%) were in the age range from 18 to 35. In terms of occupation, a majority (75%) of the respondents consisted of UF students; 13% of the respondents were UF staff or faculty; visiting scholars make up of 5% of the participants; and there were seven dependants, seven other employed members, and one unemployed filling out the survey. Regarding the membership length, the finding indicates comparable percentages of the members joining the association less than six months (22%), six months to 1 year (24%), and 1-2 years (26%). The members holding membership of 3-5 years made up of 17% of the survey participants, the percentage of five years longer members were 10%.

Membership Motivation

Participants were asked to indicate the primary reason for having joined FACSS, 41% of the respondents chiefly were interested in the various events and activities as being a member of FACSS. "Obtaining community information" was the main reason mentioned by 36% of the participated members to take parts in the association. Other motivations of joining the organization include member services (5%), networking (17%), career information (1%), and other.

Organization Evaluation

In the 2009-2010 academic year, FACSS has organized over 10 events. It shows that 76% of responded subjects attended the Chinese New Year Show, which is the annually biggest event of FACSS. The New Comer Orientation comes as the activity with

second highest attendance rate with 35% participants. There are 21% and 20% of the respondents reporting that they went to the New Comer BBQ Party and Karaoke Contest. Around 9% of the answerers did not attend any of the events. Turning to the evaluation of each activities, all of the events are rated better than “good” (the lowest score is 2.14 on a five-point Likert scale), but only one out of ten events is qualified to be described as “very good”. Regarding the overall satisfaction, 50% of the respondents indicate that they are “somewhat satisfied” with the organization while 12% are not satisfied.

Communication Effectiveness

According to the survey findings, E-mail stands out the most important information resource of FACSS members. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents get FACSS’s messages via emails. It is quite interesting to notice that as high as 21% responded members have learned FACSS initiatives from their families or friends.

Only 8% people use FACSS website to obtain the information. Consistently, when asked the preferred form of communication about FACSS, a majority (76%) lists email as their first choice. Twelve percent of respondents like to be informed through FACSS website while 10% prefers Facebook.

Member Expectations

The data demonstrates that “Entertainment” is members’ mostly expected benefit from the organization, which is mentioned by 85 respondents (49%), followed by career information (28%), belongingness (13%), and academic assistance (3%). Apart from that, 10 participants picked up the answer “other” without specifying.

One open-ended question is designed to ask for the suggestions from the members and have got 41 text responses. More than ten out of 41 respondents who provided specific suggestions for FACSS expecting more activities or events, even though the organization hosted at least 10 events this phase and some of the surveyed members looked forward to more customized events. Others express their willingness to see more interactions between FACSS and other social institutions especially other cultural groups while others suggest FACSS work with other Chinese organizations like CASA to make an even better job.

PLANNING

Key Publics

Because FACSS regards every Chinese student, faculty, and, as well as resident in Gainesville as its member, the target public for the project should be the entire Chinese community in the city of Gainesville.

FACSS was originally built as a student group serving UF Chinese community, its primary public remains UF Chinese students, scholars, and their families. Also, since most of the organizational initiatives are conducted on campus, this public is the most easily reached one. Therefore, for the member relations project, our primary targets are current Chinese students, scholars and dependents of UF, while other Chinese residents including Chinese staff, faculty of UF, other employed and unemployed residents are secondary targets.

By fall 2009, UF has enrolled 812 Chinese students and 50 dependants (Anderson, personal communication, Oct.21st, 2009). Zhang (2009), the vice president of FACSS Students and Scholars Services, reported at the end of the New Comers Welcome Program that his association has provided airport pickup for at least 210 Chinese students, scholars, and their families in 2009 summer. According to Gainesville Florida Census and demographic information indicated in 2000 U.S. Census Report, there were 1,372 Chinese residents in the city of Gainesville by 2000, which made up 1.4% of the total population (“Gainesville Florida Census,” 2004).

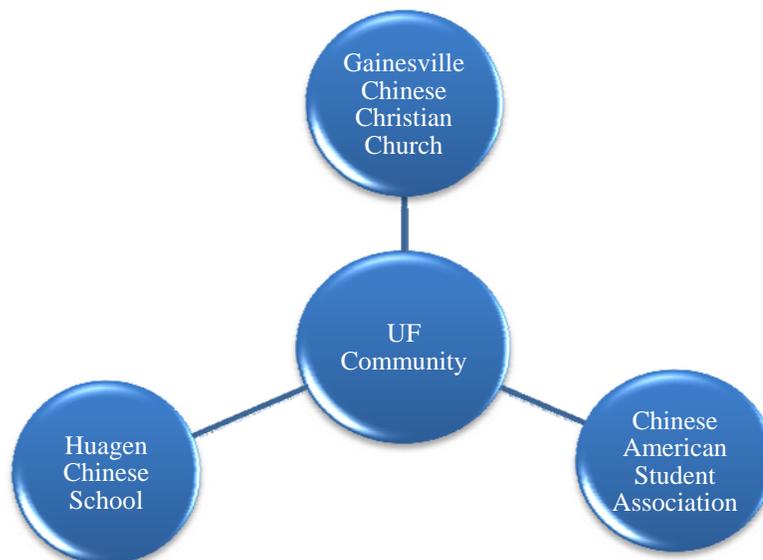


After identifying key publics of this project, it is also important to identify stakeholder groups. A stakeholder is any person, group, organization, or system who affects or can be affected by the public relations project. Stakeholders in this case include UF community and Gainesville Chinese Christian Church, Huagen Chinese School and Chinese American Student Association.

The latest total enrollment of the University of Florida is 52,112 which consist of 35,898 undergraduate students, 11,756 graduate students, and 4,458 professional students by fall 2008 (see Table-5). The number of female students is slightly over than that of male students. In term of ethnicity, the Caucasian population is significantly overwhelming other races with a population of 31,802.

The Gainesville Chinese Christian Church was officially established in February 1989. The number of adults attending the worship service grew from about 40 initially to more than 100 at present (“History of GCCC,” n.d.) (“Gainesville Florida Census and demographic information,” 2004)

The Chinese American Student Association (CASA) is an organization striving to promote the Chinese and Chinese American heritage at the University of Florida campus and in the Gainesville community through social and community events. Members of CASA are comprised of Chinese and American undergraduate students on campus united to show the appreciation of the Chinese culture--both of the old traditions and contemporary ideas, and of the Chinese American influence (“CASA | About,” 2005).



