

For Students, By Students: An Internal Audit of the
Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative

by

Morgan B. Dumitru

A PROJECT

submitted to

Oregon State University

University Honors College

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Honors Bachelors of Science in Environmental Economics, Policy, and Management
(Honors Scholar)

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Abstract Approved:

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Student-coordinated programs such as the Oregon State University (OSU) Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI) provide important opportunities for future leaders to explore passions and develop experience. Unfortunately, recent trends may be putting those programs at risk (Hilliard, 2010). This study was created to investigate systemic issues facing the SSI and identify (1) their potential causes and impacts, and (2) a handful of solutions that could have the greatest potential to improve the program. A sample of (A) employees of OSU directly responsible for some aspect of the SSI, and (B) members of groups, organizations, and parties that had collaborated with the SSI on a project were interviewed. The findings of those interviews were then compared to the existing literature to verify their validity and clarify their context. The results suggest (1) that the SSI may face issues surrounding communication, capacity, support, engagement, and knowledge, and (2) that student-coordinated programs can endure, and benefit from, ongoing assessment and improvement. The implications of this are that all student-coordinated programs likely have potential for improvement, and it is likely that some have room to improve in the same areas as the SSI.

Key Words: Student-Coordinated Program, Organizational Development, Communication, Capacity, Support

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I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, University Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

Morgan B. Dumitru, Author

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PREFACE

Morgan Dumitru, the Student Researcher associated with this study, was deeply involved in the Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative between 2009 and 2012. During that time, he was a volunteer, staff member, and eventually co-director of the program. His term of leadership overlapped with this study by approximately six months. By necessity, this influenced the form and focus on the study. However, to ensure that the final product was defensible, the research team did everything in its power to prevent his association with the program from influencing the study, and vice-versa.

FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS: AN INTERNAL AUDIT OF THE OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Welcome

Student-coordinated programs at colleges and universities provide some of the best opportunities for future leaders to develop experience, but recent trends may be putting those programs at risk (Hilliard, 2010). Between 2006 and 2010, enrollment at these institutions in the United States rose 6.8% (Adams, 2011). Meanwhile, budgets at many institutions were cut considerably (Shulenburger, 2009). Because of these and other pressures, institutions are being forced to do more with less (Blöse, 2010). For the student-coordinated programs supported by these institutions, this could exacerbate the ongoing challenges they face in their efforts to serve students and provide leadership opportunities. This paper examines those ongoing challenges as faced by the Oregon State University (OSU) Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI), and their potential causes, impacts, and solutions.

1.2 Student-Coordinated Programs

1.2.1 Definition

A student-coordinated program is “a program that offers students positional roles of leadership as employees of [the College or University]” (Oregon State University, 2011).

At OSU, the intention is that by housing these programs in university units, the students leading the programs will have the “professional development, mentoring, and advising” support they need to grow as leaders while also ensuring the success of the programs they lead (Oregon State University, 2011). Because they create and manage programs that generate some type of measurable benefit to which they can lay claim, these programs and their student leaders might be considered entrepreneurial (Montanye, 2006). Because the benefits generated are almost always inherently social in nature – few, if any, student-coordinated programs operate for private benefit – these programs can also be considered social enterprises (Paulsen & McDonald, 2010). Because these programs address the “out-of-classroom education of students,” they can also be thought of simply as very small departments, each working to advance some aspect of student education and empowerment (Oregon State University Division of Student Affairs, 2012). There is a uniqueness to these programs, however, that is not captured by any of these characterizations.

1.2.2 Uniqueness

Student-coordinated programs differ from other programs, organizations, groups, and leadership opportunities by merit of three main characteristics.

The first is their focus on social issues. For example, the mission of Associated Students of Oregon State University (ASOSU) is to promote “self-governance and leadership within the student body of Oregon State University, thereby enhancing the educational, social and cultural experience of the students” (Associated Students of Oregon State University, 2012). The mission of the Memorial Union Program Council (MUPC) is to

“bring OSU Beavers together by upholding and creating traditions while generating enthusiasm and a welcoming spirit” (Oregon State University Memorial Union Program Council, 2012). The mission of the SSI is to “advance student efforts in creating a culture of sustainability at OSU through action, education, and opportunity” (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2010). Each of these student-coordinated programs serves a slightly different purpose or engages a slightly different community. Regardless, each does so with the only intended outcome being the social benefit of that community.

The second characteristic is the source and mechanism of funding, and the way it affects governance. At OSU, student-coordinated programs are universally housed within the Division of Student Affairs and funded by student fees. By its simplest interpretation, this means that the source of funding for all such programs is students. Students fund the programs and students coordinate the programs. However, the mechanism by which those funds are collected and disbursed plays an arguably larger role in the uniqueness of student-coordinated programs as entities. In the 2000 case *Board of Regents Univ. Wisc. v. Southworth*, the United States Supreme Court upheld the “constitutionality of charging mandatory student fees” so long as the programs subsidized by those fees were “viewpoint neutral” (Oregon State University Student Incidental Fees Committee, 2011). This opened the door for the current OSU student-fee structure. Each student-fee funded unit is overseen by a student-chaired advising and budgeting board composed of students, faculty, staff, and community members (Oregon State University Student Incidental Fees Committee, 2011). The general process is outlined in a training presentation made available by the OSU Student and Incidental Fees Committee (SIFC). It begins when an

Table 1.1 SIFC Criteria for Funding

Category	Description
Student-Focus	Extent to which a program or activity provides opportunities for students, either by direct participation or by participating as spectators and listeners, to develop new skills, competencies or appreciations not available elsewhere in the university.
Goals	Extent to which there is agreement between the program's or activities' goals and objectives and those of the overall goals and objectives of the university.
Success	Extent to which a continuing program or activity fulfilled its stated objectives of previous budget years.
Education-Focus	Extent to which a program or activity complements or provides an optional laboratory setting for an educational program.
Fit	Extent to which a program or activity is of general interest to the university community.
Non-Duplication	Extent to which a program or activity provides an appropriate service not available on campus or in the city as conveniently and/or inexpensively.
Process	Extent to which alternative funding has been sought (if applicable).
Accuracy	Extent to which budget requests reflect actual costs incurred in realizing the goals and objectives of a program or activity.

Note: Descriptions are verbatim from the 2011 SIFC Training Presentation (Oregon State University Student Incidental Fees Committee, 2011). Categories were identified as those best fitting the overarching focus of a given criterion.

advising and budgeting board drafts a budget proposal and presents that proposal to the SIFC. The SIFC reviews the proposal and works with the budgeting board to ensure it meets the established criteria for funding (outlined in Table 1.1). Once it is sure that the proposed budget meets those criteria, the SIFC presents the proposal for public input, modifies the proposal accordingly, and presents it to the ASOSU Congress. If the congress challenges the proposal, mediation between a congressional subcommittee and the SIFC must be pursued to yield agreement on a revised proposal. Once the congress approves the proposal, it is presented to the President of Oregon State University for recommendation to the Oregon University System. That process results in a fee being set for the following fiscal year that the institution, as an agent of the state government, will

then collect on behalf of students, and redistribute to the funded units. The implications of this process and the source of funding are: (1) student-coordinated programs spend little, if any, of their time focused on the acquisition of funding capital, (2) funding capital, though not readily available, is reliably available and is not prone to sudden change, (3) funding is provided on the basis of numerous criteria, only one of which is past success, and (4) there is substantial administrative and advising support provided along with the student fee funds to ensure that student-coordinated programs and their leaders have a reasonable chance of success.

The third characteristic is the support and decision-making structure. Every student-coordinated program is actively supported by (1) a faculty advisor, (2) the department within which that program is housed, and (3) the Auxiliaries and Activities Business Center. When additional support is needed, dozens of other university units and a number of extra-institutional resources are available to provide services and advice. The majority of direction and decisions come from students: students at large, student employees, elected student leaders, and appointed student representatives. Despite the support they receive, it is ultimately up to the students to make their programs succeed. It is important to recognize that despite the control students have, there is by legal necessity a division of rights and responsibilities that support the program. In the case of the SSI, numerous policies and practices that support the program are, to a large extent, outside of the control of the program's leaders. For example, financial services and human resources are provided by the Activities and Auxiliaries Business Center (AABC), and are overseen by the Business Affairs Unit within the Division of Finance and Administration.

Together, these three characteristics make for an interesting environment in which to develop future leaders. They are provided with administrative, logistical, legal, and emotional support, the risks they assume are very real but the costs are low, and they are surrounded by other students all dedicated to a similar vision of a community somehow improved.

1.2.3 Importance

In the OSU Department of Student Leadership and Involvement alone, this past year, student-coordinated programs reported a total of 172,285 non-unique program beneficiaries (Oregon State University Department of Student Leadership and Involvement, 2012). This means that each of the 23,265 students enrolled at OSU was served an average of 7.4 times. Communities were nurtured, campus sustainability improved, and students were educated, all while a few dozen student leaders developed experience planning events, coordinating campaigns, and supervising programs and staff. By all accounts, student-coordinated programs provide valuable opportunities for future leaders to explore their passions, make connections, and develop experience. For these students, the stakes tend to be relatively low, the opportunities for learning numerous, and the administrative support and advising readily available.

1.3 Issues Facing Student-Coordinated Programs

1.3.1 Difficulties of Intertemporal Management

Because of the support and decision-making structures that student-coordinated programs utilize, management of the programs across time can be somewhat difficult. Students rarely stay in leadership positions for more than a couple of years, and frequently spend

the majority of that time developing the knowledge and experience required to adequately fill those roles. When they leave those positions, they take with them much of the knowledge they gained during that time, and rarely can pass on to their successors enough information for those students to avoid repeating the process at least in part. The staff, meanwhile, turns over just as quickly. The result is a cohort, within each student-coordinated program, that begins by being only slightly more knowledgeable than the preceding cohort was when they began, and significantly less experienced than the preceding cohort was when they left. This doesn't mean that the programs don't grow, change, or continue to improve, but it does mean is that the long-term growth and improvement of the program is retarded. While the professional staff supporting the program can do a lot to mitigate this, the management of the program as a whole is in the hands of the students coming and going. This makes the overall management of the program over time challenging.

1.3.2 Compounding Impact of Programmatic Uniqueness

The solutions to the intertemporal management challenges, together with the structures and cultures that develop within and around these programs to address their unique needs and abilities, can result in a lack of emphasis on organizational development (e.g. process assessment and improvement). Despite receiving significant student fee funding, official endorsement by important parties, and hours upon hours of paid and unpaid labor, student-run programs tend to be underserved in this one area. Some of this might be due to the importance of letting student-coordinated programs guide themselves, some of it might be due to the difficulty institutions have in consistently supporting the organizational development work of each cohort of each student-coordinated program,

some of it might be due to the competing needs of student-coordinated programs, and some of it might be due to the lower priority organizational development holds for those supporting student-coordinated programs. That said, student-coordinated programs do seem to largely miss out on the support they would need to methodically assess and improve their own processes. Because this type of organizational development is not heavily supported, growing pains within programs may be deeper and more persistent than they would otherwise be, and the students involved in the program may miss out on one of the most critical topics for a successful leader to understand.

