



Student-Led Best Practices

Submitted by Bonner Congress Representatives

Name of Best Practice:

Student Organized Group Reflection Options

College/University Name and Contact Information:

Wofford College

Name of Congress Representative(s) Preparing Report:

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Background:

At Wofford we try to provide a wide variety of reflection sessions each month in order to encourage meaningful and fun reflection for all our Bonners. Wofford Bonner Senior Interns and Congress Reps organize these monthly reflection sessions.

What Makes This Unique:

Wofford Bonners organize the entire reflection session and as a result we have experienced a wide variety of reflection sessions. This Best Practice is ultimately unique because it empowers students to push past the experience of service toward a higher level of expertise, including leading reflection.

How it Works:

1. **Schedule:** Every month we have at least one alternative student-led reflection.
2. **Gathering Ideas:** Sometimes we ask the Bonner Senior intern or another Bonner leader to come up with an idea (by him/herself or in a small group) for group reflection.
3. **Putting Legs on ideas:** The idea is discussed with the Coordinator, and upon approval the students set a date, time, and place for the reflection.
4. **Some Ideas:** Past reflections have ranged from topical discussions and journaling to more involved group activities such as Yoga. The following ideas are some of the most creative from this past year.

Yoga Night: This successful event took place near the end of the semester when stress levels were high. The theme for the meeting was dealing with pressure and the importance of self-care. We brought in someone to lead the Bonners in a Yoga session and at the end of Yoga took time to share some stressors in our life.

Campus Event: One student-led reflection partnered with a campus event. We all attended a performance by a Jewish female pianist that was imprisoned in Germany during WWII. The reflection centered on this performance. I found it a beneficial experience. Not only did it draw Bonners to a unique on campus event, but it also provided a forum for discussion. Too often students don't take advantage of campus events, or if they do attend they do not have an opportunity to discuss the event. This reflection was an incredible success and very easy to plan.

Campus Event Suggestions:

- **Lectures:** Ask a professor to lead a discussion following a lecture.
- **Concerts:** Even a Coldplay concert can provide good fodder for reflection.
- **Performances:** Watching a play, listening to the orchestra, or hearing a choir can prompt some interesting insights.
- **Sporting Events:** Yes, even sporting events can prompt reflection. A reflection session around an event might center on teamwork, exploring the important of leisure, or discipline.

Movie Reflections: Taking time to watch a film that deals with a common commitment and then discussing it.

Dinner Meetings: Sharing a meal together and tossing out a question or two for group reflection and discussion.

Monthly Book Club: We have not done this, but we have entertained the idea of reading a book together each month and discussing it for a reflection option.

Recommendations:

1. **Student Input:** Again, it is really important to organize reflection meetings that speak to your Bonners. Poll your Bonners and see how they best reflect. If they come back and tell you that they enjoy a more social reflection then you should consider a setting that reflects this desire, like a social area on campus. Consider a comfortable,

private place where people can relax and not feel threatened by distractions or intrusions for discussion reflections.

2. **Student Leadership:** The success of student led reflection rests on the relationship between you and your Coordinator. If your Bonner coordinator is adverse to the idea of allowing students to completely run the meeting, then just suggest that one or two students help in the preparation of the meeting. This meeting might not be suitable for all programs, but it is a smart idea to allow students to become more involved in their education and their Bonner experience.
3. **Campus Events:** I found this to be the best way to plan creative and thoughtful student reflection. I feel that it is beneficial for students to take time out of their schedules to think about how their education, service, and social life coalesce. Unfortunately, students often find it challenging to make time to participate in other campus events, so when the reflection coincides with another event that is going on around campus students may find themselves more likely to attend. This is also a great way to begin forming coalitions on campus between student organizations, faculty and Bonner.