Goals

The proposed project is an initial step for FACSS to build relationship with its members. In particular, the project has several goals to fulfill. First, before starting a member relations improvement program, the organization should make sure that they have a clear idea about its identity and purpose. Second, FACSS does not have a clear definition of membership, the project attempts to solve this problem. Third, though this project, the organization wants to know more information of its members including their profiles, contacts, and expectations. The fourth goal is to operate more effective communication with its members and eventually achieve more positive and beneficial member relations. The overall project goals are set as follows:

Clarify the organizational identity and mission

Recruit members to register a new membership system

Achieve more connections with members

Build and maintain a favorable member relationship

Objectives

Usually, mission is seen as a vital component of organizational identity or organizational self-definition. A clear and consistent mission statement is important to the success of any organizational development. Since the organization plans to operate a member system, the organization will not have any formally registered members from that starting point. The whole Chinese community should be stimulated to register official membership identities. The membership information is most valuable resource to a membership organization like FACSS which functions as the basis for building relationship and connection with members. In addition, both communication effectiveness and event satisfaction are useful indicators of positive member relations. Thus, the specific objectives of the project are outlined below:

Objective 1: To register 800 people (300 newcomers of 2010 fall, 300 of 2009 fall and 200 from the rest of the community) for the FACSS membership by April 2011.

As mentioned, currently, FACSS doesn't have any registered member. Through the project, at least 800 Chinese residents in Gainesville are expected to register themselves as FACSS official members. FACSS started a newcomer check-in system last year in order to offer airport pick-up and housing services, and therefore had an e-mailing list of 300 Chinese students, scholars and dependents came to Gainesville in 2009 fall. The high response rate of 2009 newcomer survey indicates the organization has initial connection with most of them. Thus, we anticipate this group of people (300) to register. In 2010 fall, another 300 Chinese will come to UF and are expected to become FACSS members by registration. We also attempt to recruit 200 people from the rest of Chinese community to formally join in the organization.

Objective 2: To manage the information of 800 members in a databank with different categories during the project.

The information of registered members needs to be systematically itemized and managed in a databank.

Objective 3: To have new mission statement known by 50% of members and 90% of officers by April 2011.

Objective 4: To stimulate 200 persons to join Renren group page, expand Facebook network by 60% bigger and encourage 50 member comments on both pages respectively by April 2011

Objective 5: To increase the visits of FACSS website by 100 % by April 2011

Currently, FACSS website does not have visits counter. Before operating the project, the technical team will incorporate some software to examine the clicks.

Objective 6: To organize 10 quality events and stimulate 3,000 attendances in total by April 2011

FACSS has organized 10 events in the academic year 2009/2010, attracting approximated 2,000 attendances. In the next FACSS year, we will continue to do 10 events but enhance the qualities in order to stimulate more membership participation.

Key and Supporting Messages

With the aim to recruit members, the organization at first should publicize its functions to the potential membership. Based on the interviews with the officers, FACSS mainly provides help, support and entertainment to the community. The messages about organizational efforts on this member relation improvement should be spread as well. In addition, more directly related to goals of the objective, the benefits of the new membership system needs to communicate to the potential members.

Key Message 1: FACSS strives to help, support, and entertain its members.

Supporting Message 1: FACSS provides help for Gainesville Chinese residents with new Chinese students with transportation, housing, and other basic needs.

Supporting Message 2: FACSS serves as a social outlet for producing networks, belongingness and unity.

Supporting Message 3: FACSS organizes a variety of events and activities to entertain Chinese community, such as the Chinese New Year Celebration.

Key Message 2: FACSS is making great efforts to improve its member relations.

Supporting Message 1: FACSS is operating a professional system for membership registration.

Supporting Message 2: FACSS is developing its communication tools in aim of achieving more interaction with its members.

Supporting Message 3: FACSS is doing best to better understand its members.

Key Message 3: The new membership system is important and beneficial to the organization as well as the members.

Supporting Message 1: It is easy to register as a member of FACSS through the system.

Supporting Message 2: This system can help FACSS to know more about its members and therefore fulfill more achievement.

Supporting Message 3: The personal information of the members are kept confidential according to the law.

EXECUTION

Strategies & Tactics

Objective 1: To register 800 people (300 newcomers of 2010 fall, 300 of 2009 fall and 200 from the rest of the community) for the FACSS membership by April 2011.

Strategy: To set up and promote a membership registration system.

Policy tactics:

- 1) Design an online system for membership registration (please see the registration form in appendix).

Communication tactics:

- 2) Present the system on the home page of FACSS website.
- 3) Demonstrate the link on social network pages.
- 4) Send the registration system link to 2009 fall comers e-mail list.
- 5) Build the connection with 2010 fall new comers and direct them to the registration system.
- 6) Attract event attendees to fill out the registration forms.

Objective 2: To manage the information of 800 members in a databank with different categories by April 2011.

Strategy: To establish and maintain the membership databank.

Policy tactics:

- 1) Set up a membership information databank.
- 2) Assign a database manager.
- 3) Build a new member mail list derived from the data bank.

Communication tactics:

- 4) Input the personal profiles and contact information of the registered members into the databank.
- 5) Identify the data and fit the members into different categories based on gender, age, occupation, membership length, and interest.

Objective 3: To have new mission statement known by 20% of members and 90% of officers by April 2011.

Strategy: To develop and publicize a new mission statement.

Policy tactics:

- 1) Discuss the identity and mission of the organization in the committee board meetings.
- 2) Vote and pass a new mission statement (two versions of preliminary mission statement are proposed in the Appendix).

Communication tactics:

- 3) Educate the staff and keep them aware of the official statement of the organizational identity and mission.
- 4) Present the new statement in all of the organization-own media including the homepage, Facebook, Renren.com and etc.
- 5) Promote the links and changes via email to FACSS membership.
- 6) Print out the statement along with event information on the flyers distributed for advertising upcoming events.

Objective 4: To stimulate 200 persons to join Renren group page, expand Facebook network by 60% bigger and encourage 50 member comments on both pages respectively by April 2011

Strategy: To make online social networks more usable and interactive.

Policy tactics:

- 1) Assign a social media specialist to manage the online networks.
- 2) Register a group page on Renren.com.

Communication tactics:

- 3) Update the pages of Renren and Facebook on a timely basis.
- 4) Invite members who have an account of Facebook or Renren to join in the networks.
- 5) Make the network pages more like online communities by stimulating discussions, uploading visual materials, adopting more applications and etc.
- 6) Respond to members' inquiries and comments immediately.
- 7) Promote the group pages on FACSS website, via emails and through other printed media.

Objective 5: To increase the visits of FACSS website by 100 % by April 2011

Strategy: To improve the FACSS website in several ways.

Tactics:

- 1) Have technicians to incorporate new features including newsroom, online album, blog and BBS.
- 2) Assign a communicator to manage and update newsroom, BBS and online albums.
- 3) Encourage officers to elaborate the organizational blog by awarding active bloggers.
- 4) Update the website periodically.
- 5) Respond to members' inquiries and comments immediately.

Objective 6: To organize 10 events and stimulate at least 2,000 attendances in total by April 2011

Strategy: To design and execute more customized and satisfactory events.