1.4 This Study

1.4.1 Knowledge Gap

As of yet, little research has been done – or is being done – on student-coordinated programs.

1.4.2 This Study

The SSI is an example of a student-coordinated program that is going through a growth phase and struggling with some of the aforementioned issues. Since its creation five years ago, the program has seen a roughly 1,200% increase in the number of paid staff and 600% increase in funding (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2010). While successful by most measurements, the organization recently displayed what could be symptoms of systemic issues when the SIFC cut its budget by \$50,000 “because the [program had] a \$300,000 surplus of funds and no clear plans to spend them (Hilborn, 2012).

The purpose of this study is to diagnose systemic issues facing the SSI and identify a handful of solutions that have the greatest potential to improve the program.

1.4.3 Filling the Gap

This study asks: “What challenges do student-coordinated programs face, and how might they be addressed?” To answer that question, it uses the SSI as a case study. Besides providing an example of a student-coordinated program showing symptoms of general systemic issues, the SSI also provides a potential case study for issues that can arise when organizational development is under-supported. Lessons learned from studying the SSI have the potential to provide similarly sized, structured, and focused organizations with a starting place for their own auditing and development efforts, and could provide a foundation for further research on this aspect of such organizations. While this study won’t completely fill that gap, it will provide a stepping-stone for future research. Eventually, with enough research, it might be possible for young, student-run social enterprises to improve their capacity, efficacy, and efficiency without having to face the same chronically recurring challenges.

1.5 The SSI

1.5.1 History

The history of the SSI can be traced back to April 2003, when a student named Justin Fleming submitted a decision package to the SIFC that proposed a new student fee to support student-coordinated recycling and sustainability projects at OSU (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2010). Although it was approved by the

SIFC, the proposal met with resistance from the ASOSU Congress. The proposal went to mediation, and the fee was eventually approved at \$1.85 per student, per term.

In February 2006, the SIFC established a budgeting and advisory board to oversee the fee, manage the budget that had developed around the fee, and support the "growing list of sustainability related projects" it funded (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2010). This was the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative Fee Board (SSI Fee Board). That April, the SSI was formally created as a student-coordinated program of Oregon State University Business Services, and in May a student employee (SSI Coordinator) was hired to support the new program, supervise its volunteers, and coordinate its activities.

In April 2007, students approved a second student fee dedicated to sustainability. This was \$8.50 per student, per term, and was slated to fund a shift by the university to 100% renewable energy. That May, five student employee positions (Coordinators) were created to support the program and its activities. At that time, the SSI Coordinator position was re-titled to Program Facilitator. In July, the OSU Student Sustainability Center (SSC) was established. A small residential building at the corner of 15th and Western had recently been acquired by the university, and it was given to the SSI as an office and meeting space. To ensure that the SSC fit the program it housed, major renovations were made to the structure and its grounds, including installation of new doors and storm windows, a permaculture garden, a sustainability library, and composting facilities (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2009).

During the 2008 Academic Year (June 16, 2007 - June 15, 2008), coordinators and volunteers worked collaboratively on a handful of different programs. These included “‘elecTrick or Treat’ (reverse trick or treat in the res halls, handing out CFL bulbs), the Campus Carbon Challenge, two worm bin workshops, Focus the Nation, a sustainability and discussion with Corvallis Mayor Charlie Tomlinson, the completion of the solar trailer, promotional events for the new reuse-a-cups, Recyclemania promotions, and Earth Week” (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2008). In May 2008, one student employee position (Visibility Coordinator) was created to support the staff and advertise the program's activities.

During the 2009 Academic Year (June 16, 2008 - June 15, 2009), coordinators and volunteers began to focus on five different areas of sustainability: energy, food systems, landscape, alternative transportation, and waste reduction. To reflect this change, the coordinator positions were re-titled accordingly (e.g. Energy Coordinator, Alternative Transportation Coordinator, etc.). Programs were equally collaborative and individual, and included Operation Green Beaver, PowerShift '09, the OSU Permaculture Alliance, a bicycle co-op, the Sustainable Energy Revolving Loan Fund, Earth Week, and the SSC Garden (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2009). In May 2009, two student employee positions (Political Engagement Coordinator and Partnerships Coordinator) were created to support and advance the program.

During the 2010 Academic Year (June 16, 2009 - June 15, 2010), coordinators and their new volunteer groups refined their focus to six different areas of sustainability (energy, food systems, landscapes, political engagement, alternative transportation, and waste

reduction). These programs were less collaborative and included PowerShift West '09, the Campuses Beyond Coal campaign, the Energy Civil War, the Cultural Center Energy Challenge, a compost pilot project in McNary Residence Hall, RecycleMania, the Sustainability Fair, and Earth Week. That same year, the SSI joined the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition, the SSI Fee Board switched from funding renewable energy credits to renewable energy projects, and the program as a whole moved from Business Services to Student Leadership and Involvement (SLI). In June 2010, one student employee position (Administrative Assistant) was added to help administer the program.

During the 2011 Academic Year (June 16, 2010 - June 15, 2011), coordinators sought to revitalize volunteer groups and concentrated their efforts even more singularly on their specific area of focus. Programs included the Sustainability Fair, the Building Energy Challenge, the Energy Civil War, the Campus Carbon Challenge, the Sustainable Career Fair, a capstone project for the School of Civil and Construction Engineering, sustainable cooking classes, a student-run food co-op, sustainable potlucks, Tasting Tables, SPROUT, bicycle parking on campus, a Land Action Plan, a bike share / rental program, bicycle repair workshops, a Recycled Craft Night, and clothing swaps (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2011). In May 2011, the Program Facilitator position was split into two Co-Facilitator positions, the Administrative Assistant position was changed to a Financial and Administrative Coordinator position, the Visibility Coordinator position was changed to a Design and Visibility Coordinator position, and staff positions focusing on planning and executing activities were each re-titled to the position of Projects Coordinator (e.g. Food Projects Coordinator, Transportation Projects Coordinator, etc.) and were re-titled collectively to be Project Coordinators (e.g. the Food

and Transportation Project Coordinators). In June, one student employee position (Political Engagement Coordinator) was removed and one (Events and Outreach Coordinator) was added. In July, the two Co-Facilitator positions were each re-titled Co-Director. In January 2012, the SSI Internship Program was created and the Design and Visibility Coordinator position was split into the Design Coordinator and Visibility Coordinator positions.

During the 2012 Academic Year (June 16, 2011 - June 15, 2012), project coordinators each focused on a small number of individual programs and assisted with one or two collaborative programs. These included the Sustainability Festival, the Building Energy Challenge, the Energy Civil War, a bio-fuels research center, an energy net-zero commitment, RecycleMania, Earth Week, a university food assessment, the Sustainable Cooking Series, edible container gardening workshops, Tasting Tables, a bicycle shelter green roof, the SSC garden, OSU landscaping practices and policies, a ride-share program, the Bicycle Extravaganza, a bike loan program, a bicycle physical activity course, OSU composting facilities, a composting trial in Halsell Hall, the Ban the Bag campaign, worm bin workshops, a sustainable film festival, the Spring Sustainability Celebration, and a half-dozen other small events and programs (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2012). In May 2012, the two Co-Director positions were replaced by a single Director position. The Financial and Administrative Coordinator position was changed to an Administrative Coordinator position and was redesigned to take a substantial portion of the program's administration over from the Director. The Partnerships Coordinator position was removed. The Events and Outreach Coordinator

position was changed to an Events Coordinator position with the outreach responsibilities reassigned to the Visibility Coordinator.

These changes, throughout the years, saw the program slowly shift from a very fluid program with sporadic success and low reliability to a relatively established program with consistent success and high reliability. This shift occurred without an established plan. As the program accomplished things, created partnerships, and gained supporters, it grew organically. Some traits and processes it developed were and still are of great benefit to the program. Others might be holding it back. The importance of the program's history is that it sheds light on the current state of the program, and thus, the issues it might face.

1.5.2 Structure

Today, the SSI is a student-coordinated program of the Department of Student Leadership and Involvement within the Memorial Union unit of the Division of Student Affairs at Oregon State University (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2011). It has ten student staff (Director, Administrative Coordinator, Design Coordinator, Energy Projects Coordinator, Events Coordinator, Food Projects Coordinator, Landscape Projects Coordinator, Transportation Projects Coordinator, Waste Reduction Projects Coordinator, Visibility Coordinator) and nine interns (Energy Intern, Events Intern, Food Intern, Journalism Intern, Landscape Intern, Multimedia Intern, Online Visibility Intern, Transportation Intern, and Waste Reduction Intern). It is supported by two Faculty Advisors (OSU Sustainability Coordinator and OSU Civic Engagement Coordinator) and governed by the SSI Fee Board. The SSI Fee Board is composed of five voting members (one paid student chair, one ex-officio student

member, and three students at large) and at least four non-voting members (the two Faculty Advisors, the one Director, and the one Administrative Coordinator) (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2012).

Three distinct groups exist within the SSI: the Marketing Team, the Projects Team, and the Leadership Team.

The Marketing Team includes the Design Coordinator, the Events Coordinator, the Journalism Intern, the Multimedia Intern, the Online Visibility Intern, and the Visibility Coordinator. The group “is tasked with publicizing the SSI and its activities” (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2012). Part of this requires working extensively with the Projects Team to advertise the projects, events, and campaigns they are planning, and part of this requires designing and implementing general publicity campaigns for the SSI as a whole.

The Projects Team includes the Energy, Food, Landscape, Transportation, and Waste Reduction Project Coordinators, and their interns. The group is responsible for “planning and executing sustainability-related projects, and ... recruiting, coordinating, and supervising [participants]” in those projects (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2012). Projects can include campaigns, events, and many other types of programs.

The Leadership Team includes the Director, Administrative Coordinator, Faculty Advisors, Fee Board Chair, and Department Director and “is periodically convened to

address large picture issues related to the structure, direction, and performance of the organization” (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2011).

The importance of the program’s structure is that it defines the responsibilities and relationships that maintain and constrain the program. A different structure (e.g. no staff, all interns, no leadership team, etc.) would result in a very different set of issues facing the program. In order to understand the issues that might be facing the program, then, it’s important to understand the structure within which they occur.

1.5.3 Vision & Mission

The vision of the SSI is "to create a culture of sustainability and empower a new generation of leaders,” and the mission “in pursuing this vision, is to advance student efforts in creating a culture of sustainability at OSU through action, education, and opportunity” (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative, 2010).

During its most recent strategic planning session, the SSI identified five goals for the program:

- **Awareness** - Increase understanding of the need for a sustainable culture, and provide information about available opportunities and resources.
- **Empowerment** - Encourage and support students in furthering their own vision of sustainability on campus.
- **Leadership** - Help students improve their ability to instigate, plan, and manage sustainability related projects and campaigns through leadership development opportunities.

- **Partnership** - Connect organizations within campus and greater community, and integrate sustainability into every OSU department.
- **Institutional Development** - Assist, encourage, promote, and advocate for movement by the institution towards a sustainable future (Oregon State University Student Sustainability Initiative Fee Board, 2011).”

