Preparing Future Career Women of Excellence

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Preparing Future Career Women of Excellence was a one-day workshop funded by the Women of Excellence Giving Circle that was aimed at teaching professional workplace skills to under-privileged adolescent females in the community. For the workshop, we chose to invite the female sophomore class from DePaul Cristo Rey High School due to their unique program, which requires students to work at a job placement during their junior and senior years. The skills taught at the workshop would especially be useful for these girls, given that they will be applying for their work positions in the upcoming year.

The workshop was comprised of three segments: 1) Preparing for Interviews, 2) Resume Writing, 3) What Not to Wear to an Interview.

The Preparing for Interviews workshop focused on teaching the girls interviewing skills such as, how to talk about your strengths and weaknesses, what questions to ask/not to ask, how to respond to common interview questions, and allowed the girls to engage in mock interviews with each other to practice the skills that they learned. In addition, each of the girls received a leather-bound portfolio that can be used to carry their application materials while on interviews.

 The Resume Writing workshop taught the girls the essential sections of a resume and the information that should be included in each section. A large portion of this workshop was dedicated to allowing the girls to work on their own resumes by using computers provided by the IT department. In addition, each girl received their own flash drive, which included a blank resume template and a completed sample resume.

The What Not to Wear to an Interview workshop focused on teaching the girls how to create a professional identity across a variety of contexts, such as professional dress, appropriate grooming and hygiene techniques, and by being mindful of their social identities online and in their personal life. At the end of this workshop, the girls were split into two groups, with the task of creating a professional interview outfit using clothing provided by the workshop facilitators and mannequins donated from Snooty Fox in Hyde Park. In addition, each of the girls received a $10 Target gift card that they could use to purchase clothing and/or accessory items for future interviews.

The last portion of the workshop consisted of a luncheon catered by CINTAS during which we had two guest speakers, Amy Reed from TRiO/Student Support Services and Joya Dillard from the Multicultural, Gender and Women’s Center. Although a large portion of the workshop focused on building professional workplace skills, we felt that it was important to also provide the girls with information about resources available at Xavier University so that they can make informed decisions in the future about possible options for college. Lastly, we were able to raffle small gifts to the girls during the luncheon due to having saved some money from our proposed budget (*See attached Budget*).

In order to obtain information about the helpfulness of the workshop, the participants completed a pre- and post- workshop questionnaire. Most of the participants reported that their preparedness to go on a job interview increased after the workshop (“*On a scale of 1 to 5, how prepared do you feel to go on a job interview?”*). In addition, after comparing the averages of participant ratings for the individual segments, we observed that the participants rated the Resume Writing Workshop as most helpful and the Guest Speakers least helpful.

 Most of the barriers that we encountered while planning the workshop were related to the process of learning how to reserve rooms, catering, etc. at the university and how reserve the necessary transport for the girls; these are probably typical for first-time workshop facilitators. Despite the initial confusion, CINTAS staff and other faculty were very helpful during our planning process and we were able to navigate through it successfully.

The facilitators of this workshop would like to thank the Women of Excellence Giving Circle for providing the grant which allowed us to develop this workshop for the female sophomore class of DePaul Cristo Rey High School. Facilitating the workshop was a rewarding experience that we will not soon forget.