Tactics:

- 1) Propose a list of potential events and activities for next FACSS year.
- 2) Invite the members to vote on the list and choose the favorite events by using the "vote" application on Renren network.³
- 3) Encourage the members, especially non-students to show their own ideas on activities via emails, website and online community pages.
- 4) Conduct sufficient formative research and make a comprehensive plan for each event.
- 5) Use all of the channels to effectively communicate the event information to the membership.
- 6) Involve more experts, volunteers, members and non-members into the events and activities.
- 7) Operate an evaluation for each event.
- 8) Make relevant news, photo, video or other recording forms available for members to review.

³ The vote application on Renren.com is one of the most popular applications. The user can launch a voting activity by clicking the button and invite his/her "friends" to participate.

EVALUATION

Evaluation represents an important part of the project. It will allow the organization to understand the degree to which the strategies and tactics of the project has fulfilled its goals and objectives. Member relations improvement is a long-term process in that we do not expect a significant change during a year. Actually, this project is more like an initial step for relationship building. Through the project, FACSS will hopefully know better about its membership and begin to establish, maintain and improve the member relations consciously and strategically. The specific evaluation methods are listed below.

Objective 1: To register 800 people (300 newcomers of 2010 fall, 300 of 2009 fall and 200 from the rest of the community) for the FACSS membership by April 2011.

Evaluation method: To examine the registration system to see:

- a) how many members register in the system by April 2011;
- b) what kind of information they reveal to the organization;
- c) And how much of the revealed information is reliable.

Objective 2: To manage the information of 800 members in a databank with different categories by April 2011.

Evaluation method: To examine the databank to find out:

- a) how many the categories are set up,
- b) membership distributions,
- c) And if the new mail list is built based on the databank or not.

Objective 3: To have new mission statement known by 20% of members and 90% of officers by April 2011

Evaluation method 1: To conduct a survey among the newly registered members to determine how many out of them are aware of the new mission statement

Evaluation method 2: To conduct a survey among the officers to determine how many out of them are familiar with the new mission statement.

Evaluation method 3: To observe FACSS website and other social media to see:

- a) if the new mission statement is put on the website,
- b) if the new mission statement is presented on Facebook and Renren pages,
- c) how many hits on mission statement page on FACSS website,
- d) And how many comments on mission statement on those two social network sites.

Objective 4: To stimulate 200 persons to join Renren group page, expand Facebook network by 60% bigger and encourage 50 member comments on both pages respectively by April 2011

Evaluation method 1: to count how many people join Renren group page.

Evaluation method 2: to count how many new members join Facebook group.

Evaluation method 3: to observe how many comments posted in the two online communities.

Evaluation method 4: to find out if the social media specialist responds the comments and inquiries timely.

Objective 5: To increase the visits of FACSS website by 100 % by April 2011

Evaluation method 1: To count how many hits on the website during the project.

Evaluation method 2: To observe what kind of new functions added in the website.

Evaluation method 3: To conduct a membership survey to determine:

- a) the members' attitude towards the website,
- b) what features are most popular,
- c) And which part needs to be improved.

Objective 6: To organize 10 events and stimulate at least 2,000 attendances in total by April 2011

Evaluation method 1: To count how many events are hosted.

Evaluation method 2: To observe how many events are customized to the members.

Evaluation method 3: To count how many attendances in each event and in total during the project.

Evaluation method 4: To conduct a membership survey to see:

- a) the attendance of each event
- b) And member attitude towards each event.

STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Upon its conclusion, the member relations project for FACSS will have accomplished six objectives previously stated.

However, as discussed above, this project is an initial step of FACSS's member relations improvement process. In order to achieve ongoing success in the relationship maintenance, many efforts in the project need to be sustained in the future.

- 1) To recruit more members, the organization should maintain and promote the registration system in the long run.
- 2) Membership databank including the mail list is the most valuable resource of the organization. The data manager must update the information on a timely basis.
- 3) A regular review and revision process of mission statement could keep the organization clarified with its priority.
- 4) With the growing popularity of social media, FACSS's online communities on Renren and Facebook will become more important in terms of membership communication and interaction. The social media team is expected to make better use of these two social networks.
- 5) The maintenance and promotion of FACSS website requires ongoing efforts to increase the awareness and influence.
- 6) After the project evaluation, the organization can determine which events should be reserved, improved, or abandoned. Also, it is always beneficial to obtain more thoughts of members.

Timetable

The proposed member relations project will last for one year from May 2010 to April 2011.

May 2010	
Mission Statement	a) Develop a new mission statement
Membership Registration System	a) Incorporate a membership registration system on FACSS website b) Build a membership information databank
Effective Communication	a) Register a group page on Renren.com b) Set up a new e-mailing list of members c) Continue to construct FACSS Website
Event Improvement	a) Propose a list of potential events

June-July 2010	
Mission Statement	a) Present the new statement on FACSS's website, Facebook page, Renren.com b) Promote the links of mission change to FACSS new members via emails
Membership Registration System	a) Put the link of registration system on Facebook and Renren.com b) Send emails to promote the link of the registration system among FACSS membership
Effective Communication	a) Attract members to join in FACSS's online groups b) Start to enrich the content on FACSS's social network web pages c) Incorporate new features on the FACSS website like news room, blog, and online album
Event Improvement	a) Start the member voting of most expected events

August 2010-March 2011

Mission Statement	a) Print out the new mission statement on publicity materials and distribute them during actual events
Membership Registration System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sort out the membership information into different categories b) Update the data bank on a timely basis
Effective Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Update FACSS website timely b) Update online networking pages timely c) Maintain the interpersonal communication with members via emails d) Have officers regularly respond to membership inquires
Event Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Conduct sufficient research and make a comprehensive plan for each event b) Use all of the channels to effectively communicate the event information to the membership c) Operate an membership assessment of each event

April 2011

- a) Start Project Evaluation

Budget and Resources

Besides the tactics associated with special events, most part of the project will be conducted online which makes it cost little money. But the project needs a professional team of personnel including web technicians, designers, social media experts, communication specialists, and data managers.