1.6 Scope

In order to ensure a high feasibility and reasonable probability of success, the scope of this study was limited to systemic issues that were identified by a small population within the OSU community as being issues facing the SSI.

CHAPTER 2. METHODS

2.1 Guiding Philosophy

The basic philosophy behind the design of this study is that “the rights and welfare of human research participants” should be actively protected and promoted by the research team and the inherent design of the study (Oregon State University Research Office, 2012). “Respect for persons [was] firmly ensconced in research ethics ... [by] its inclusion as one of three core principles in the [1979 National Commission’s] *Belmont Report*,” and has continued to be a guiding force in human subject research (Dickert, 2010). When this study was being designed, it was readily apparent that if this principle wasn’t consistently upheld, the study and its validity would be in jeopardy.

2.2 Structure & Materials

2.2.1 IRB Process

After the study was designed, it was submitted to the OSU Internal Review Board (IRB) for consideration. The initial review identified no fewer than 22 issues with the study’s protocol, consent, recruitment, and testing documents, ranging from minor typographical errors to the flow of the consent process. After these issues were addressed, the study was resubmitted for consideration. A second, shorter round of revisions – this one primarily focusing on clarity of intent – followed, and IRB approved the study shortly thereafter. (Final versions of the study documents approved by IRB can be found in Appendices A – D.)

This process is intended to help the IRB:

- “promote the rights and welfare of human research participant,
- facilitate ethical research,
- provide guidance and support to the research community in the conduct of research with human subjects, [and]
- assist the research community in ensuring compliance with the standards set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services" (<http://oregonstate.edu/research/ori/irb.htm>, April 21, 2012).

Of the numerous concerns addressed by IRB during its review of this study, the three most influential were:

1. The ability of the consent process to provide sufficient time and information for potential participants to make an informed and voluntary decision before divulging any private information.
2. The balance between providing sufficient information and providing too much information to participants.
3. The means by which the study could best limit potential risks and biases.

If it weren't for the issues of risk and bias raised, the process by which this study was vetted by IRB might not be noteworthy. However, doing so was an important step in the process of conceiving and executing the study and is valuable when trying to assess the validity or limitations of the study and its findings.

2.2.2 Protocol

The study collected qualitative data through a series of in-depth interviews with (A) employees of OSU directly responsible for some aspect of the SSI, and (B) members of groups, organizations, and parties that a member of group A identified as having collaborated with the SSI on a project.

2.2.3 Selection & Recruitment

A review of publicly available information was conducted to identify potential participants who meet inclusion criteria A: employees of OSU directly responsible for some aspect of the SSI.

These potential participants were then sent an email from an official OSU address to their publicly available address providing IRB-approved recruitment content and materials.

Following each interview with a participant meeting inclusion criteria A, data gathered during the interview was reviewed for mention of groups or organizations whose members might meet inclusion criteria B: members of a group, organization, or party that a participant meeting inclusion criteria A identified as having collaborated with the SSI on a project or event and having been a potential witness to an issue with the SSI.

Publicly available information on the group or organization was then used to identify members. These potential participants, like potential participants meeting inclusion criteria A, were each sent an email from an official OSU address to their publicly-available addresses, providing IRB-approved recruitment content and materials.

This pre-screening, having a participant mention a group involved in an incident with the SSI, was unavoidable because in order to describe in detail a time when something did

not go as well as it could have, the participants need to provide information on the parties involved. (For the purpose of privacy, names of individuals were not collected during interviews, but were sourced from publicly available information on the group.) Due to the topic being studied and the steps in place to protect participants and potential participants, this method of pre-screening didn't appreciably increase the risk faced by those involved. (If they did not respond to the recruitment information or responded but did not successfully submit a consent form, no private information was gathered. The information gathered was retained by the researchers but was not included in the study as doing so would contribute nothing and would be without the consent of the individual.)

2.2.4 Consent

Consent was obtained in writing at the beginning of the initial interview using the "Consent Form" included in Appendix B. This form details the study, the role of participants in the study, and the plans for utilizing and disseminating the data collected. Completion of the "Consent Form" requires confirmation that the study had been explained to them, all their questions had been answered, and they agreed to take part in the study. To ensure that potential participants were able to discuss the study with a researcher before consenting to be a participant, the first interview started with the researcher reviewing the consent form with the participant, answering any questions they have, and then having the potential participant sign the form.

Written hardcopy consent forms were collected in person by the researcher at the beginning of the first interview with a participant. This took place at the location selected by the potential participant during the secure online poll to schedule the interview. The

interview locations were intended to respect participants' privacy and protect the privacy of potential participants prior to the signing of a consent form. The method of collection was recommended by Candi Loeb of IRB, and should meet any concerns about respecting potential participant's privacy.

Researchers provided potential participants with a digital copy of the consent form before scheduling an interview, reviewed the consent form in person with potential participants before the first interview, and answered any questions or concerns participants might have had in person before the initial interview. These steps should be sufficient to ensure that participants understood the study and their role in it. (Please note: non-English speakers, adult subjects lacking the capacity to consent, and potential participants under the age of 18 were excluded from the study due to privacy, confidentiality, and logistical concerns.)

2.2.5 Anonymity & Confidentiality

As part of the efforts to address the potential risks to participants, a number of steps were taken to provide an anonymous and confidential experience:

- Data was stored in .docx, .xlsx, .rtf, .pdf, and .mp3 files on a password-protected laptop with an encrypted, online, password-protected backup to a secure storage facility off-site. This data will be retained until at least December 31st, 2015. Due to the nature of the study and the data collected, data was not de-identified. Doing so would greatly diminish the value of the data, and likely make it not worth storage. However, the data will not be used for any research besides this final

report, and that will not include any identifiers. Steps were taken to make this clear to participants.

- The only direct identifiers were the names of the individuals as recorded on their consent form. (If agreed to by participants, names may also be recorded in study notes and audio recordings.) These identifiers were used because using any other identifier would be either (a) more intrusive, or (b) more disruptive to the study given the small sample size, the limited personal data collected, and the structure of the study.
- If the participant indicated on their consent form that they wished to be on record under a pseudonym or participation code, all further communication and documentation of their participation in the study used that identifier.
- The only link between pseudonym and direct identifier is contained in the consent form, which will be retained as a .pdf on a password-protected laptop with an encrypted, online, password-protected backup to a secure storage facility off-site for as long as the study data is retained. This documentation is necessary proof of IRB guideline compliance, and will only inform (a) the involvement of the potential participant in the study, and (b) the records kept and made public of that individual's participation in the study.
- The identifiers provided to entities outside the research team were randomly generated fictitious first names. The key linking these names and the name, pseudonym, or participation code requested by each participant was not and will not be provided to anyone outside the research team.

- No copies of the consent form or other research study information were retained in the subjects' records.
- Information collected during the course of this study will not be used for any future studies, nor will it be made available to anyone outside the research team except through the production of the final report.

2.2.6 Risks & Benefits

The risks associated with participation in this study were heightened by the aforementioned role Morgan Dumitru played in the SSI and this study during the Spring of 2012. (Details can be found in the Preface.) These risks can best be classified by the inclusion criteria mentioned previously.

Participants meeting inclusion criteria A were at risk of having their employment and professional career negatively impacted by the information they might reveal. This risk was addressed by providing the option of response coding and confidentiality.

Participants meeting inclusion criteria B were at risk of social, political, or professional blowback from members of the SSI for the information they might reveal. This risk was addressed by providing the option of response coding and confidentiality.

In addition, the following risks were shared by all potential participants:

Breach of Confidentiality: There is a risk that members of the research team could accidentally disclose information that identifies a participant.

Internet/Email: The security of information sent via email or collected online cannot be guaranteed. Information sent via email or collected online could have

been intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses.

Note that no deception was used during this study, that all known risks were addressed in the consent form, and that the only anticipated risks were those taken knowingly and willingly by participants.

The primary benefit to individual participants was the knowledge that they were contributing to the improvement of the SSI and the creation of research on issues faced by student-coordinated programs.

Given the content and structure of this study and the ability of participants to choose their level of involvement, confidentiality, and identifier coding, it is the opinion of the research team that the potential benefits of this study far outweighed the potential risks to participants who chose to participate.

2.3 Process & Procedure

2.3.1 Scheduling Interviews

Participants who responded to the recruiting emails were sent a follow-up email with a consent form and a link to a private online poll where they could indicate their availability (i.e. time and location) for a 50-minute interview. (Times ranged from 9 AM to 9 PM, and locations ranged from public to private and on-campus to off-campus.)

Their submissions to this poll were visible only to the research team. Once they indicated their availability for an interview, they were contacted to verify a specific time and location for the interview. To ensure that potential participants were able to discuss the

study with a researcher before consenting to be a participant, researchers scheduled the interviews before receiving the consent form. (Consent forms were reviewed, discussed, and signed at the beginning of each initial interview.)

2.3.2 Conducting Interviews

After consent was gained, participants were asked a series of open-ended, scripted questions. Each question was followed by at least one clarifying, non-scripted question.

If the participant indicated on their consent form that an audio recording could be made, their responses were recorded digitally to a .mp3 file-format. Either way, the interviewer took notes with a laptop during the course of the interview to ensure a record was kept and to facilitate analysis of any audio recordings.

Once either 55 minutes has passed or all questions had been answered, the interviews were wrapped up and the participants were thanked for their time.

At this point, participants meeting inclusion criteria A were also asked if they would like to participate in a second one-hour in-depth follow-up interview.

If the eligible participant chose to participate in the second interview, they were sent a follow-up email with a link to a private online poll where they could indicate their availability (i.e. time and location) for that interview. Once they indicated their availability, they were contacted to verify a specific time and location. During the second interview, participants were asked a different series of open-ended scripted questions designed to get them to elaborate on and explore the answers they provided during the

first interview. Each question was followed by at least one clarifying non-scripted question.

2.3.3 Follow-Up

After completing their involvement in the study, participants were thanked for their participation and provided with written information reminding them (a) how the data would be used, and (b) how they could access a copy of the final report.

2.4 Analysis

2.4.1 Technique & Procedure

The responses were compared across interviews and participants to identify: (1) systemic issues facing the SSI, (2) categories that those issues might fall into, (3) potential prioritization of those categories, and (4) potential solution. Once these were identified, a select number of existing pieces of literature on these issues were referenced to verify their validity and expand the potential solutions to those issues.

2.4.2 Calculations

The two simple calculations used during this analysis were:

1. The Issue Awareness, or the percent of interviews during which an issue was mentioned. (This is calculated using the simple average equation below, in which A represents the Issue Awareness, M represents the number of interviews during which the issue was mentioned, and T represents the total number of interviews.)

$$A = \frac{M}{T}$$

2. The Issue Importance, or the reported importance of each issue, weighted by the Issue Awareness. (This is calculated using the equation below, in which I represents the Issue Importance, R_n represents the reported importance on a 1-10 scale by the n^{th} participant who mentioned the issues, n represents the total number of reports of the issue, and A represents the Issue Awareness calculated above.)

$$I = 10A \left(\frac{(R_1 + R_2 + \dots + R_n)}{n} \right)$$

CHAPTER 3. RESULTS

The results of this study were coded by instances (the instance was the name given by the participant to a time where something didn't go as well as it could have or was not handled as well as it could have), and issues (the issue was the term used by the participant to classify or categorize the problem that occurred in that instance).

