

Student Organization Speed Dating

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Institutional Overview: LeBron James University

CAMPUS DESCRIPTION

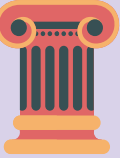
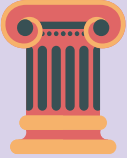
LeBron James University is located in Akron, Ohio and is classified as an R1 institution with a student population averaging 40,000 students annually. This is made up of 34,000 undergraduate and 6,000 graduate degree-seeking students. LJU was founded in 1930. The student population is made up of the below-outlined demographics. Through intentional recruitment, LJU has worked hard to attract, recruit, and retain a diverse population of students who are then supported by campus and community resources. On-campus demographics are important, but we also recognize that the city of Akron will play an important role in supporting our students which is why we have recruited a population that is closely reflective of the city's and work to create partnerships that further support the broader community (DataUSA, 2017).

Institution Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission: Recognizing the importance of higher education and the ability for individuals to think critically, LeBron James University works diligently to the LJU and surrounding Akron community on the never-ending quest for knowledge (adapted from the LeBron James Family Foundation, n.d.).

Vision: To become the leading creator of education, innovative research, and mobility in America.

Values: Diversity, Education, Knowledge, Leadership, and Service



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To align with our values of diversity, education, and knowledge and our mission to recognize the ability for individuals to think critically, LeBron James University would like to acknowledge that the land we are presently established on is the original homeland of the Mingos and Delaware tribal nations. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land on which we gather.

LeBron James University Student Demographics

White	52%
Black/African American	24%
Latinx	11%
Asian, Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander	7%
Native American or Alaskan Native	3%
Other/Unknown	3%

Event overview

The event would be composed of two distinct portions. The first, a synchronous portion conducted over the Degy World platform, would be a speed “dating” event which students would sign up for to connect with different campus and community organizations while also giving them a chance to meet other students and community members in a virtual space.

The second portion would be an asynchronous portion to accommodate for any students who are unable to attend the synchronous portion. These students would be connected with undergraduate student engagement ambassadors in a virtual “pen pal” style relationship via social media.

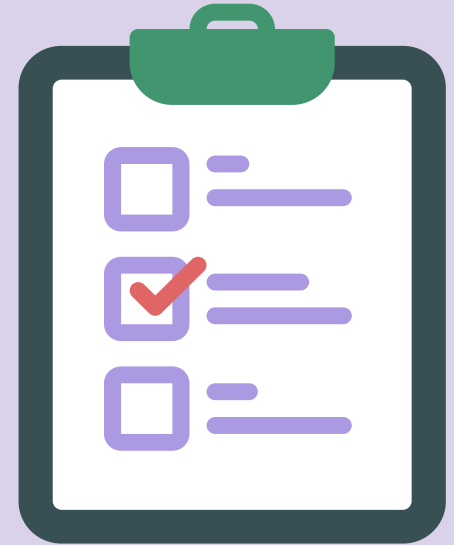
Implementing this program in two phases allows the student affairs professionals to address the individual challenges students face. Sanford’s (1966) theory allows the event to meet the correct level of challenge and support for individual students based on their own comfortability and readiness for the two different types of events.



Goals

The primary goal of this program is to provide students additional connections to other students, to campus and community organizations, and to provide additional marketing for the organizations. Astin's Theory of Student Involvement tells us that the more energy that is invested into the co-curricular experience, the more successful students will be overall (Patton et al, 2016).

For campus professionals, the goal is also to help break down the silos that tend to exist at large institutions like LJU and create deeper connections and partnerships between campus departments and community organizations.



LOGISTICS



WHO

The organization of this event is led by the Director of Student Activities in partnership with campus and community organizations that sign up to participate. In addition, the Director of Student Activities will work closely with campus IT to provide technical support leading up to and throughout the program. Proficiency in the ACPA/NASPA 2016 Technology Competency would be necessary for the success of the event. The Dean of Students did not know where to begin so it is vital for the committee to have at least a foundational level of the technology competency.



Office of Student Activities

The Office of Student Activities is located in the Akron Union. The office holds functional areas around programming, student organizations, leadership programs, and the primary cultural center. The professional team often collaborates on larger programming events, which includes the Student Organization Speed Dating program. The department follows an extra-curricular model where practitioners are able to better their practice and offer opportunities for development outside academics (Manning et al, 2014).