Task	Personnel Resource	Responsibility
Website Development	Technician (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Improve current function b) Incorporate new features: news room, blog, online albums c) Regular update and maintenance
	Communicator (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Write blogs, news and promotion materials b) Respond to members' comments
	Designer (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Design web graphic, poster and other digital arts
Online Community Coordination	Social media specialist(1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Expand the online networking to members and non-members b) Immediate response to any inquires about the organization c) Regular update and maintenance
Task	Personnel Resource	Responsibility
Website Development	Technician (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Improve current function e) Incorporate new features: news room, blog, online albums f) Regular update and maintenance

	Communicator (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Write blogs, news and promotion materials d) Respond to members' comments
	Designer (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Design web graphic, poster and other digital arts
Online Community Coordination	Social media specialist(1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Expand the online networking to members and non-members e) Immediate response to any inquires about the organization f) Regular update and maintenance
Databank Management	Data manager (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Set up a membership information databank b) Filter out the information of current members from the existing data c) Locate the data into different categories d) Daily update and maintenance e) Keep members' personal information confidential
Interpersonal Communication	Communicator (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Set up a new email list of current members b) Send out organizational information to the members on the list c) Express greetings on member's birthday, holidays and special occasions d) Answer questions and respond inquiries e) Keep members' email addresses confidential

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APPENDIX

Interview Questionnaire with CSSA Presidents

1. Please give a brief introduction of your organization (size, mission, value, and vision).
2. How would you characterize member relations in your association?
3. What strategies do you use to maintain positive and beneficial member relations?
4. Have you ever faced any financial problem when running the organization? If so, how did you deal with it?
5. Do you have any effective fundraising strategies?
6. What are the main features and functions of your website? Do you think it is an effective communication channel for your organization? Please explain.
7. Do you use any forms of social media, including wikis, podcasts, online videos, message boards, blogs, social networking sites, etc., as communication tools? What about their effectiveness?
8. Do you have plans to increase the adoption of social media?

Interview Questionnaire with the Staff of FACSS

1. According to your knowledge, could you please tell me the mission or purpose of FACSS at UF?
2. What are your thoughts and comments on the mission of FACSS as stated in the website?
3. What is the main purpose of FACSS in your mind?
4. How would you characterize member relations in your association?
5. Currently, what tools do you use to communicate with your members?
6. What strategies can be used to build and maintain favorable member relations?
7. How should the organization improve its work in terms of member relations?
8. What online media do you think will be effective for membership interaction?

Survey Questionnaire

1. How long have you been a member of Friendship Association of Chinese Students and Scholars (FACSS)?

Answer
Less than 6 months
6 months to a year
1-2 years
3-5 years
Over 5 years

2. What is your occupation?

Answer
Student
Visiting Scholar
Staff or Faculty
Dependent (F2 or B1)
Other employed
Unemployed

3. Are you male or female?

Answer
Female
Male

4. What is your age?

Answer
18-25
26-35
36-45
46-55
Over 55

5. What was your primary reason for joining FACSS?

Answer
Community Information
Activities and Events
Member Services
Networking
Career
Other(please specify)

6. Which of the following events have you attended in the 2009-2010 academic year?

Answer
Newcomer Orientation
Newcomer BBQ
Karaoke Contest
Baby Talent Show
Chinese, talk about our stories
Wall Painting
The Chinese Sport Day
Dancing Party
11.11 Dating Party
2010 Chinese New Year Show
None

7. Overall, how would you rate the quality of each of the following activities FACSS engage in?

Question	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Newcomer Orientation					
Newcomer BBQ					
Karaoke Contest					
Baby Talent Show					
Chinese, talk about our stories					
Wall Painting					
The Chinese Sport Day					
Dancing Party					
11.11 Dating Party					
2010 Chinese New Year Show					

8. How do you get the information about FACSS events or services?

Answer
FACSS Website
Email
Friends or family
Print ads (posters, flyers, etc.)
Facebook
Other

9. What is your preferred form of communication about FACSS initiatives?

Answer
Email
FACSS Website
Phone call
Facebook
Twitter
Other(please specify)

10. What is the most important benefit you expect to receive from being a member of FACSS in the future?

Answer
Career information
Academic assistance
Entertainment
Belongingness
Other(please specify)

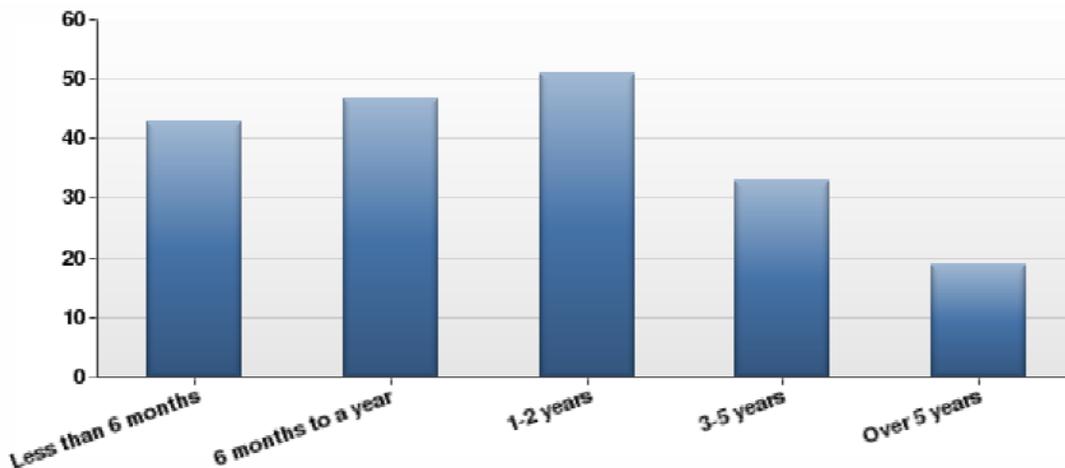
11. Overall, how satisfied have you been with FACSS?

Answer
Very Dissatisfied
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Neutral
Somewhat Satisfied
Totally Satisfied

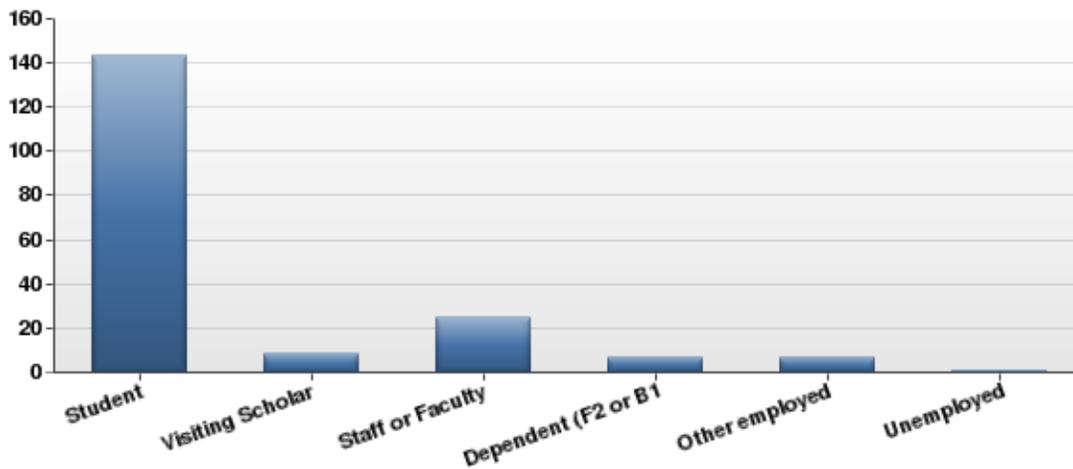
12. What suggestions do you have to help improve FACSS?

