

HIGHLIGHTED CHANGE IDEA

Change Idea

- Social interactions

Primary Driver

- STEM students are meaningfully connected with faculty, staff, and peers in ways that promote belonging (fit), wellness, resilience, and financial stability.

Secondary Driver

- To support fit, institutional teams work with STEM department chairs and lead faculty to develop a welcoming campus climate to First2 students (e.g., increasing frequency, duration, type, quality of supportive interactions).

PLAN

- Coordinate with Amber McLaughlin, Director of the Davis College Student Success Office, to plan the event, set the date, and secure a space
- Promote through flyers, Instagram, and newsletters
- Serve dirty sodas with help from Michelle Paden's office
- Provide First2/REACH handouts
- Track attendance through student ID swipes
- Use a whiteboard for students to identify as first-generation

DO

- Student directors coordinated with Michelle Paden to select a date based on availability
- Event was aligned with an existing monthly program with strong campus turnout, arranged with Michelle and Amber
- Trinity created promotional flyers using the REACH Canva account for online and campus distribution
- Student directors supported event operations (check-in and drink preparation) when schedules allowed
- Staff from Michelle's office and student workers assisted with event support
- Michelle managed day-of supply pickup and logistics having the event when there was already two dogs, and she brought Ruby, the therapy dog from the reach center.

STUDY

Our main learning questions were:

1. How many invited students will attend this event?
2. What are the class ranks of student attendees?
3. To what extent does this social event impact students' feelings of belonging in their STEM courses of study?
4. To what extent does this type of social event facilitate scheduling future meetings between students, faculty, and administrators to collaborate around removal of systemic barriers to first-generation students' success in STEM courses of study?

SUMMARY

- Student Leaders at WVU will plan a monthly social event
- The event will be organized in partnership with faculty, administration, and students from the Davis College Success Center
- The goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive space for connection and open dialogue
- The social will act as a starting point for ongoing conversations between students, faculty, and administrators
- Discussions will focus on identifying concerns, generating ideas, and proposing solutions
- The initiative aims to improve the overall student experience
- Long-term goal: foster collaboration that leads to meaningful, systemic change within the university community

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



TIPS FOR OTHER INSTITUTIONAL TEAMS

We wish that we knew more on how to use it when we were first starting with our STEM club. Advice we would we give to to not be afraid to go into the unknown and be able to communicate with your peers and staff.

ACT

Adapt

- **Areas for Improvement**
 - Strengthen data collection to better measure engagement and impact
 - Refine event structure and flow for a smoother, more effective experience
- **Key Success**
 - Identified an event that generated strong student interest and excitement
- **What Worked Well**
 - Hosted in a familiar, on-campus location
 - Easy to attend—no extra effort required from students
 - Increased participation and engagement
- **Key Takeaway**
 - Meeting students where they already are leads to higher involvement and more meaningful interaction

DATA

- **65 total attendees**
 - 22 FirstGen
 - 17 Freshman
 - 19 Sophomores
 - 7 Juniors
 - 20 Seniors
 - 2 Graduate
- **Top majors represented**
 - Animal & Nutritional sciences (22)
 - Agriculture & Extension Ed. (10)
 - Environmental, Soil and Water science (8)
 - Wildlife Fisheries and Resources (5)

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Areas for Improvement

- Improve how engagement data is collected to better evaluate impact
- Adjust event structure to create a more seamless and effective experience

Key Success

- Chose an event format that strongly resonated with student interest

What Worked Well

- Located in a familiar on-campus setting
- Convenient for students with no extra effort required to attend
- Led to higher attendance and engagement

Key Takeaway

- Engaging students in spaces they already use increases participation and interaction