

AI Facilitator Certification Report

1. **Contact Information:**

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2. **AIFT Dates and Training Location:**

1/12/10 – 1/15/10, The University of Maryland, College Park

3. **Description of Organization:**

As the Coordinator for Off-Campus Student Involvement, I advise a student organization (The Off Campus Student Involvement Programming Board) who comes together and designs programs to serve the needs of the UMD commuter population. The commuter population is made up of transfer students, upperclassmen and graduate students. I have been advising this programming board for the past six months. After attending the AI Facilitator Training, I decided to revamp our Spring Retreat using the five generic processes that I learned about in my training.

4. **Names of Student in the Core Group:**

Brooke Warrington, Rob Warrington, Brian Lentz, Girish Chaskar, Emily Miller, Daniel Kwon

5. **Positive Topic chosen by the core group:**

Role clarity was the positive topic that we identified for focus at the inquiry. As this is a new organization, it was very natural for the group to agree upon wanting to have some meaningful way of asking the question, "what is my role in this organization?" The modified interview guide reflected this topic and gave the core group an opportunity to think about role clarity as a positive force within an organization.

6. **Modified Interview Guide is attached to this document.**

7. **Method of interviews used:**

Face to face paired interviews.

8. **List of Life-Giving Forces:**

- Being empowered with campus-related knowledge to turn great ideas into reality.
- "Laser Tag" – A highly successful program the board did last semester

- How our organization empowers the off campus student population.
- Using our personal experiences to inspire future accommodations to help meet the needs of our commuter population.
- The positive feeling you get when you put a lot of work into designing a program and the program turns out to be a great success!
- Each person's voice matters.
- Inspirational advisors.

9. **Our Provocative Proposition:**

"We empower off campus students by providing them resources and offering educational, social, and recreational opportunities to better enhance their college experience, while advocating for off campus students' needs."

10. **Strategic Intentions:**

With a stronger sense as to what the role of the Off Campus Student Involvement Programming Board is, our hope is that through structural changes and ongoing training in the area of programming that we will be able to increase student participation in both the organization and in the programs we design. We intend to increase our visibility on campus and get our name out there. We want to be the "happening" organization on campus that students flock to for engagement experiences. In line with this intention, we will be filming a commercial in April and attaching it to our website, as well as putting it on our Facebook account and on YouTube. The commercial has been storyboarded and will feature both staff and students. We are also in the process of applying to become a student government recognized group on campus (it has been several years since the commuter population has had an organization on campus that was SGA recognized).

11. **Impact or Results:**

The largest tangible change that has taken place as a result of our appreciative lens is the restructuring of our organization. In an effort to create a more inclusive and inviting environment for off campus students, the board has since changed its name to the "Off Campus Student Association." Students in the association who are specifically interested in programming can be part of the programming board within the association. Using a more umbrella structure such as this, increases our reach across campus while still providing leadership

opportunities for students who want to take on more of an active role within the association.

Since our retreat we have been working hard in the process of becoming SGA recognized and I'm excited to say that the students on the programming board submitted their application last week and it was approved. We are now SGA recognized!

We are gearing up for the upcoming commercial shoot scheduled to take place on Saturday, April 3rd. As a side note, the commercial had been storyboarded prior to my AI facilitator training. However, due to issues with getting the copyright to the song that we had chosen we needed to choose a "stock song" that the university already had the rights to. There are thousands of songs to choose from in this stock music and I have to say that my work with the AIFT had a huge impact on the song I ultimately chose and the rewritten storyboard for the new music. The feeling the commercial evokes is much more appreciative than what would have resulted if we had actually gotten the rights to the first song we had chosen. For example, the original story board featured students who were stressed out because they were rushing to get out the door in order to begin their commute to campus. The new story board shows administrators serving the needs of the commuter population in order to make their lives easier and their commutes less stressful. Several of the programming board members will be acting in the commercial and everyone is really excited about the project.

A fantastic pilot program that is quickly growing into a full-fledged service opportunity for new off campus students is one a programming board member recently developed called "Campus Connections." It's a peer mentor program designed to help students living off campus acclimate to their new surroundings. In this program, new off campus students are paired up with an on campus student peer mentor. Our pilot program has 10 participants this semester. Our hope is to increase the size and scope of this program for next year. So far we have gotten great feedback from the students who are participating in the program this semester.