The office structure and current practice was modeled from Indiana University's Student Involvement & Leadership Center located at its main campus in Bloomington.



LOGISTICS



Where

The synchronous portion of the event will take place via the [Degy World platform](#). Each organization that signs up to participate will have their own virtual booth which will include video integrations for the student organization and interested students to meet.

The event will last from 8 AM - 8 PM to allow for as much time for engagement as possible and to accommodate for class time. All participants will have an avatar which they can use to interact with each other in a more realistic format. An important step to go along with this to ensure the event goes smoothly and students are able to make the most of the experience is training. Christopoulos et al. stated “a smooth induction to the tools, the methods, the procedures and the affordances of a virtual world can lead students into having meaningful and engaging interactions” (p. 367). Without the necessary training, students may be distracted by learning to use the platform tools and engagement may fall by the wayside.



LOGISTICS



Where

The asynchronous pen-pal portion of the program will take place via Instagram accounts that are created for use by the student engagement ambassadors. Students who sign up for the asynchronous portion will be connected via Instagram to their ambassador. The ambassador will be charged with highlighting student organizations that are geared toward the interests of their students by using polls, quizzes, and other tools available via Instagram. In addition, the ambassador will work to connect students that share interests to further build engagement and connection opportunities.

The student engagement ambassadors can bring a more meaningful experience for the participants. Schlossberg's (1989) theory of mattering and marginality focuses on establishing aspects of mattering for students. The aspect of *importance*, a belief the individual is cared about, will be relevant to the asynchronous pen-pal program with these student leaders.

Many current institutions utilize student engagement ambassadors to assist students in their efforts to get involved, like University of Southern Mississippi, University of Utah, and Clemson University. This will help to not rely on only the time and energy of the Director of Student Activities.



Marketing Campaign

The marketing campaign would make use of the social media platforms of all participating organizations along with the LJU accounts. Each organization would be provided templates and engagement ideas to go along with different social media platforms:

Instagram - utilize the poll and quiz feature to engage with interested students

TikTok - create videos that current student organizations and interested students can stitch to share their interests

Twitter - use the poll, like, and retweet features



Marketing Campaign

In addition to the organizations that will participate, LJU will make use of its social media accounts as well as sending an email to the entire student body to raise awareness. It is likely that most students and staff would not be familiar with the Degy World platform so we would also work to highlight how this platform works and how users can interact.

Hello!

The Student Activities office is cordially inviting you to participate in our Student Organization Speed Dating event! This event consists of two portions; one synchronous and the other asynchronous.

The first event will begin February 26th, 8am-8pm via the Degy World platform. You will be able to connect with both student and community organizations through this time and see what ways to get involved on and off campus. Sign up now and see the many opportunities that are just around the horizon!

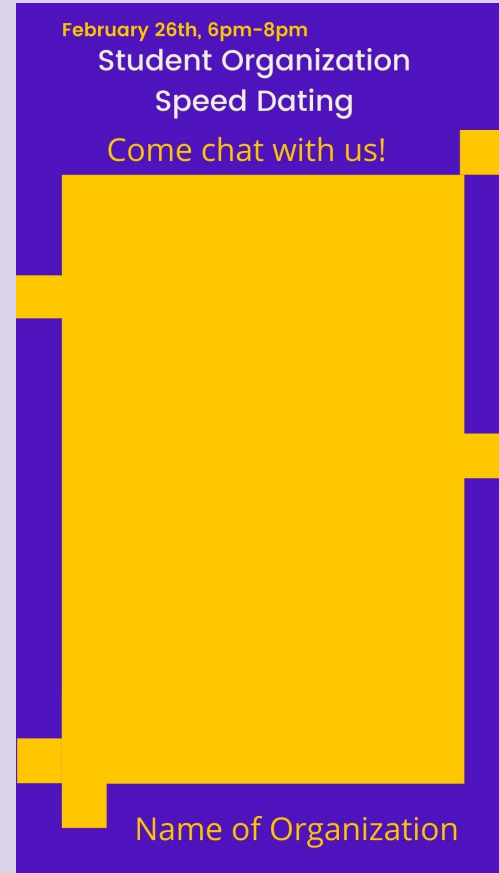
The second event will offer you the experience to connect with one of our amazing student engagement ambassadors. Our “pen-pal” program will offer you the regular experience to communicate and share how your time on campus is going and how you can find support from fellow students. Get to know someone on campus and start a friendship that can last a lifetime!