3.1 Participation

Twenty potential participants were identified for this study. Fifteen of them were OSU employees directly responsible for some aspect of the SSI (Group A) and five of them were members of groups that collaborated with the SSI (Group B). (Groups who collaborate with the SSI include, among others, the Activities and Auxiliaries Business Center, the Student & Incidental Fee Committee, Campus Recycling, University Housing & Dining Services, the Sustainability Office, the Associated Students of Oregon State University.) Of the potential participants contacted, eleven decided to participate. Of these eleven, nine were in Group A and three were in Group B. During the course of their involvement, participants took part in a total of twelve interviews for a total of 780 minutes of interviewing.

3.2 Occurrences

Thirty-three distinct instances where something did not go as well as it could have or was not handled as well as it could have been were identified by participants. Most instances were recent and directly related to the work of the participant. Specific instances reported

included: “Space Conversations” (Erik, 2012), “Composting Trial” (Eve, 2012), “Winter Social” (Christian, 2012), “Budgeting Process” (Christian, 2012), “Campuses Take Charge” (Jessie, 2012), “Cooking Classes,” “Earth Month” (Eve, 2012), “Energy Civil War” (Nelson, 2012), Fall Training (Molly, 2012), “Green Roof project” (Jami, 2012), “HooHaa” (Christian, 2012), “PR Campaign” (Allan, 2012), and “RecycleMania” (Eve, 2012).

3.3 Causes

For those 33 distinct instances, 38% of issues “existed from the beginning” of the activity, 33% of issues arose when an activity was being executed, 25% of issues arose during planning, and 4% of issues arose after the activity was complete.

Among the causes mentioned were: “something just slipped through the cracks” (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012), “breakdown [of] communication” (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012), “the whole strategy was flawed from the beginning” (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012), “methods ... were flawed to begin with” (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012), “breakdown was from the start” (Erik, 2012), “early on, follow up wasn’t happening” (Erik, 2012), “[problems occurred] from the get go” (Christian, 2012), “the goals of the SSI and the project didn’t align [from the beginning]” (Nelson, 2012), “[problems occurred] in the planning stage” (Allan, 2012), “trying to get specific [agreements] in” (Molly, 2012), “issues cropped up with deadlines” (Eve, 2012), “[problems arise] after the fact” when it becomes clear something wasn’t done properly (Darren, 2012).

Very few of the instances were reported to have been caused solely by a one-time factor (e.g. character flaws, coincidences, etc.).

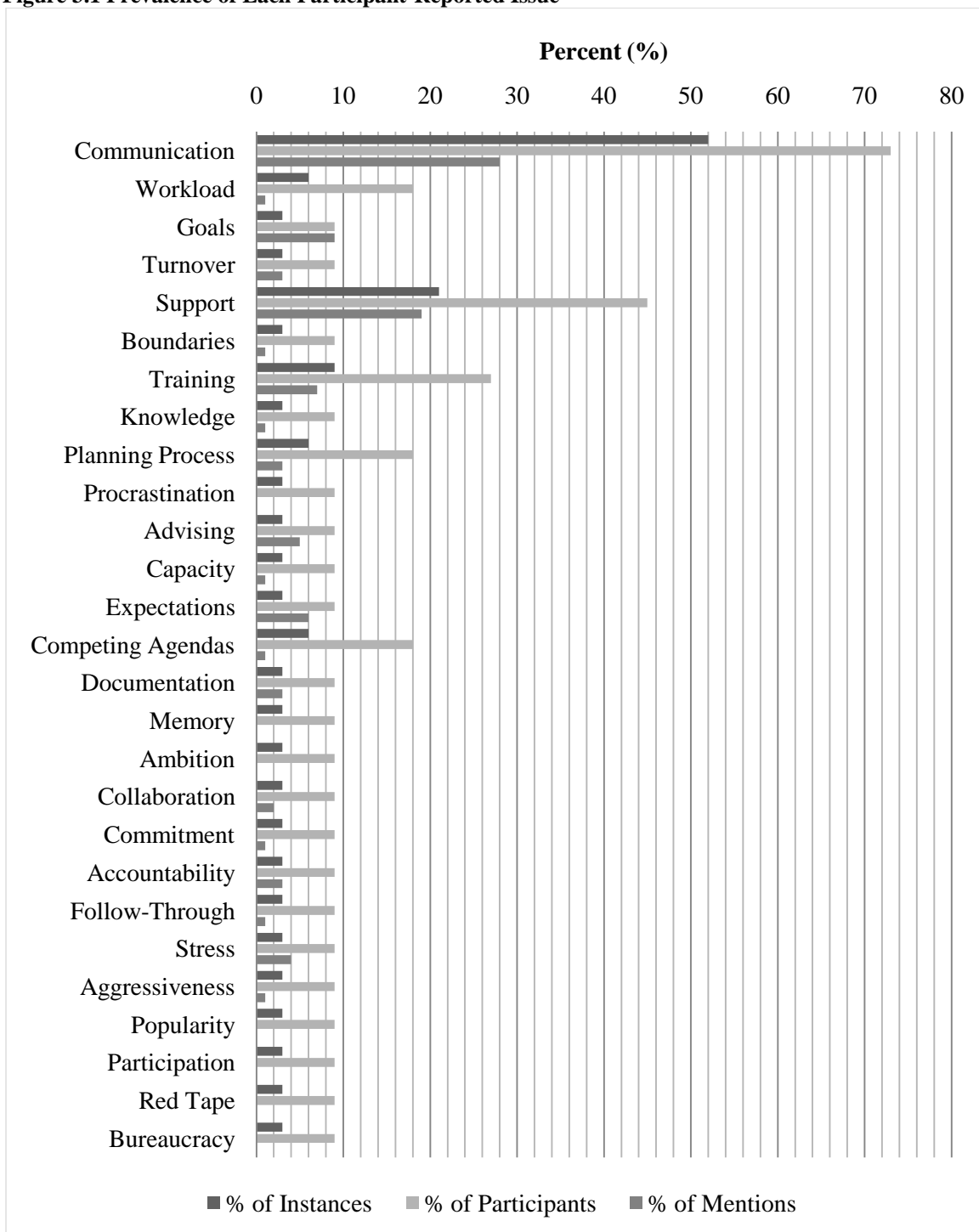
3.4 Involved Parties

Of the 33 distinct instances, sixteen involved just the SSI and seventeen involved the SSI and other parties. Those parties included (in no particular order) the Activities and Auxiliaries Business Center (AABC), the Student & Incidental Fee Committee (SIFC), Campus Recycling, the Landscape Shop, University Housing & Dining Services (UHDS), the Sustainability Office, the Department of Horticulture, the Organic Growers Club (ORGS), the Center for Civic Engagement (CEC), the Associated Students of Oregon State University (ASOSU), the Department of Recreational Sports (Rec Sports), the UO Department of Physical Education and Recreation, the UO Sustainability Center, the First Alternative Natural Foods Co-op, the International Living/Learning Center, the Student Dietetic Association, Facility Services, and the Spring Creek Project. Eleven of the instances involving other parties listed communication as an issue, while six did not.

3.5 Classification of Issues

During the interviews, participants identified 27 distinct issues facing the SSI. These issues ranged in reported importance from “not very important” to “critical,” and in frequency of occurrence from “one-time” to “systemic.” The most frequently reported issue was communication, showing up in 52% of the 33 distinct instances and being reported by 73% of participants. Throughout the course of interviews, communication was explicitly mentioned 53 times. The next most frequently reported issues were support

Figure 3.1 Prevalence of Each Participant-Reported Issue



Note: Percent instances measured as the number of instances for which that issue was among the reported issues divided by the total number of instances. Percent participants measured as the number of participants who mentioned that issue divided by the total number of participants. Percent total mentions measured as the number of times the issue was mentioned during the course of the participant interviews divided by the total number of times one of the participant-reported issues was mentioned during the course of the participant interviews.

(21% of instances, 45% of participants, and 35 mentions), training (9%, 27%, and 14), workload (6%, 18%, and 2), planning process (6%, 18%, and 6), and competing agendas (6% of, 18%, and 1). For comparison, see Figure 3.1. For details, see Table 3.1.

3.6 Importance of Issues

The average reported importance to the future success of the SSI of the issues discussed with participants was “pretty important” or a 6/10 (with 1 being “not at all important” and 10 being “critical”). The issue with the highest average importance was goals, followed by boundaries, aggressiveness, advising, capacity, support, and communication. The issue with the highest total importance was communication, followed by support, competing agendas, goals, and training. This can be seen, along with the reported importance of all of the other participant-reported issues, in Table 3.1.

A handful of participants reported that the importance of an issue depended on its future frequency – the more often it occurred, the more likely it would be to influence the success of the program. The difference between a regularly occurring and irregularly occurring issue was as much as 7 out of 10 (i.e. irregular occurrences would rate a 3/10 and regular occurrences would rate a 10/10).

Individual participants tended to rate the issues they reported to be of roughly comparable importance (i.e. if a participant rated their first issue a 7/10, they were unlikely to report an issue with a reported importance of 3/10).

Table 3.1 Prevalence and Importance of Each Participant-Reported Issue

Issue	Inst.	%	Participants	%	Mentions	%	T. Imp.	A. Imp.
Communication	17	52	8	73	53	28	102	6.375
Workload	2	6	2	18	2	1	4	4
Goals	1	3	1	9	17	9	10	10
Turnover	1	3	1	9	6	3	6	6
Support	7	21	5	45	35	19	26	6.5
Boundaries	1	3	1	9	2	1	8	8
Training	3	9	3	27	14	7	10	5
Knowledge	1	3	1	9	1	1	6	6
Planning Process	2	6	2	18	6	3	5	5
Procrastination	1	3	1	9	0	0	5	5
Advising	1	3	1	9	9	5	7	7
Capacity	1	3	1	9	2	1	7	7
Expectations	1	3	1	9	11	6	5	5
Competing Agendas	2	6	2	18	1	1	12	6
Documentation	1	3	1	9	6	3	6	6
Memory	1	3	1	9	0	0	5	5
Ambition	1	3	1	9	0	0	4	4
Collaboration	1	3	1	9	4	2	6	6
Commitment	1	3	1	9	2	1	6	6
Accountability	1	3	1	9	6	3	5	5
Follow-Through	1	3	1	9	1	1	5	5
Stress	1	3	1	9	8	4	5	5
Aggressiveness	1	3	1	9	2	1	8	8
Popularity	1	3	1	9	0	0	5	5
Participation	1	3	1	9	0	0	5	5
Red Tape	1	3	1	9	0	0	5	5
Bureaucracy	1	3	1	9	0	0	5	5
TOTAL	33		11		188		N/A	N/A

Note: Inst. is the number of instances for which that issue was among the reported issues. Participants is the number of participants who mentioned that issue during the course of their interview(s). Mentions is the number of times that issue was mentioned during the course of the participant interviews. "T. Imp." is the sum of all importance rankings (on a scale of 1 to 10) for that issue as reported by participants across instances. "A. Imp." is total importance for that issue divided by the number of instances for which that issue was among the reported issues.