Survey Results

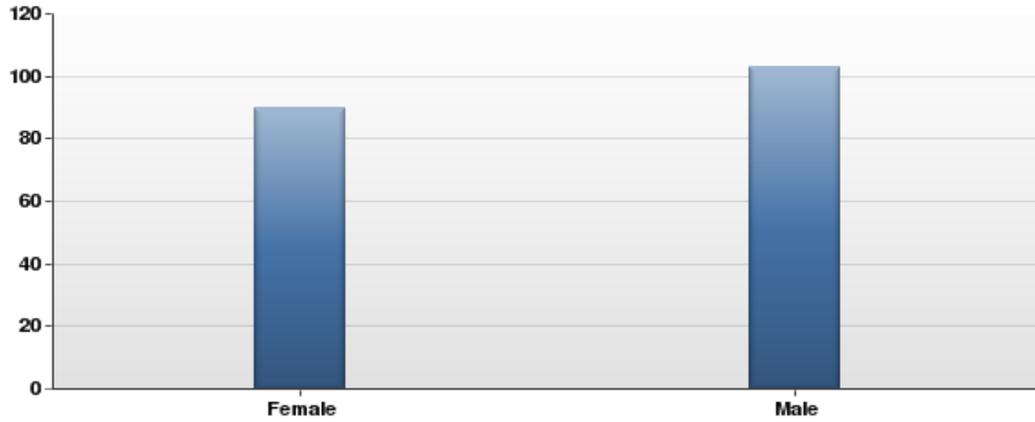
1. How long have you been a member of Friendship Association of Chinese Students and Scholars (FACSS)?



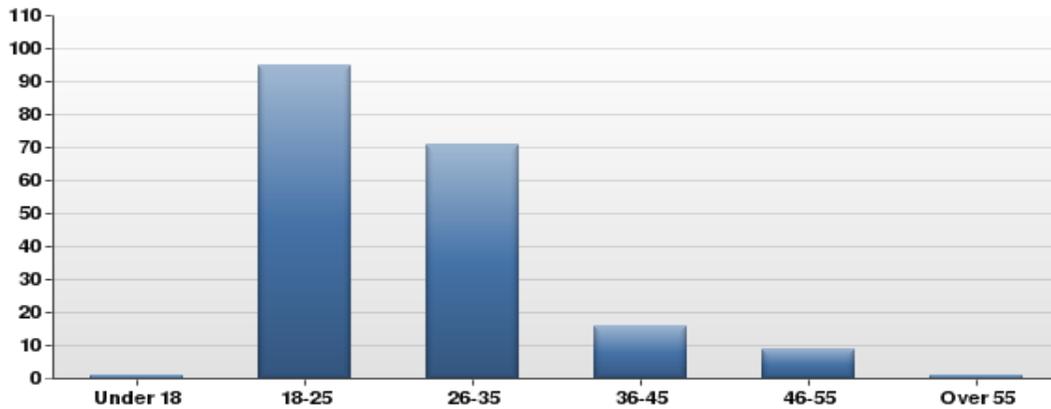
2. What is your occupation?



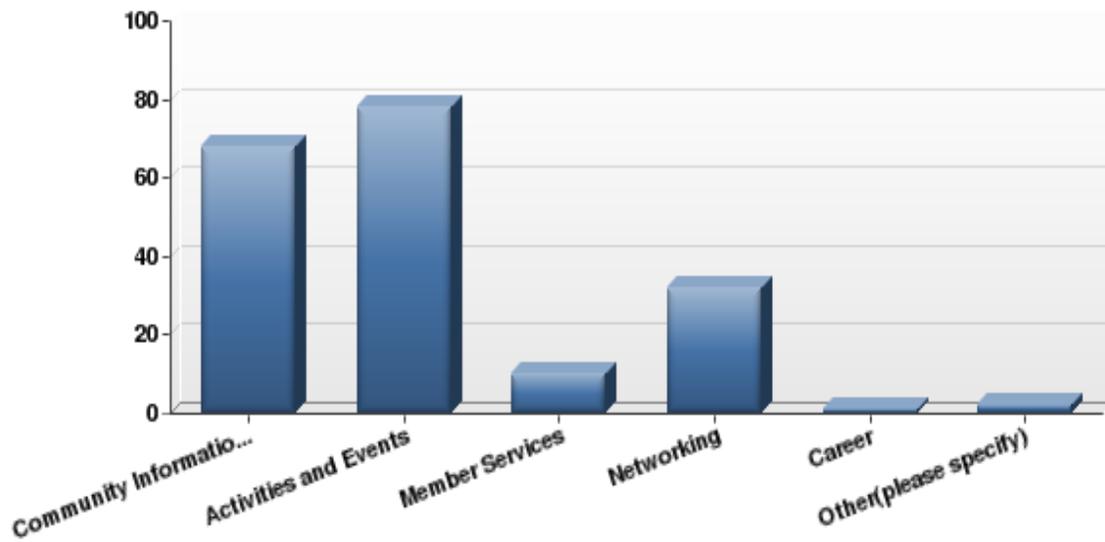
3. Are you male or female?



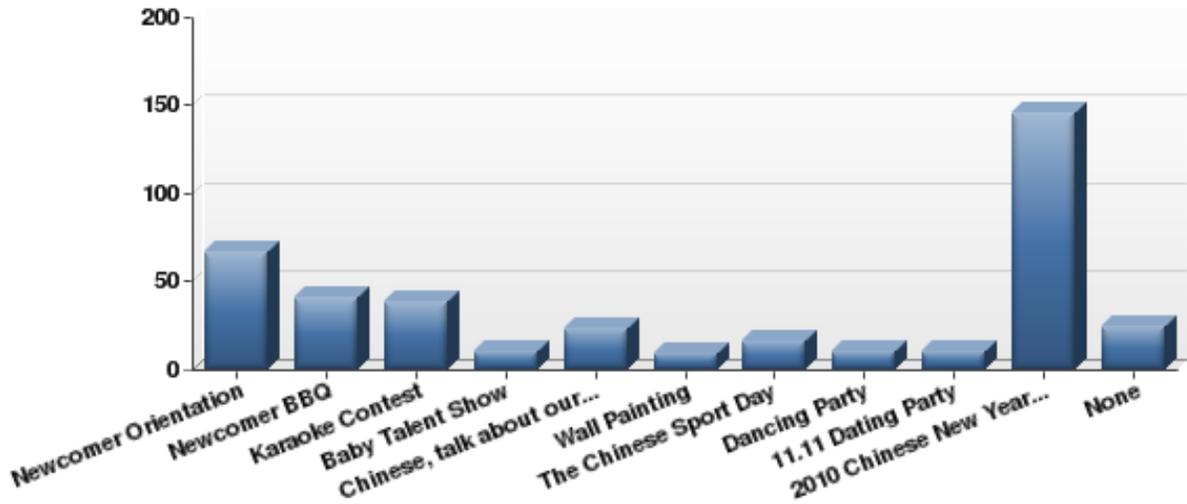
4. What is your age?



