Student Organization Leadership Consultant SOLC Facilitation Experience

Luckson Omoaregba

University of Rhode Island

On Saturday November 23, 2013 at approximately 12:0pm we held the retreat for Uhuru SASA in the Hardge Forum in the MCC. The goal for the retreat was to help the group bond, work on effective communications skills and Teambuilding. All the facilitators and I met in the SOLC room at 11pm to prepare for the retreat. We still had minor things to put in place to prepare for the retreat. As facilitators it is important we are all on the same page before the retreat so we can run a smooth and effective retreat.

Although the group showed up a bit later than expected they came in with high energy and were ready to participate in the retreat we had planned. It helped that I was familiar with some of the members of SASA, I automatically felt comfortable as a facilitator knowing there would be some familiar faces in the group as we started the retreat.

What went really well were the transitions between each activity we did, all the facilitators and I were in constant communication with one another so were able to move smoothly through the day. We had to rearrange some activities due to the food being late; we adapted and still made it work. During posse up, it was really amazing to see the group get really excited and competitive. The game was able to get them up and moving and yelling, which helped, remove whatever tension was present. Another thing I felt went well was the debriefing of each activity; personally I know that’s one part of facilitation I need to improve on. After leading Trolleys I knew I had to help the group reflect on how the activity could relate to their organization. I was very happy at how in depth we were able to get in the conversation.

Even those members who were just observing were able to contribute to the conversation. It was easy to tell off the bat that SASA is all about that being a family, during Trolleys there were several situations that came up that that reflected things families go through. During the debrief I made sure to connect that family oriented values that the group holds dearly and the obstacles that might threaten their ability to stay connected like a family.

There was a bit of a mishap with the food being delivered which forced us to change up the schedule we had for the day, I was very happy that we did not allow it to ruin what we had planned. We calmly moved things around in the schedule so we could fit everything in.

The boundary breaking activity also went very well. Prior to boundary breaking the retreat had been high energy, the boundary breaking allowed the group to slow their pace, take a deep breath and reflect on the questions the facilitator was asking. I felt like it was an awesome bridge between all of the activities we had been doing. Each activity had some elements of boundary breaking during their debriefs so it was awesome to see the group get more in depth with the conversations had during boundary breaking.

What didn’t go so well was trying to keep the group quiet when necessary; since SASA was such a high-energy group they were really talkative. It made it a bit difficult when trying to get their attention. I found myself having to raise my voice several times during the retreat in order to get the attention of the group

SASA is a group that appears to be between the storming and norming phase according to Tuckman’s group development model. The retreat reinforced the sense of family and togetherness that they needed. I can honestly say this group is ready to start performing and adjourning based on their level of participation. Overall I felt my colleagues and I were able to effectively organize and run a retreat that SASA benefited from.