TEDxXavierUniversity 2014

Theme: Conflict & Violence they play: An exploration of their causes, prominence, and the unexpected roles

Venue: Kennedy Auditorium
Date: April 11, 2014
Total Attendees: 81

Advisors: Dr. Rashmi Assudani, Sean Rhiney
TEDxXU core team: Sean Kallmeyer, Mary Malanos, Sam Seigle, Ian Borczon, Thomas Erickson, Ben Durham, Genevieve Hager, Mai Pham, Mark Gore, Kelsey Murphy, Ian Borczon, Ben Durham

Speakers:                  Topic:
Matthew Dooley (MC)       Master of Ceremonies
Georgine Getty            Christmas is an Arms Race
Beth Nowak                Helping our Littlest Helpers
Lyden Foust               Reverse-Engineering War
Dr. Victor Garcia         A System of Violence
Dr. Tammy Brown           Art: A Weapon for Social Change
Marvin Abrinica           Storytelling is Community

Mission Statement: TEDxXavierUniversity is a 100% student-led collaborative experience that inspires innovative thinking, moving others to purposeful action. We wish to promote collaboration between the three colleges, organizations, and administrations. We also aim to foster the ideas of TED, “believing passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and ultimately, the world”. Our goal is to promote Xavier University as an innovative, collaborative institution of higher learning that maintains discipline to its Jesuit roots by bringing in speakers from within and outside the XU community who are emblematic of innovation, service, and leadership.

Event Summary: The TEDxXavierUniversity team successfully hosted their third annual TEDx event on campus in Kennedy Auditorium on April 11, 2014. The team responsible was comprised of students from Xavier University with two key advisors/mentors, Dr. Assudani and Sean Rhiney. The core team started planning in the fall semester and ultimately began preparation in spring of 2013 after the 2013 TEDx event by applying for a grant from Women of Excellence. The event’s purpose is to help spread ideas worth sharing and to foster an environment of learning, prompting attendees to get involved with the issues/ideas at the event, inspiring conversation around the topics presented.

Successes: The TEDxXU team of students were successful in upholding the core values of the mission statements along with built in sustainability for TEDxXU to return to campus in spring of 2015. Success can be seen in the outstanding TEDxXU YouTube videos released following the event. Students involved had a chance to showcase their talents and skills by participating in new roles and by learning through real world experiences with outside vendors and business
professionals apart from and within Xavier. Many of the students were able to make valuable connections to help them in their career and had a chance to be a leader or to be a part of a well-rounded team of volunteers.

The TEDxXavierUniversity program is hosted by the Innovation society Club on campus and they were able to successfully obtain another award as a direct result of the event (Diversity Development award). Further success was seen when talking with the advisors and speakers who commended the students on their professionalism with every aspect of the event from communication, to presentation and the assistant of speaker coaching. The team was also successful in drawing a class for attendance and had a great turnout of individuals form the XU community and general surrounding business community. Other success lay in the behind the scenes progress of students who handled project as a team and as independent leaders within those teams. All members had a chance to lead and work together in one form or another. As an example, members had the chance to help acquire vendors, sponsors, speakers, volunteers and much more. All materials were also created from scratch by students including program designs, registration, speaker applications, video edits, event scope, and all other logistical event needs.

**Barriers:** Barriers to the event were few compared to the successes but there are many which are uncontrollable by student standards. Scheduling of classrooms and the venue were extremely difficult, putting the team on a tight schedule. We worked with the Bursar office and found communication with many individuals form the office confused things and the team was forced to wait until the end of December before they could choose a date for the event in spring due to classroom scheduling/limited space.

Without the grant, money usually becomes a barrier for the students when they are working to find support within Xavier. With budget cuts, students are looking for sponsors and fundraiser projects where they can on top of planning an event which already takes up valuable time, especially when a student is balancing classes, work, clubs, volunteer work and other activities.

There was also push back from the University in some aspects of the event. In many cases, our team would request things from staff/faculty members such as operations or technology within the university and would get push back, even when they had support from the advisors. As students, we need more than a ‘NO’ as an explanation when we are volunteers working so hard to put on something everyone can gain knowledge from. In many cases it seemed as if we were asking too much of the staff/faculty. As a result we had to approach our advisors for assistance in certain issues when in reality, we shouldn’t have. To the team members this was seen as slightly disheartening and unexpected. The students worked hard and were passionate enough to be volunteering to do this. They deserve an explanation from staff/faculty for every action especially if they are handling it in a professional manner from their (students) end.