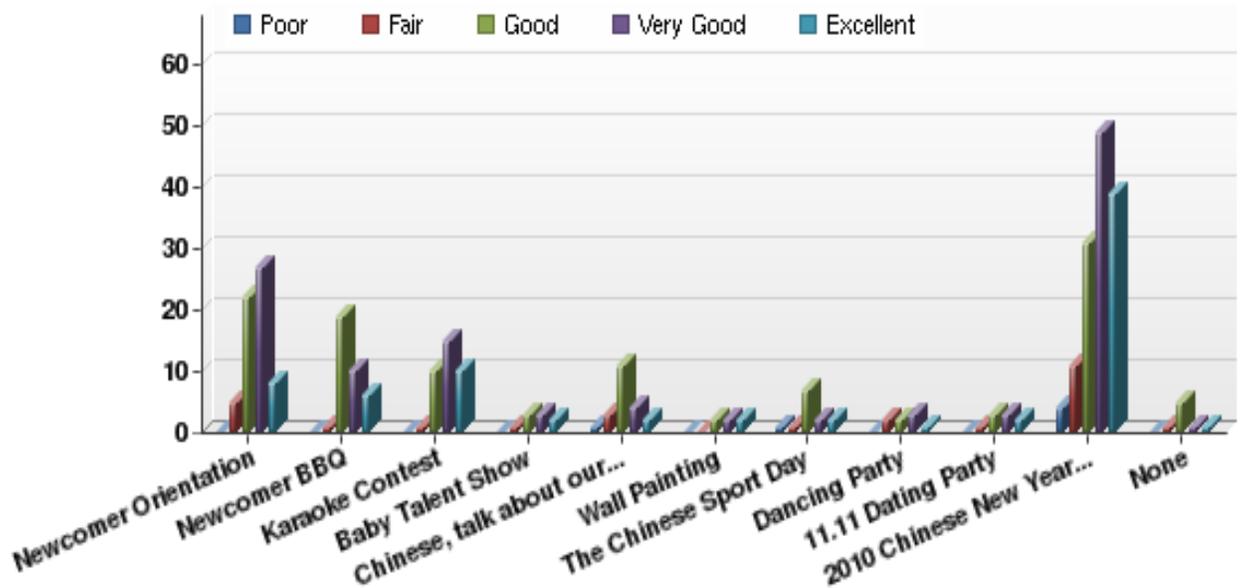
5. What was your primary reason for joining FACSS?



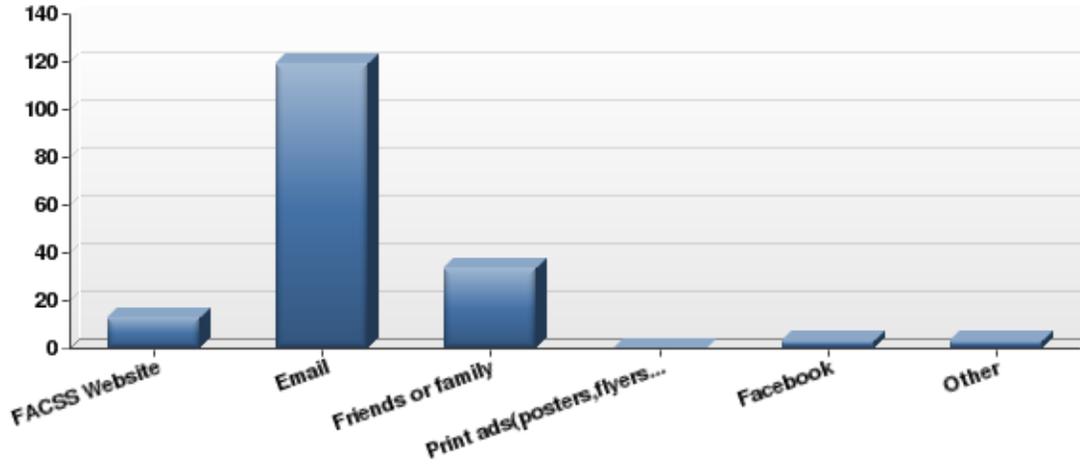
6. Which of the following events have you attended in the 2009-2010 academic year
(Please do not mark if you did not attend the event)?



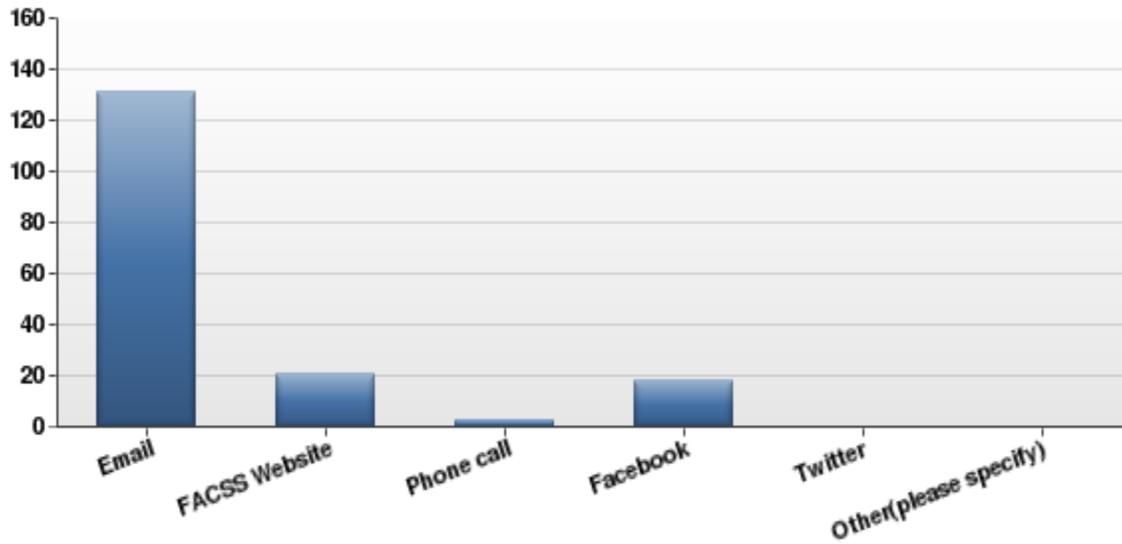
7. Overall, how would you rate the quality of each of the following activities we engage in (please do not mark if you did not attend the event)?