The Student Activities office is excited to help students connect with the many experiences the community has to offer. Contact us now with any questions you may have and we can't wait to see you there!



Marketing Campaign

The Office of Student Activities will also offer a template for student and community organizations to use on their social media pages to announce their participation. Student affairs administrators' utilization of technology can complement existing engagement (Cabellon & Payne-Kirchmeier, 2016). Technology is vital to the success of the program in the current setting of the institution.



TIMELINE

4-6 weeks prior

Each organization would be provided the social media and marketing templates to begin advertising (such as the This or That template below). In addition, introduce the Degy World platform.

01

02

03

04

3 weeks prior

QR codes would pop up around campus and on social media sending students to the "Which LJU Student Organization are you?" BuzzFeed quiz. Further encourage students to start singing up and creating their avatar on Degy World

2 weeks prior

The promo video would drop synchronously across all involved organizations. Training would be offered for students and organizations on interacting with the Degy world platform

New QR codes go out advertising the new organization matching app that will connect students to the LJU Student organization page. Similar to popular dating apps, students will be able to read a brief summary about the organization and then swipe left to skip or right to learn more

1 week prior

THIS OR THAT
WEEK ENDS

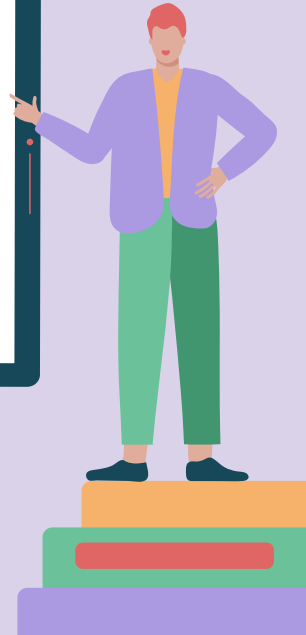
NETFLIX OR STAN
EATING OUT OR UBER EATS
BAR OR NIGHTCLUB
BUSH WALK OR BEACH
MARKETS OR SHOPPING
SLEEP IN OR UP EARLY
COFFEE OR JUICE
READ A BOOK OR MEET FRIENDS
FAMILY TIME OR ALONE TIME
ADVENTURE OR RELAX

SWIPE TO FIND YOUR NEW ORGANIZATION

Campus and community organizations would need to register with the institution to be included in the app. Interested students would then download the app and start swiping to learn more about participating campus and community organizations including when they will be at their virtual booth in Degy world.



MOBILE APP



Synchronous Event Details

During the day of the event, organizations will host times throughout in which participants can visit virtual booths in the exhibit hall through the video and chat feature to learn more about the organizations and build connections with current and interested students. Students will be able to roam the world and connect, real time, with other students. They will also be able to interact via direct message with other students, staff, and community members.

Students will then be encouraged to connect further by exchanging contact information they feel comfortable with such as social media, email, or phone number.



Asynchronous Event Details

Students that are unavailable to attend the synchronous program can still join the slack channels to see the conversations that are happening and see the information posted by the different organizations.

However, to provide a more personalized experience, they can also opt-in to this alternative and ongoing program led by Student Engagement Ambassadors.

Student Engagement Ambassadors will create instagram accounts specifically for the purpose of highlighting various student organizations that align with the interests of the students they are assigned. They will do this by using instagram polls, quizzes, and any direct messages they receive. In addition, the ambassador will work to connect like minded students together to support further engagement.



Promoting Social Interaction

Because we have limited staffing capacity, this event maximizes the resources by leaning on campus and community organizations for support. Students will be able to virtually meet hundreds of other students and have the opportunity to create virtual connections through social media, Degy World, and other virtual avenues. This virtual space is what seems to connect best with the current generation in college (Parker & Igielnik, 2020). This virtual space also allows for greater accessibility than an in-person event, especially considering the current COVID-19 pandemic and students potential to be living away from campus.



THANKS!

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by Slidesgo, including icons by Flaticon, and infographics & images by Freepik.



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Promo Video

Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/yulNeYm3l7Y>

