



South Region Meeting

Reaching out to Older Adults via Continuing Education at Rockland Community College

Introductions

Ask participants to introduce themselves, where they're from and whether they have a senior program or are thinking of starting one

History of Institute for Senior Education (ISE)

Started by active group of senior citizens in early 1980s after observing a similar program in San Diego, University of California, run totally by volunteers; professors at the college gave weekly lectures on their specialty

Enough professors to have daily choices of lectures from 9 am to late afternoon

Participants paid \$25 annually to pay for administrative assistance

ISE Early Days

Members of the RCC Senior Club developed mini-courses based on the San Diego model; first term 4 volunteer instructors

No charge, people registered but never showed up; started \$1.00 registration fee

Accessed funding through the State Office for the Aging, fund for Community Service

Had politicians, ministers write letters to attest to the value of the classes, received \$300,000 annually in funds; began to pay the instructors the adjunct rate that the college paid - \$25/2 hours

Requested support from the college and were told "this is a community college and seniors are a part of the community." Required to offer classes to any senior in the county

Started holding classes at other locations, too.

Developed a senior advisory committee, called it Lifelong Learning but had to change the name when the continuing education adopted it

At one time, 2500 registrants, more and more conditions for the grant; raised fee from \$1.00 to \$10.00, lost all funding by the early 2000s

Current Situation

30-40 classes in spring, fall; limited number of classes in winter, summer; 25% cancellation rate

Senior Education classes offered in Spring/Summer 2010 in brochure, pp. 22-28

Gross revenue \$12,034 for spring semester; lower than usual

Average class cost is \$40

Fewer registrants since not sending brochures to every household and the start of the economic recession

Fastest growing County population of 46,518 (2000 census)

Challenges

Viability of low cost classes

Membership fee vs. per class cost

Marketing; differentiating young vs old old; Web 'constant contact'

Resource development

Different generations, having classes that appeal to both or targeting separate classes

Transitioning to new instructors when older instructors leave; New instructors want more money

Changing the name

Resolution?

Retired professors from the college; Retired teachers center

Outreach

ISE is one of several senior programs:

- Senior Audit (betw 65 – 80 people each semester)
- ISE
- RCC Senior Citizens' Club
- Ramapo Senior Center
- RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program)

Being inclusive, bringing older adults into the community college

College President has met with Director of State Office for the Aging to discuss making RCC 's senior programs a model for other community colleges

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