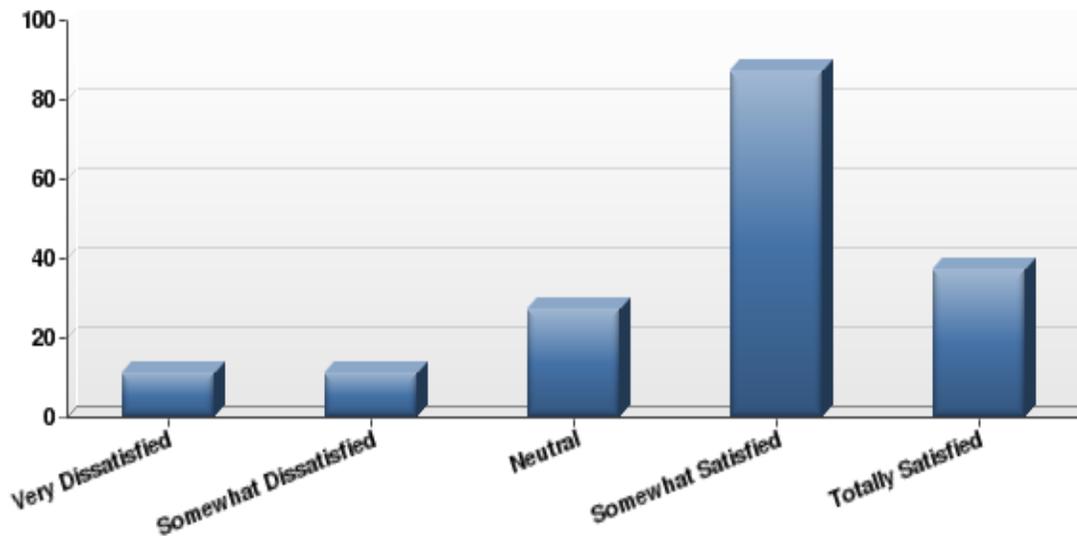
8. How do you get the information about FACSS events or services?



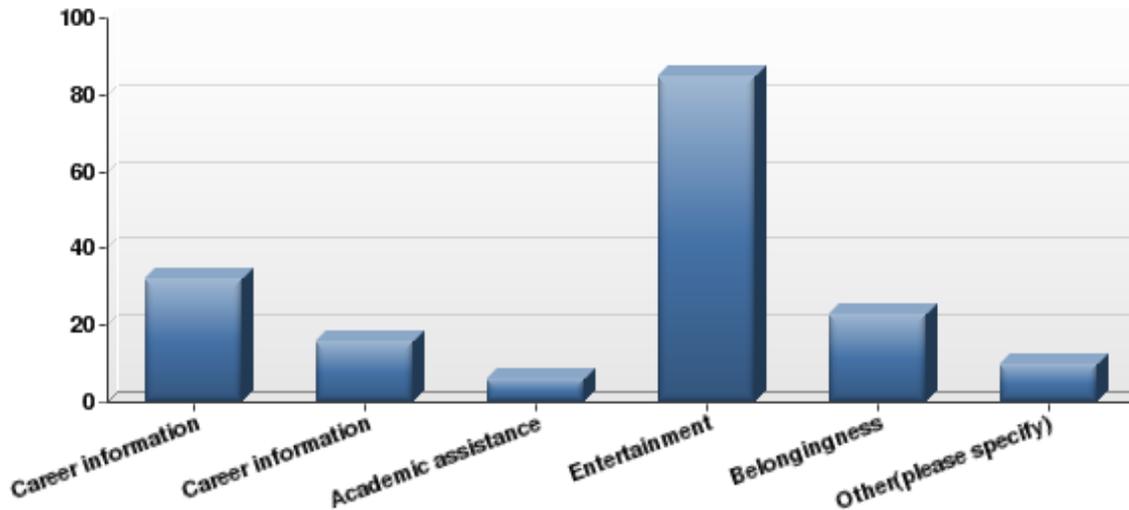
9. What is your preferred form of communication about FACSS initiatives?



10. Overall, how satisfied have you been with FACSS?



11. What is the most important benefit you expect to receive from being a member of the Association in the future?



FACSS 会员信息注册表

FACSS Membership Registration Form

姓名 Name		电子邮件 Email	
性别 Gender		电话 Phone	
职业 Occupation		年龄 Age	
何时入住甘城 When came to Gainesville		其他联系方式 (如人人网) Other contact methods (e.g. Facebook)	
更多自我介绍 More information you want us to know			
最希望从 FACSS 获得什么 What benefit you expect to receive from FACSS			
你喜欢哪些信息 渠道 How would you like FACSS to contact you			

Member Databank Administration

The membership databank is based on the excel file exported from the online member application registration system. It stores custom member profiles, basic contacts and contact history. The personal information of a member includes name, gender, occupation, age, and the length of residence in Gainesville. The basic contacts refer to member's phone number, email, other contact methods and preferred forms of communication. The data bank also records detailed communication histories for each member in the databank and stores date of contact, who made the contact, contact method, and a note.

For effective administration, the manager is expected to fit the data into different categories. For examples, several columns such as student, scholar, dependant, faculty/staff, other employed and etc. can be created under the folder occupation; according to the contact types, it would be easy to develop an email list, a phone list, or other lists. E-mail is the preference of most participants as indicated in the survey. Therefore, the manager should pay great attention to the construction of the new email list.

The organization can take advantage of the member data bank to assist its membership communication. It cannot only send tailored messages to specific groups but also reach out more people by assimilating information through their favorable contacts.

The databank needs a monthly update. The data of the previous members should be moved to an alumni folder which is valuable resource for the organization.

A Preliminary Mission Statement

A concise version of FACSS mission statement:

The mission of Friendship Association of Chinese Students and Scholars is to serve, support and entertain the Chinese community in the city of Gainesville.

A detailed version of FACSS mission statement:

FACSS aims to provide services and support to the Gainesville Chinese community. It helps Chinese students, scholars and their families with environmental and cultural accommodation. It fosters the cultural belongingness and social outlet for Chinese residents in the host country. It also promotes Chinese heritage and traditions in Gainesville community through a variety of events and celebration.