12. How will I continue to gather stories of success and help my students celebrate these successes?

In the survey I had the programming board members fill out following the AI retreat I asked them if they would like our retreat to be once or twice a year and if they would like the retreat to be half day or full day. Six of the six students said that they would like for the AI retreats to happen twice a year and five out of 6 said they would like for the retreat to turn into a one day rather than half day retreat (as was the case this year).

I think the most important way I, as an AI facilitator, can continue to support my students in a way that is appreciative and celebrates their contributions is to be as actively engaged in their dreams for our organization's future. I have begun meeting with the programming board's president on a regular basis (once per week). This increase in face time has allowed me to learn more about how students are experiencing our campus while at the same time providing us with an opportunity to dream and plan for the upcoming months.

I recently submitted a nomination for our programming board president to be awarded and recognized at an upcoming student awards ceremony. I found out yesterday that she won and will be receiving an award at this event.

I would also like to set aside some of my funds so that I can treat the programming board to a nice dinner at the end of the semester to reward them for all their successful work. What this small group of students has been able to accomplish in a few short months is really quite magical and firmly believe that that magic is created when you are staying focused on the positive.

13. Self Reflection:

My two hopes for the inquiry were that all six students would show up and that the males in the group would have fun with the dream exercise we did. I purchased a bunch of scrapbooking materials that featured themes such as driving, traveling, visiting a museum, going to a festival etc. I wanted to get

everyone's creative juices flowing around programmatic themes in preparation for creating their provocative proposition. I wondered if the males in the group would lose interest in the process during this activity. But it was absolutely fantastic. The whole group, males included, couldn't get enough of the scrapbooking. I actually had to push them along so that we could move onto the next activity. And all six students showed up.

Logistics aside, my hope was that the programming board members would begin to think of their role as advocates for off campus students and begin to find more clarity in that. The next step is to define, in more concrete terms, what their role on the programming board is. This is something that we will be focusing on as a group and through continued training and experience over the next semester.

In terms of what I learned about myself, I realized how much I have missed facilitating retreats. I had taken a few years off and worked from home while my children were young. This AI retreat is the first retreat I have planned in six years. It felt wonderful to be part of a process again. Because I have already had successful experiences with AI, I already trusted the process so it was really just a matter of being fully present and engaged in that process. My personal best experience during the retreat was when I facilitated the discussion on life giving forces that students reported to the larger group regarding their face to face paired interviews. The discussion was a strong one that lent itself easily to our provocative proposition.

- 14. I have received permission from the programming board members who attended our Spring 2010 retreat for me to share their story and for those of you at Company of Experts to share it as well if you so choose.**

OCSI Program Board Interview Questions

When organizations are at their best, people clearly understand and are committed to their unique role in achieving the organization's purpose. Understanding how their work fits with the work of others in the organization gives people a sense of connection and of significance. It helps people bring their best to the work at hand.

Role clarity results from dialogue and discussion: taking the time to talk about who does what and how the processes, procedures and relationships interrelate to meet the needs of our off campus student population.

1. Describe a time when a sense of role clarity helped you perform at exceptional levels within a group or organization. In what way did having a clear role help you perform at your best?

2. Reflecting on this time when you had a sense of role clarity, how was it created? Who was involved and what did they do? What did you do that contributed to the sense of role clarity?

3. Imagine you arrived on campus tomorrow morning and everybody's role clarity was as good or better in your group as the one you just described.

- *What's the same or different from a week ago?*
- *What's changed in people's performance?*
- *How have the organization's services been transformed?*

*4. **Best experience:** Tell me a story about the best times you have had with this organization. Looking at your entire experience, recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, or most excited about your involvement. What made it an exciting experience? Who was involved? Describe the event in detail.*

*5. **Values:** Let's talk for a moment about some things you value deeply; specifically, the things you value about yourself; about the nature of your role in this organization; and about this organization.*

- *Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself – as a person and as a member of this organization?*
- *When you are feeling best about your work in this organization, what about the task itself do you value?*
- *What do you value about the organization?*
- *What is the single most important thing that your organization has contributed to your life? To the University of Maryland?*

*6. **Core Value:** What do you experience as the core value of your organization? Give some examples of how you experience those values.*

*7. **Three Wishes:** What three wishes would you make to heighten the vitality and health of this organization?*