3.7 Frequency of Occurrence

Of the 33 distinct instances, seven were identified as being one-time occurrences, six were identified as being regular or frequent occurrences, and 20 were identified as being systemic. Many instances were reported to be “partially a systemic issue” in that there was a systemic issue that was frequently sparked into being an instance by coincidental or one-time occurrences (Darren, 2012). In addition, there were a few instances where the instance itself was reported to be a one-time occurrence but the underlying issue had fueled a number of different permutations of the instance. (These instances and their circumstances were addressed, but because the underlying issue remained unsolved it continued to create future instances.)

3.8 Solutions

Of the 33 distinct instances, 28 had at least one corresponding participant-reported solution. These solutions included: “[creating] a form” to capture details and clarify needs (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012), “set expectations at the beginning” (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012), “emphasizing importance of ... following up” (Cody, Follow-Up Interview, 2012), “focus on accountability” (Erik, 2012), “walk [staff] through the steps needed to execute a project at OSU” (Erik, 2012), “be more assertive in calling out and addressing and discussing issues” (Christian, 2012), “trainings and orientations” (Christian, 2012), “more team building” (Christian, 2012), “make sure [goals] are agreed upon, clear, understood, frequently identified, easily identifiable, and that [they’re being worked] towards” (Nelson, 2012), “require a project description and plan that correlates it to the goals and budget” (Nelson, 2012), “more formal and in-depth transition process

and transition packet” (Nelson, 2012), “start meetings with mission statement” (Nelson, 2012), “visually post goals” (Nelson, 2012), “more automated PR process” (Allan, 2012), “regular, structured meetings” (Tania, 2012), “do a better job of documenting activities and planning, as well as putting together transition materials” (Molly, 2012), “have project coordinators identify other organizations who work on [related] areas, and have sit-down meeting ... to figure out plans and get on the same page” (Eve, 2012), “systems in place to require communication” (Eve, 2012), more team oriented projects and activities (Molly, 2012), “two-year terms that overlap by a year on each end” (Jami, 2012), “have a [single] project lead” (Jessie, 2012), and “limit the number of people information is going through” (Darren, 2012).

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Study

4.1.1 Design

A few issues in the study design became clear only after it had passed through the OSU Internal Review Board (IRB). These issues greatly influenced the successful implementation of the study and the analysis of its results. While it isn't clear that the issues actually influenced the study's findings, it is likely that had they been addressed, the study would have been more successful.

First, the set of questions used during the study was designed to establish the issues faced by the SSI and to collect information about those issues. This led to interviews that were exploratory and observational in nature. It wasn't until results were being analyzed that it became clear how important it was that there also be a set of questions designed to isolate the issues, their causes, examples, impacts, and potential solutions. Knowing how those issues played out is difficult to determine using the current set of questions because each captured narrative used slightly different wording. Participants reported 27 distinct issues. Their interviews revolved around issues they, not others, identified, and the synthesis of the participants' reported issues. In this discussion, five categories of issues are identified. Because these categories don't line up nicely with all of the issues identified by participants, it is unclear whether all applicable information about those issue categories was captured. A second set of questions based on an initial analysis could have addressed this.

Second, the lack of a system to more intentionally follow up with participants probably left much useful information undiscovered. When the study was designed, it was created to capture only the initial responses of participants to a set of questions. While a second interview was available, it asked the same questions and was not designed to hone in on specific information the research team might need to push analysis to the next level. A second round of interviews should have used analysis-informed questions and been held long enough after the first round so that participants had time to mull the information unveiled during the first round of interviews.

Third, the data gathered was of limited use. This was due largely to the follow-up structure and the singular focus of the set of questions asked.

Finally, the study was structured to use only qualitative data gathered by in-depth interviews. This was intentional. Given the constraints of the study, additional methods or types of data might have placed an overly large burden on the research team and jeopardized the feasibility of the study. That said, there was important quantitative information that, upon analysis, was revealed to be very important to a comprehensive study of this nature. Potential solutions would have been to ask a small number of the most important quantitative questions during an interview or to have participants complete a brief survey in addition to the interview. How this would have impacted participation or feasibility is unknown.

4.1.2 Implementation

While a couple of minor issues arose with implementation, they were largely due to the constraints of the study and the corresponding design decisions.

First, participation was low. Of the 20 potential participants identified for the study, only 11 participated. Granted, that is a participation rate of 55%, which would be admirable in a larger study. For study of this size, however, a higher participation rate would have provided clearer indication that all appropriate information was being gathered. Potential factors in the participation rate include the short time frame during which the study was implemented and the relatively restrictive recruitment methods identified in the study design. None of the potential participants contacted declined to participate. Two of them expressed interest but didn't reply to follow-up emails and the other seven didn't reply to the initial recruitment materials at all.

Second, the time available to implement the study was too short as it was. Had the study been redesigned to better utilize a second round of interviews, it would have been worse. This was almost entirely due to the constraints of the study, and it is not clear that anything could have been done to change those constraints.

4.1.3 Analysis

The only major issue with the analysis of this study was that the data the study had been designed to collect was difficult to analyze. This resulted in analysis methods that were appropriate but perhaps not of preferred caliber. It isn't clear that the final results would have been any different with better analysis methods, but it would have improved the clarity of those results and confidence with which the research team could stand behind them. Addressing this issue would have required: (1) redesigning the questions and data collection methods so as to collect a different dataset, or (2) gathering together a research team with considerably more experience working with qualitative data.

4.2 Context

Synthesis of the study's interview data has revealed five fundamental issues facing the SSI. Existing literature on these topics suggests that they are among the most important factors influencing the success of student-coordinated programs. These keys to success are: communication, capacity, support, engagement, and knowledge.

4.2.1 Communication

Communication is widely recognized in academic literature as being key to the success of organizations (APA Practice Organization, 2012). While it can be defined as either “something going on between the ‘sender’ and ‘receiver’” or the mechanism by which “the organism [takes] something into account,” communication is “not ... limited to speaking, debating, writing, or listening” but rather is something that “subsumes all these activities and others as well” (Porterfield, 1976).

The importance is partially due to the important information it can provide staff in their efforts to maintain the organization, and partially due to the support it can provide them in addressing issues or improving performance. Bottom-up communication, for example, can provide information about “employee needs, values, perceptions, and opinions,” which can help the organization tailor support to fit their employees' needs (APA Practice Organization, 2012). Top-down communication, on the other hand, can provide information on resources, policies, and expectations, which can help ensure that employees can meet expectations and are supported well enough to do that.

Simply put: organizations function through the collaborative – but individual – action of people, and in order to reach a “coordinated achievement of the desired results”

(whatever they are), it is necessary for there to be “some efficient communication system” (Dăneci-Pătrău, 2011). To be effective at supporting the internal workings of an organization, a communication system must support the “functions of management,” “establish and maintain ... relationships,” “disclose ... opportunities to improve ... performance,” support “motivation process[es],” “contribute to ... fair and effective relationships,” and manage the “influence of ... changes” (Dăneci-Pătrău, 2011). To be effective at supporting the inter-organizational workings of an organization, it must also support the development and management of mutually beneficial inter-organizational relationships (Monge & Poole, 2008). Recommendations on how to create such a communication system include developing a “good working relationship,” clearly defining boundaries, and encouraging team building (Parrish, 2007).

4.2.2 Capacity

When it comes to organizations, capacity refers both to the capacity of the organization as a whole and to the capacity of individual employees. This second point is particularly important where there are bottlenecks.

Capacity matters because it increases effectiveness and allows organizations to establish organizational expectations (Barman & MacIndoe, 2012). While not necessarily always a key determinant of organizational success, capacity is critical in determining how much an organization can do at any given point in time at any given level of performance (Ting, 2009). This occurs in a number of ways: Stronger organizational capabilities support “high[er] levels of performance,” greater organizational capacity allows the organization to “take advantage of opportunities on the horizon,” and new organizational

structures “open up [new] opportunities to align [revenue systems] with value” (Corrigan & McNeill, 2009). For most organizations, however, building capacity is really about (1) improving the “internal weaknesses of the organization by building on its existing strengths,” and (2) preparing to “meet the challenges of a rapidly changing ... environment” (Loza, 2004). In essence: effectiveness and sustainability (Sobeck & Agius, 2007).

Organizational capacity has been tied to the “presence of ... central dimensions of bureaucracy – the division of labor, written rules and records, separation of organizational property and rights from the personal, hierarchy of authority, and predictable career ladders” – but is not necessarily created by the presence of that bureaucracy (Barman & MacIndoe, 2012). Rather, it is created by “blending capabilities, knowledge and resources, and ... human capital” with the “informal and formal processes and procedures followed by individuals” to achieve their goals (Sobeck & Agius, 2007). This can involve a range of activities – strategic planning, capital upgrades, staff training, board development, management training – but must focus on adjusting the elements of the environment to improve staff “knowledge and productivity” (Sobeck & Agius, 2007). A helpful first step is to categorize the work of the organization into a “manageable set of specific elements” that can then be targeted for improvement (Toma, 2010).

4.2.3 Support

Support by an organization for its employees and by its employees for each other is necessary to maintain employee performance and morale.

Due to the variety of support needed in different organizations or by different employees, the only accurate ways to measure level of support are (1) through objective measurement of different support activities or resources, or (2) through subjective measurement of employee stress and sense of support (Curling & Simmons, 2010). Signs of too little support can include “depression, anxiety, burnout,” stress, “unacceptable workload levels,” and “unsafe practices as [employees] try to cope with the ... pressure” (Curling & Simmons, 2010; Ten Alps Creative, 2009).

Such support can be ensured in many ways. An obvious partial solution is to assign support responsibilities to specific employees. These employees can be dedicated support staff (e.g. receptionists, secretaries, accountants, administrators, office managers, human resource managers, etc.), but don't have to be (Choat, 2005; Marland, 2007). Second, the organization can hire more employees to provide support (Ten Alps Creative, 2009). Third, leaders can reinforce a culture of supporting each other, so that whenever someone needs it “there is someone ... at [their] elbow helping [them] along the way” (Connelly, 2005). Fourth, the organization can educate employees about the support network available to them and help them figure out how to effectively use that network (Marland, 2007). Fifth, the supervisors must understand what employees are going through (Harrison, 2008).

4.2.4 Engagement

Employee engagement is the “extent to which employees put discretionary effort into their work” and harness their “selves to their work roles” (Juniper, 2012; Ram & Prabhakar, 2011). As an important factor in competitiveness and profitability, it has been

identified as “one of the top five most important challenges for management” (Romanou, et al., 2010; Ram & Prabhakar, 2011).

Engaged employees offer numerous benefits. First, they are more likely to acquire and retain knowledge and skills (Cullen, 2012). Second, they tend to be innovative, critiquing and improving the status quo (Euchner, 2012; Cullen, 2012). Third, they are often more “loyal, productive, and excited about their work” (Kerfoot, 2008). By encouraging engagement, leaders can build a “workforce that is stimulated, involved, inspired, receptive to change and goes well beyond just being present” (Pater & Lewis, 2012).