The List of Potential Events

New Comer Orientation

Purpose: To provide help and guidance for Chinese newcomers

Time: 6:30 pm-9:00 pm, August 20, 2010

Location: Reitz Union Ball Room

Checklist:

- 1) Round-table ice breaking
- 2) Singing performance
- 3) Speech given by the president
- 4) Presentations respectively focusing on campus life, basic necessities, travel and entertainment

Newcomers and Volunteers BBQ party

Purpose: To welcome the newcomers and thank volunteers for their help with airport pickup and housing

Time: 12:30 pm-5:00 pm, September 5, 2010

Location: Lake Wauberg

Checklist:

- 1) BBQ, snacks and drinks
- 2) Play cards
- 3) Beach volleyball
- 4) Boating

“Language and Cultural”

Purpose: To enhance members’ language skills and knowledge of American culture

Time: 6:00 pm-8:00 pm Friday nights, biweekly

Location: Reitz union meeting room

Checklist:

- 1) Periodically invite speakers to teach English and culture
- 2) Invite American Chinese learners to be language partners of Chinese members
- 3) Encourage members to practice both English and Chinese with their language partners

3 Person Basketball League

Purpose: To promotion sports and teamwork in Chinese community

Time: 4:00 pm- 6:00 pm, Saturday afternoons

Location: Southwest Recreation Center

Checklist:

- 1) Games are played half court with 3 players.
- 2) Enter a team by Thursday, September 9th, 2010
- 3) The top three teams will be awarded

2010 FACSS Badminton Competition

Purpose: To promote sporting spirit in the community

Time: 4:00 pm- 6:00 pm, Saturday afternoons

Location: Southwest Recreation Center

Checklist:

- 1) It is open to the entire Gainesville community
- 2) Enter the competition by Thursday, September 9th, 2010
- 3) The top three players will be awarded

2010 FACSS Go Game Contest

Purpose: To promote the traditional Chinese board game and associated spirits in Chinese community

Time: 4:00 pm- 6:00 pm, Saturday afternoons

Location: Maguire Common Room

Checklist:

- 1) It is open to the entire Gainesville community
- 2) Enter the competition by Thursday, September 9th, 2010
- 3) The top three players will be awarded

Mid-Autumn Celebration

Purpose: Mid-Autumn Day is a second important festival (Spring Festival is the most important one) which would make people homesick. It is good for the organization to host a family-like party to bring belongingness to its members. Moon cake is the traditional food for this holiday. Making moon cakes together will be much fun.

Time: 6:00 pm-11:00 pm, September 22, 2010

Location: Maguire Common Room

- 1) Potluck
- 2) Make moon cakes
- 3) Watch a movie
- 4) Karaoke

China National Day Wall Painting

Purpose: To celebrate the National day

Time: 7:00 pm-10:00 pm, September 30, 2010

Location: SW 34th Street

Checklist:

- 1) Paint wishes on the wall to celebrate China National Day
- 2) Safety is big issue since the activity will be in road side and at night.

Career Workshop

Purpose: To enhance Chinese students' job hunting skills with regard to resume design, cover letter writing, and interview

Time: 1:30pm-5:30 pm, October 2th, 2010

- 1) Invite the experts of UF Career Resource Center to give lectures
- 2) O/A section

Chinese Institutions Job Fair

Purpose: In the past, several higher institutions in China came to UF at different time. It will be more beneficial for Chinese students to invite all of Chinese universities to come together in the job fair

Time: TBA

Location: Reitz union conference room

- 1) Discuss the details with UF Career Resource Center
- 2) Send invitation letter to several higher institutions in China
- 3) Set up the booths and prepare the materials for the invited employers
- 4) Inform the graduating Chinese students
- 5) Arrange the introduction sessions for the institutions to showcase their universities and Interests

Chinese Community Karaoke Contest

Purpose: Karaoke Contest is the one of the signature event by FACSS.

Time: 7:00 pm -11:00pm, Oct 16th, 2010

Location: Reitz union ball room

Checklist:

- 1) A preliminary round should be conducted one week before the contest
- 2) No more than 20 participants can enter the final contest
- 3) Create more interaction with the audiences

Chinese Elements in U.S. Photography Competition

Purpose: This competition is designed to showcase Chinese elements in American society. It will be co-organized by the FACSS at UF, CSSA at the University of Central Florida, and CSSA at Florida State University and open to both Chinese and university communities of the three schools.

Time: September 10-November 7

Checklist:

Deadline of submission is October 25.

- 1) Invite three or four photography experts from the three universities to be judges.
- 2) Notice and award the top three places and other winners on November 7th.
- 3) Exhibit all of the prize-winning photographs.

Faculty/Students/Scholars Banquet

Purpose: To increase communication and interaction between the three groups

Time: 6:30pm-9:30pm

Location: Reitz union ball room

Checklist:

- 1) Invite the Chinese faculty, students and scholars to have dinner together.
- 2) Round-table ice break
- 3) Invite 2-3 Chinese professors to deliver lectures
- 4) Set a Q/A section

Halloween Party

Purpose: To have fun in the celebration of Halloween

Time: 9:00 pm-1:00 am, October 30th, 2010

Location: Reitz union ball room

Checklist:

- 1) Holiday decoration and music
- 2) Sufficient food and drink
- 3) Appraise and elect the best costume

- 3) Resume review session. The experts/ volunteers will help revise the resumes which the student bring to the workshop
- 4)

“Let’s breathe the autumn” Road Trip

Purpose: To take a break from the overloaded schooling work

Time: November 6-7, 2010

Location: TBA

Checklist:

- 1) FACSS needs to have a very detailed plan and perfect preparation before the trip begins.
- 2) The organization should pay great attention to the safety issue.

“Be Bold and Be Mine” Dating Party

Purpose: Chinese girls and boys are a little bit shy. This party is to provide a stage for them to show and find their love.

Time: 8:00 pm-11:00 pm, November 11, 2010

Location: Maguire Common Room

Checklist:

- 1) Romantic decoration and music for create a comfortable atmosphere
- 2) 5-minute speed dating
- 3) Several games
- 4) Talent showcase

Thanksgiving Banquet

Purpose: to foster a platform for Chinese community to socialize and celebrate the holiday

Time: 6:30 pm-8:30 pm, November 27, 2010

Location: Reitz union ball room

Checklist:

- 1) Invite a presenter to show the history and customs of Thanksgiving
- 2) Some performances
- 3) Sufficient food and drink, especially turkeys

Chinese New Year Show

Purpose: It is the biggest and most signature event hosted by FACSS. Every year, Chinese New Year show attracts more than 1,000 attendees.

Time: 7:00pm-10:30pm, January.29th, 2010

Checklist:

- 1) Performance recruitment should start no later than November 1st, 2010
- 2) Start the auditions on December 15th, 2010

- 3) Volunteer recruitment starts on January 10th, 2010
- 4) Reserve a full-equipment rehearsal in the Philips Center one week before the formal show
- 5) A work manual for every involved officer and volunteer
- 6) Request the attendees return the performance evaluation card to the box

Lantern Festival Dinner Party

Purpose: It is also a vital Chinese traditional festival. In the dinner party, the best performance for the Chinese New Year Show will be announced and awarded.

Time: 6:30 pm-10:00 pm February 19, 2010

Location: Maguire Common Room

Checklist:

- 1) Make rice ball, the food for Lantern Festival celebration
- 2) Announce and award the best performance
- 3) The winning director or performer gives speech
- 4) Karaoke

Career Workshop

Purpose: To enhance Chinese students' job hunting skills with regard to resume design, cover letter writing, and interview

Time: 1:30pm-5:30pm, February 26, 2010

- 1) Invite the experts of UF Career Resource Center to give lectures
- 2) Q/A section