

Introduction

- Leadership courses & programs* offered by the CSLD prior to 2019:
 - Freshman year: Leadership Institute, F.L.I.T.E.
 - Sophomore year: HDF290, Sophomore Breakthrough Experience
 - Senior year: Senior portfolio, Senior expedition
- *these are the courses & programs that are specific for only that grade level
- Junior year is “the turning point of your college career” (K., 2016).
- Evidence has shown that the most common struggles of Junior year include mental health issues associated with the concern for one’s career path, and struggles with feelings of anxiety or depression in regards to having difficulty making decisions (College Student Development, 2019).
- Junior year is particularly stressful because it is when students “need to start thinking about the long term. [They] have serious choices to make that will affect [their] future” (K., 2016).
- The Juggling Junior Year experience was specifically designed to help ease this stress by providing fun and insightful ways to balance one’s Junior year and gaining confidence for their life beyond college.

Why “juggling”?

“Research has shown that there is a direct relationship between the hand-eye coordination learned through juggling and the ability to read, write, and reason” (Juggling for Success, n.d.).

10 reasons why junior year is the most stressful year: (Rabalais, 2015)

1. You’re only half way through college
2. Internships
3. Job searching
4. Do or die majors
5. 300+ level courses
6. Social strains
7. Budgeting
8. Seeing others that have their lives together
9. “Real life stuff” is happening all around you
10. You’re an upperclassman

Benefits of learning how to juggle: It requires one to... (Juggling for Success, n.d.)

- Calm down
- Have attentive listening skills
- Use critical observation skills
- Focus on one thing at a time
- Stay on task, ignoring distractions
- Manage their muscles
- Persevere through minor failures (drops)

Event agenda

- **3:00pm:** Set up & meet at the Higgins Welcome Center’s Hope Hall
- **3:45pm:** Participants arrive. Hand out packets, name tags, & raffle tickets
- **4:00pm:** Introduce planning committee members; frame the day
- **4:15pm:** Opening activity (name juggle energizer with *Zoogle* stick)
- **4:30pm:** Financing workshop lead by Adriana Wilding (Student Body President)

- **5:30pm:** Hors d'Oeuvres- networking outside of your comfort zone
- **5:45pm:** Dinner- Elevator pitches with mock interviews
- **6:15pm:** Assessing and articulating your values workshop lead by Brandon Sousa (Career Education Specialist)
- **7:30pm:** Closing event (group juggling activity)
- **7:50pm:** Raffle, acknowledgements, & post-event survey

Survey results

- "I will stop looking at my major as a definitive pathways towards my career. I will also **open myself up more to different opportunities** for experience because I want to have a **more well-rounded college-experience.**"
- "After attending this experience, I have realized the **importance of being aware of my financial expenditures.** I also gained a better understanding of **how to apply my strengths.**"
- "I really liked getting **feedback on how I interview.** I plan on using this in my RA interview next weekend. I will use the STAR response in my interviews in the future as well."
- "I will plan out my saving for expensive monetary goals down the road. I have **found a new resource on campus.**"

Discussion and conclusions

In analyzing the survey we found that...

What we did well:

- Mock **interviews** (great practice)
- **Location** (professional setting)
- **Time** of the semester (February is when people are starting to apply for internships, etc.)
- **Raffles** (should also be use in marketing for the event)
- A current senior as a **co-presenter** (relatable peer)

What we can improve on next time:

- Make event **longer** (especially dinner portion)
- Have event **earlier** in the day (undesirable to be a weekend night)
- More **inclusive** for non-leadership juniors (make sure every participant takes the VIA and StrengthsQuest surveys to know their own values and strengths)
- **Advertise** for the event more often and earlier (start during Fall semester)
- More **activities** in between workshops (good breaks that make the day not seem as long)
- Heavier emphasis on **resumes** (so participants have opportunity take notes/get feedback on own working copies)

Acknowledgements

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I am grateful that I was able to leave my mark on this university so that any juniors in the years to come have this experience to better prepare themselves for the "real world" beyond college.

Literature cited

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