Engagement can be measured using indicators such as “energy, involvement, ... efficacy” “commitment[,] and effort,” and can be encouraged by (1) recognizing employees for their strengths, (2) ensuring that leaders are engaged and passionate, (3) balancing challenge and recuperation periods, (4) matching “characteristics or strengths with the work” that needs doing, and (5) creating an “optimistic culture where people feel they have hope and freedom to grow and mature” (Ram & Prabhakar, 2011; Juniper, 2012; Kerfoot, 2008). Signs of engagement issues include “exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy” (Ram & Prabhakar, 2011). Before an organization can address engagement issues, it must identify the reasons leaders and employees disengage, and the limiting views held by leaders and employees (Pater & Lewis, 2012).

4.2.5 Knowledge

Managing available knowledge is an important task for organizations seeking to maintain or increase overall performance (Abel, 2008). This process can be thought of as (1) the acquisition (e.g. surveying, recording, training, orientation, mentoring, professional

development, etc.) and retention of knowledge (e.g. institutional memory, activity documentation, assessment records, etc.) by the organization and its employees, (2) the production (e.g. information acquisition, individual and group learning, knowledge claim formulation, knowledge claim evaluation, etc.) and integration (e.g. broadcasting, searching, retrieving, sharing, teaching, etc.) of knowledge by and within the organization, or (3) the creation of conditions needed for individuals to learn and apply knowledge for the benefit of the organization (Edwards & Kidd, 2003; Coles, 2005; Firestone, 2008; Gerami, 2010).

Factors that can affect knowledge acquisition and retention include organizational culture, trust between individuals and groups, communication between leaders and employees, and information technology use (Edwards & Kidd, 2003; Liebowitz, 2010).

Methods of addressing knowledge acquisition and retention include: ensuring IT and information literacy, managing existing data sources carefully, relating knowledge to goals, sharing knowledge between individuals and groups, focusing on the process, using diverse teaching strategies, retaining existing staff, documenting activities, and conducting regular organizational assessments (Gerami, 2010; Hall & Durward, 2009; Hoffman, Ziebell, Fiore, & Becarra-Fernandez, 2008; Kroeger & Cardy, 2006).

4.3 Findings

4.3.1 Overview

A few things are clear from the results of this study. First, it is clear that the single most prevalent issue facing the SSI is communication. Second, it is clear that in many cases the

issues identified by participants were not have distilled to their most basic categorization. This is why it is important to discuss those results at some length. After analyzing, sorting, and then synthesizing the data, a few trends have emerged. All of the 27 distinct issues used by staff to explain the instances discussed fit into one of five categories: communication issues, capacity issues, support issues, engagement issues, and knowledge issues.

What follows is an analysis of the research data broken down by category and containing definitions, examples, impacts, and potential solutions for each category of issues.

4.3.2 Communication

The network or system of pathways through which messages flow in an organization is that organization's communication structure (Papa, Daniels, & Spiker, 2008). The extent to which and ways that network is cared for, used, and improved bears a direct relationship - according to the results of this study - to the potential for certain problems to arise.

Of the issues identified by participants, communication was by far the most frequently mentioned. This large sample size made it relatively clear that communication issues usually stemmed from either the amount or quality of communication. For example, staff working together on a project might either give each other inaccurate information (e.g. providing incorrect dates, procedures, contacts, etc.) or simply fail to communicate information (e.g. waiting until too late to provide details or ask for assistance). Both of these have the potential to delay or derail a project, and both were reported to have occurred both internally and externally.

Participants reported that there was frequently too little communication between staff and between the SSI and collaborating groups. (While there was occasionally too much communication, that issue appears to have stemmed from how staff were supported and how projects were led.) "Lack of communication," "lack of understanding," and "communication [falling] through" were all phrases used to identify this issue (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012; Allan, 2012; Jessie, 2012). Some of the communication problems were due to workload, some were due to differing expectations and standards, and some were due to differing perspectives. Regardless, it was clear to participants that "everyone [needed to be] on the same page," but that they frequently "weren't on the same page" (Tania, 2012; Cody, Follow-Up Interview, 2012).

There were a few examples provided of too little communication occurring between staff. One of the clearest of these was the advertising of AY12 Earth Week events. During advertising, a lack of communication between staff resulted in at least one event being left off listserv announcements and ending up without any day-of staff support (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012). This was seen as being a case where "there were so many events in one week that something just slipped through the cracks," but it was "a breakdown in communication between [staff]" that allowed it to slip (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012). (A counter example, of a time when there was too much communication, was the AY12 Publicity Campaign. In that case, there were "too many people communicating, [and] the process of spreading work [around made] more work than there actually [was] and [made] that work more difficult" (Allan, 2012).)

The examples of too little communication occurring between the SSI and collaborating groups were more numerous.

One example is the periodic lack of “communication between the SSI and university offices (Allan, 2012). When issues crop up on the SSI’s end, it isn’t uncommon for staff to reach the university offices only “after the fact” because SSI staff must go through a half-dozen people before getting to the right person (Darren, 2012). Some of this stems from “a difference of views [or] perspective[s]” between the SSI and university offices (Darren, 2012). Some of it stems from the complexity of the systems managing the flow of information.

Similarly, when issues crop up on the university’s end, word doesn’t always effectively reach the SSI in a timely enough manner for the issue to be properly addressed. Take as an example the 2012 budgeting process that the SSI, AABC, SIFC, and ASOSU participated in, the end result of which was a reduction in the SSI’s budget. The SIFC made this recommendation based on an unexplained surplus in the SSI’s budget (Hilborn, 2012). While representatives of the SSI acknowledged that “management of the fund was not optimized,” they felt that they had addressed all of the issues that had been raised (including explaining the surplus and their plan for it) at the time of the open hearing (Erik, 2012; Darren, 2012). The “SIFC may not have interpreted [the explanation or plan] as SSI thought,” and asked a set of questions at the open hearing that “the SSI hadn’t been asked in the past” (Erik, 2012). Under the impression that they had already addressed all of the concerns, the SSI “went in blind to the concerns” and “wasn’t as

prepared [as] it [could] have been” (Erik, 2012). In the end, the SIFC and ASOSU “didn’t approve the budget as the SSI had wanted it” (Darren, 2012).

Another example of a lack of communication between the SSI and external parties is Campuses Take Charge. In part because of the large number of people working on the project and the number of parts of the project they were working on, communication needs were much higher than the collaborators were able to maintain (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012). It didn’t help that both SSI staff and the external party members were very busy. At times, after “sending an email or making a call,” “it would take as much as two weeks to hear back” (Jessie, 2012). These challenges can be attributed to the project plan, the lack of clarity on expectations, the reliability of individuals, the quality of communication within each collaborating party, the “dedication of the SSI to outside partnerships,” and the priority placed by the SSI on projects where it is not taking the helm (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012; Jessie, 2012).

Insufficient communication has a very large impact on the success of the SSI and its activities (Darren, 2012). It happens frequently, hurts credibility, undermines activities, and erodes successful collaboration (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012; Cody, Follow-Up Interview, 2012; Allan, 2012; Jessie, 2012).

Potential solutions include:

- Creating a “flow chart with a purchasing process approved and agreed to by [the] SSI and AABC” (Allan, 2012).
- Having a “single person be [the] lead on a single project” (Jessie, 2012).

- Formalize the process for planning projects and clarifying needs and expectations (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Create a protocol to clarify who is involved and how (Jessie, 2012).
- Emphasize “the importance of each project the SSI works on:” to the program, to the university, and to the community (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Emphasize the “importance of email correspondence and following up ... if you don’t hear back” (Cody, Follow-Up Interview, 2012).
- Arrange physical meetings between necessary parties (individual staff or internal/external collaborating groups) on a regular basis (Jessie, 2012; Darren, 2012).
- Have fail-safes to ensure communication is occurring (Jessie, 2012).

Participants also reported issues with the quality of communication. This included mixed or delayed messages from “too many people communicating,” consistency of communication, clarity of communication around wants, needs, goals, and expectations, communication across cultural lines, and ineffective communication of rights, boundaries, and responsibilities (Allan, 2012; Darren, 2012; Tania, 2012; Christian, 2012; Erik, 2012). Some of this was due to differences in focus or priorities, some of it was due to precedents, and some of it was due to overall workload (Christian, 2012).

A few examples of low-quality communication were identified by participants.

First, was the “space conversation [that] started a few years ago” (Erik, 2012). Because of a cultural conflict and lack of respect between the SSI and other parties involved in the conversation, there were meetings – perhaps even deals – directly influencing the SSI

where the SSI was not present and when it came time to follow through on agreements it had made, the SSI did not (Erik, 2012). It wasn't that there wasn't enough communication between parties, so much as it was that the communication was, to say the least, unhelpful.

Second, was the SSI's recent involvement in an event called the HooHaa. The SSI agreed to provide finances, planning, and volunteer support, but had difficulty nailing down what was needed of them (Christian, 2012). When the event planners did take the SSI up on its agreement, they did so in a way that directly – if unintentionally – violated SSI protocol (Christian, 2012). Again, there had been regular and extensive communication, but that communication didn't positively impact the outcome.

Third, was a staff support meeting in late 2011 where progress was made on most of the agenda items, but those items that weren't at the meeting weren't picked up later (Tania, 2012). There was plenty of communication between parties after that meeting, but they had never clarified expectations about such meetings or established responsibilities for addressing those specific types of topics. In essence, the communication skipped over important subjects and there weren't any fail-safes in existence to catch them.

Fourth was the 2011 Energy Civil War. While there was a good amount of communication about the event itself, there wasn't a lot of communication or clarity about “why [the SSI was] doing it in the first place” (Nelson, 2012). The topic was simply overlooked in the rush to make the event successful, which meant that it was only in retrospect that staff realized that “the goals of the SSI and the project didn't align” (Nelson, 2012).

The impact of low-quality communication seems to depend, in part, on the frequency of occurrence and the subject being communicated (Christian, 2012; Allan, 2012).

Participants reported that in some cases it resulted in significantly hindered progress, “spinning ... wheels or just doing pet projects,” and potential reduction in funding, while in other cases it wouldn’t necessarily have that large of an impact (Allan, 2012; Nelson, 2012; Christian, 2012; Darren, 2012). There was general consensus, however, on the need for clear communication of goals and expectations.

Potential solutions include:

- Making it clear what university units can expect from the SSI in terms of “ways of doing things,” “non-traditional ... process[es],” and “response-rates” (Erik, 2012).
- Where possible, limit the number of people information has to pass through (Darren, 2012).
- Be comfortable addressing differences in cultures, views, opinions, goals, or expectations early on (Christian, 2012).
- Expect and support a higher level of firmness or assertiveness from staff (Christian, 2012; Jami, 2012).
- When possible, divide responsibilities by project instead of type of work (Allan, 2012).
- Create more support staff and intern positions (Allan, 2012).
- Make the purchasing process/protocol more automated, streamlined, and predictable (Allan, 2012).

- Make sure “people have a clear[ly] designated position and role and [make sure there is an] agreed upon protocol for handling different situations” (Allan, 2012).
- “Rethink what [current] protocol ... demands of people” (Allan, 2012).
- More “effectively use and prioritize advising time” (Tania, 2012).
- Establish responsibility for “scheduling and planning ... important check-in meetings” between staff, supervisors, and advisors (Tania, 2012).
- Clearly communicate expectations, especially for “regular meetings, check-in[s], debriefs, facilitation, training, [and] hiring” (Tania, 2012).
- Include all stakeholders (i.e. staff, interns, fee-board members, faculty advisors, and student volunteers) in some level of socializing and team building (Tania, 2012).
- Make sure goals are “agreed upon, clear, understood, frequently identified, and easily identifiable” (Nelson, 2012).
- Make sure agreements between the SSI and its vendors and collaborators are clear and enforceable (Allan, 2012).
- Require documentation for each event, project, or campaign of what it is, how it fits with the programs goals, and what it will require in terms of financing, administration, marketing, and staff support (Nelson, 2012).
- Have staff establish “goals for their position” that tie into the “larger goals of the SSI” (Nelson, 2012).
- “Have more planning and visualizing concept conversations with staff” about what the SSI is doing, including the activities of staff, interns, directors, advisors, and fee board members (Nelson, 2012).

- “Post goals of the SSI in the office so that staff can be visually reminded of what they are working towards” (Nelson, 2012).
- “Start staff meetings with the SSI mission statement to remind everyone what they are doing there” (Nelson, 2012).
- Debrief every project, event, and campaign, and the processes supporting those activities (Christian, 2012).
- When there is an issue that has been successfully addressed, communicate with staff “how things should have gone differently” (Christian, 2012).

4.3.3 Capacity

The capacity of an organization and its employees is an important factor in the effectiveness and sustainability of the organization and its activities (Barman & MacIndoe, 2012). In the case of the SSI, capacity was the second most frequently mentioned issue, but was usually mentioned in conjunction with another issue. The two types of capacity issues mentioned by participants were the capacity of staff and the capacity of the program as a whole.

Reports of staff capacity presenting an issue occurred primarily in the form of comments to the effect that staff workload was too high, staff were over-committed, and “it [was] easy to bite off more than you [could] chew” (Eve, 2012). When staff tried to keep an eye on too many projects, some tasks drift into blind spots, or even off the radar. Often, these were things that staff don’t fully support or prioritize because there was insufficient vetting of the activity in the beginning. There was evidence that not everyone agreed on the larger goals within the activity.

One example of staff capacity being a barrier to success was the SSI's involvement in Earth Month. Despite having explicitly committed to carrying out a portion of the planning, marketing, and staffing work, at least one SSI staff member announced to collaborating parties that they were too busy and would not be able to follow through after all (Eve, 2012). While there were certainly other factors at play, the fact that the staff member was so busy that they had to choose between two existing commitments suggests that too much is being asked of staff or staff are committing to too much.

Overcommitment of staff has an impact on the program that is difficult to isolate. The busy nature of the positions can result in staff unhappiness or discontent, and without an "appropriate workload, [staff] can't pursue even agreed-upon goals" (Nelson, 2012).

However, staff capacity is often exacerbated by other issues. If these issues were addressed, it might make over-commitment less likely to happen and less impactful when it does happen.

Potential solutions include:

- Lower staff workload (Nelson, 2012).
- Organize and divide work differently between staff (Nelson, 2012).
- Help staff separate their personal and work lives (Nelson, 2012).

Reports of program capacity presenting an issue occurred primarily in the form of comments to the effect that "it's a big program," it "works above its capacity in general," "the breadth and depth of work going on within the SSI" is unbelievable, and the program's capacity is not the "sum of [its] parts" (Darren, 2012; Tania, 2012; Molly,

2012). Participants suggested that at times the SSI tried to do too much, that perhaps if it tackled a smaller number of programs it might be more successful with each program. To do this, however, it would need to scale down in other ways as well. Given the current capacity issues, it isn't clear "if the strategic plan is realistic" (Tania, 2012). The plan currently asks a lot of the staff – maybe too much, considering the other demands placed on them as students. Participants also suggested that trying to push for change often pitted the organization against established interests, and that it didn't always have the programmatic capacity to reach a beneficial conclusion, often finding itself forced to give up the activity until a later time (Tania, 2012; Molly, 2012).

One example of program capacity being an issue was the recent discontinuation of work on the sustainable cooking class series. After entering into a partnership that would supply the series with space, staffing, supervision, and financial support, the SSI found itself unable to come to agreement with one of the partnering organization on scheduling dates (Tania, 2012). At that point, a new individual was assumed responsibility for the project, and from there, the project began to unravel, with concerns being raised about how the series was going to be executed, the content that would be covered, and the role different parties would play. In the end, it came down to a difference in goals. Unable to come to agreement, the parties decided to discontinue the project. Participants involved in the project noted that the SSI didn't have the capacity to do the series without the partnering organization, the capacity to challenge decisions being made by university units concerning the series, or protract mediation of the issue until a suitable conclusion could be reached (Molly, 2012).

Program capacity has an immense impact on what the program can do, but it is only because the program doesn't always consider that capacity that it impacts success. In the past, this lack of consideration has strongly effected the success of a limited number of programs, making it very difficult for the SSI to ensure the success of its programs, "handle taking on ... partnership[s] with ... outside organization[s]," and focus its influence for the greatest impact (Tania, 2012; Jessie, 2012; Molly, 2012).

Potential solutions include:

- Prioritize time and resources on only the most impactful programs (Molly, 2012).
- Consider sustainability across staff cohorts when setting precedents (Tania, 2012).
- Create a training model to "train directors to do the work they're currently doing" (Tania, 2012).
- Provide staff with more training on "project development ... and goal communication" (Tania, 2012).
- Improve support model between faculty advisors and directors as well as between directors and staff (Tania, 2012).
- When appropriate, encourage staff to collaborate on projects (Molly, 2012).
- Reposition program within the institution to have more direct power or influence (Molly, 2012).
- Brainstorm project ideas as a team (Molly, 2012).
- Find allies willing to "stand up for and defend the SSI's message when running into" issues, allies that are "willing to ruffle feathers and push for change when appropriate" (Molly, 2012).

- Come to consensus as a staff on what message(s) the SSI is willing to stand behind (Molly, 2012).
- Consider focusing on “program and initiatives that ... engage a larger number of students,” faculty, and staff (Tania, 2012).
- Take a “critical look at the work currently occurring and [figure out] how to better address and follow the strategic plan,” including adjusting that plan (Tania, 2012).
- When appropriate, don’t hesitate to fully utilize resources and support available within the SLI and Memorial Union (MU) (Tania, 2012).

4.3.4 Support

Support by an organization for its employees and by its employees for each other is positively correlated with high moral and performance. Without support, projects languish, and employees experience burnout and stress (Ten Alps Creative, 2009). This study found that support was the third most frequently mentioned issue, and was mentioned equally often by itself and in conjunction with another issue. The two types of support issues mentioned by participants were internal support (support by staff, supervisors, and advisors of each other) and external support (support by other university units of the SSI).

Reports of internal support presenting an issue occurred primarily in the form of comments to the effect that staff didn’t support each other as much as they could have, that it wasn’t always clear how staff could rely on each other, that there “wasn’t as much guidance and facilitation” by directors as there should have been, and that the relationship between faculty advisors and staff wasn’t clear (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012; Jami,

2012; Molly, 2012; Tania, 2012). Lack of staff support occurred in a few different ways: staff were sometimes too busy to fully support each other, staff didn't always agree upon or support the same goals or projects (which would lead individuals to feel "a bit like a lone wolf, convincing others on staff that [their] project [was] cool"), and staff weren't always comfortable asking for support because they weren't certain what they could ask for (Molly, 2012). Lack of director support tended to crop up as the director being very busy and having "little time to meet" with staff or actively assist with their work (which resulted in meetings not "occurring as frequently as necessary" and staff feeling that directors never took an active role in supporting them), appearing to not buy in to staff work, or having an ambiguous role or responsibility (participants reported at the end of the year, that they still weren't sure what the director did or what their role was) (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012; Nelson, 2012; Molly, 2012). Lack of advisor support was isolated to "confusion about [the] advising structure" and the associated standards, needs, and processes (Molly, 2012; Tania, 2012).

An example of internal support being an issue occurred when, toward the middle of Winter Term, 2012, a handful of staff struggled to balance work and school, and their coworkers and supervisors were not as helpful as they should have been. One identified cause was that, despite needing "a little extra help," most of them didn't "[speak] out about it" (Jami, 2012). It wasn't clear in participants' reports whether this was because staff didn't think their struggles were important enough, didn't feel other staff had the availability to help, didn't know who to ask for what, felt there might be repercussions, or were compelled to stay silent for another reason. Because everyone in the organization

already operates at capacity, and there is barely enough internal support for it, when individuals are stretched by other factors, that support isn't enough.

The impact of a lack of internal support is pretty substantial. Students within the program “have some of the highest responsibilities and largest leadership opportunities” available to students at OSU (Tania, 2012). Participants noted that being well supported by their coworkers, supervisors, and advisors was one of the most helpful ways to ensure the success of their work and a healthy work environment (Jami, 2012). Without sufficient support, success would be uncertain and stress would be higher.

Potential solutions include:

- Make sure staff can delineate between the roles and responsibilities of all positions within the organization (Molly, 2012).
- Look for opportunities to have outside mentors for individual staff members to give them perspective and help augment internal support (Molly, 2012).
- Have director(s) take an active role in collaborating, brainstorming, and helping plan projects, events, and campaigns (Molly, 2012).
- Make it clear to staff what they can ask of each of the positions (Molly, 2012).
- Arrange for more interaction between coworkers (Jami, 2012).
- Require attendance at certain events and activities, either months in advance or in the actual position descriptions (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Encourage or require collaboration between staff on areas of mutual experience or responsibility (Jami, 2012)

- Use electronic media to create a data management system that collects and organizes data about the program and its activities in one place, ensuring that the activity planning process naturally fits with the system so as to encourage full utilization (Erik, 2012).
- Hold people accountable for their commitments (Erik, 2012).
- Require, at the beginning of the year, a “project description and plan [from each coordinator] that correlates [the project] to the goals and budget” of the program, so that from the beginning everyone knows what is going on (Nelson, 2012).
- Hold regular, structured one-on-one meetings between staff and supervisor to discuss how things are going, plan or debrief activities, address needs or desires, and “focus . . . on how things fit together” (Nelson, 2012).
- Hold regular, structured meetings between faculty advisors and the director (Tania, 2012).
- Find opportunities to increase formal documentation in ways that help staff without overly burdening them (Nelson, 2012).
- Establish a clear advising model (Tania, 2012).
- Clearly identify what needs to be communicated between which individuals within the program (Tania, 2012).
- Provide training to advisors on “what a facilitated advising model looks like and how decisions are made” (Tania, 2012).
- Establish set roles for group projects (Molly, 2012).
- Consider adjusting position descriptions to require partnership between coordinators (Molly, 2012).

- Continue to develop the internship program (Molly, 2012).
- Explore new ways to develop a community of students who volunteer with the SSI (Jami, 2012).

Reports of external support presenting an issue occurred primarily in the form of comments to the effect that “walking around campus, sustainability [doesn’t seem to be] a value people hold,” it isn’t clear “this campus is progressive enough,” there is often “red tape on a bigger scale,” and the units supporting the SSI aren’t always reliable or predictable (Tania, 2012; Jami, 2012; Molly, 2012; Erik, 2012). Generally, the lack of external support was reported as being either a lack of support from the institution in the form of red tape, bureaucracy, and resistance, or a lack of reliable support from the external parties supporting the program. (It was also mentioned that the SSI didn’t always provide the strongest support for external organizations itself (Eve, 2012).)

One example of external support being an issue was the 2012 budgeting process in which the SSI, AABC, SIFC, and ASOSU participated. Participants suggested that while the SSI received support that was less adequate and helpful than it would have liked in its efforts to present an appropriate and accurate budget, they might not have been the only organizations receiving such support (Erik, 2012). On top of that, the programs funded by the SSI’s budget “don’t really fit into the nice boxes . . . the institution often want[s] them to” (Erik, 2012). They take a long time and are very unique for a student-fee funded program (Erik, 2012).

One example of the SSI not providing the strongest support for external organizations was RecycleMania. Each year, collaborating organizations have to go to the SSI and ask

“how much of a commitment [it] is willing to give” (Eve, 2012). This commitment waxes and wanes over the years, and makes it difficult to rely on the SSI or ensure the consistent and continued success of such annual projects.

The impact of a lack of external support is very large. It limits potential success, retards progress towards the SSI’s vision, increases program maintenance, and introduces uncertainty where it shouldn’t be (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012; Erik, 2012).

Potential solutions include:

- Set standards at the highest programmatic level to address the lack of institutional support (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Sit down with members of the administration to figure out “how the SSI fits into the administration’s sustainability goals,” and what support is needed by the SSI in order to fill that role (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Conduct research on how high a priority sustainability issues are to students, faculty, and staff, and how effective the SSI is in addressing sustainability issues (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Improve the advising and support structure directly external to the program (Erik, 2012).
- Encourage regular and proactive communication with the external organizations supporting the program (Darren, 2012).
- Increase the planning timeline for activities to accommodate the realities faced by other university units (Darren, 2012).

- Sit down with external organizations to “figure out how to [better] use each other as resources and work together” (Eve, 2012).
- Create more accountability between the SSI and external organizations (Eve, 2012).

4.3.5 Engagement

Engagement is a very important factor for most student-coordinated programs. In addition to employee engagement, which is an important factor in efficacy and efficiency, these programs also have to deal with student engagement, which can be a deciding factor in program influence, financial resources, and activity success.

Reports of employee engagement presenting an issue occurred primarily in the form of comments to the effect that staff were not always accountable or reliable, were unable to commit enough time to the SSI, were uncommitted to long-term collaborations, and were unreliably committed to goals and activities (Cody, Follow-Up Interview, 2012; Eve, 2012; Nelson, 2012). (At times, staff were balancing as many as four part-time jobs on top of school, personal life, and volunteer positions on campus. While this could reduce their overall capacity to handle SSI work, that reduction is due in part to their engagement elsewhere.)

One example of employee engagement being an issue was the initial residence hall composting trial attempted in Spring Term, 2010. In addition to starting the pilot in the “middle of spring term” and collecting no meaningful data, the staff involved in the project failed to communicate with partners, follow-through on agreements, or consistently support the project over time (Eve, 2012). It was suggested by participants

that while part of this might have been due to a lack of “know-how on how to set up [a] pilot that would be helpful [and] productive,” a significant portion was simply that the staff coordinating the project weren’t engaged enough in the SSI or their project to ensure its success (Eve, 2012).

Another example of employee engagement being an issue is that the group knowledge of the Academic Year 2012 staff didn’t grow throughout the year (Molly, 2012). The SSI and its staff didn’t necessarily lead by example, utilize the “best practices, technologies, and thought-processes,” and weren’t “a beacon of sustainable practices and goals” (Molly, 2012). It was acknowledged that being spot-on in all areas of sustainability might be prohibitive. That said, there was relatively little effort to “really [live] it” (Molly, 2012).

The impact of low employee engagement varies depending on the employee and their responsibilities. Effects include lower rates of success, higher rates of exhaustion and inefficacy, and a higher likelihood of performance and follow-through issues (Eve, 2012; Ram & Prabhakar, 2011).

Potential solutions include:

- Engage staff in a “journey as a staff to learn something or improve something” sustainability related (Molly, 2012).
- “At the start of the year, have project coordinators identify other organizations who work [in their] areas, and have sit-down meetings ... to figure out plans and coordinate ... work” (Eve, 2012).

- Assist staff in better balancing their personal and work lives (Nelson, 2012).
- “Make sure staff know what is expected of them going [into their position] so they can handle what they will be doing” (Nelson, 2012).
- Have more internal social gatherings “so that staff can get to know each other better and have more fun” working together (Nelson, 2012).
- Help staff focus on a small number of really engaging projects (Cody, Follow-Up Interview, 2012).
- Provide proper training and supervision to ensure that staff are engaged where they need to be engaged (Eve, 2012).
- Make sure that everyone agrees on the larger goals for the SSI, and are actively engaged in those goals through their projects (Nelson, 2012).

Reports of student engagement presenting an issue occurred primarily in the form of comments to the effect that students don’t really seem to care, sustainability isn’t a value students hold, “the SSI doesn’t seem to be as popular as other student programs,” a lot of time has been spent recruiting volunteers to little avail (Christian, 2012; Tania, 2012; Erik, 2012). What interest students do have in the SSI often falls short of engagement when it runs into barriers raised by the program itself.

One example of student engagement being an issue was the 2011 Winter Social. At that time, “project coordinators [had] expressed an interest in having volunteer groups” and a substantial portion of the SSI’s work was focused on getting students to volunteer (Christian, 2012). The catch-22 was that “project coordinators didn’t want to start projects until they had student buy-in” and “students didn’t want to buy in until there was

something to buy into” (Christian, 2012). “Retention of volunteers – not just recruitment of volunteers – was low,” and the Winter Social was planned with the intention educating students, sparking interest, and recruiting new volunteers (Christian, 2012). A lot of time and money was put into planning the event – extensive advertising, expensive catering, a costly craft activity – and turnout was bare (Christian, 2012). The interest, involvement, and follow-up that the SSI had hoped to get from the event never materialized. Certainly, a large part of the failure of that event was its conception and planning, but the fact that even after going to such lengths to get people to simply show up attendance was low suggest that students aren’t engaged. The reasons for that disengagement are partially under and partially outside the control of the SSI.

The impact of low student engagement really depends on the goals of the SSI. If, as a student program, engaging students is one of its goals, then having low engagement is inherently problematic. If engaging students isn’t one of its goals, then perhaps low engagement isn’t really that important. It is entirely possible for the SSI to have successful projects, reach goals, and create some level of a culture of sustainability at OSU without a lot of direct student engagement. Realizing its current vision, however, may prove impossible without a greater breadth and depth of student engagement.

Potential solutions include:

- Focus on having awesome, tangible, and “productive [projects] for students to get involved in” (Christian, 2012; Erik, 2012).
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to have ownership in the program and its activities and opportunities to pursue leadership roles (Jami, 2012).

- Explore ways to exert pressure on students to become engaged (Jami, 2012).
- Come up with a plan to address student engagement and volunteering (Christian, 2012).
- Train staff on “communication, team building,” recruitment, and facilitation (Christian, 2012).
- Increase visibility among students of issues facing the SSI (Jami, 2012).
- More effectively and efficiently use media and media coverage to advertise to the student body (Molly, 2012).
- Consider brainstorming solutions with other student programs that are (a) facing the same issue, or (b) have addressed the same issue in the past (Molly, 2012).

4.3.6 Knowledge

Managing available knowledge is important for all organizations, but can be particularly challenging for student-coordinated programs. To simply maintain performance over time, program leaders must actively work to acquire and retain knowledge within the organization.

Reports of knowledge acquisition presenting an issue occurred primarily in the form of comments to the effect that there is “some need for additional training of staff,” personal and organizational limits are poorly understood, and staff are unfamiliar with the landscape in which activities are pursued (Eve, 2012; Erik, 2012). Over the past few years, sizable improvements have been made to the process by which incoming staff acquire knowledge, but there is plenty of room for improvement (Molly, 2012). That said, work is only now beginning on the process by which the program acquires

knowledge about itself, and there are some positions that are still underserved when it comes to training (Tania, 2012). (The director position, for example, is held to a much higher standard, but isn't "provided with the training [it] ... need[s] to really be able [to] and comfortable ... mak[ing] large programmatic decisions and provid[ing] the support and advice" needed by staff (Christian, 2012).)

One example of knowledge acquisition being an issue was the shortcoming of SSI staff in supporting Earth Month 2012. After plans were completed and in place to advertise the month's activities, it began to become clear that SSI staff didn't have "an accurate picture of the amount of work required," and were largely unfamiliar with the standards they would need to meet (Eve, 2012). In the end, there were only a few tasks left uncompleted, but the lack of knowledge was such that staff didn't even know that they were missing such basic knowledge. It wasn't circumstantially important information or skills, but routinely valuable information and standards that they were missing. This suggests that the knowledge should have been acquired at some point during initial training.

The impact of inconsistent and inadequate knowledge acquisition tends to be relatively large. How large it is depends on how critical the missing information is to the success of the SSI, and how consistently that type of information is missing. Without the right training, staff simply fail to acquire the knowledge they need to do their job, let alone do their job well (Nelson, 2012). As much as the responsibility falls on the program and its leaders to adequately prepare new staff for existing conditions and existing staff for new conditions, final responsibility often falls on the staff to make sure they have acquired all the knowledge they need. The challenge lies in figuring how that they know, what they

need to know, and somehow acquiring and conveying that knowledge in a consistent and timely manner.

Potential solutions include:

- Provide staff with training on “the steps needed to execute a project at OSU,” including how to articulate “requests, needs, and timelines,” effectively “motivate people,” and get “faculty and staff to respond faster” (Erik, 2012).
- Provide more frequent check-ins between the faculty advisors and the director(s) (Erik, 2012).
- Provide more transparency on goals, timelines, and progress to help identify when there may be a need for additional information (Erik, 2012).
- Consider establishing a different liaison within facility services to help facilitate project execution (Erik, 2012).
- Train staff on OSU standards concerning: care, design, communication, legal issues, food service, and event planning (Eve, 2012).
- Provide ongoing training and support to help staff improve in their positions and more successfully and appropriately plan projects or activities (Eve, 2012).
- Teach staff “to say ‘no’” (Eve, 2012).
- Provide director with a wider range and depth of formal trainings focused specifically at their position and the unique demands it placed on a person (e.g. advanced facilitation and communication methods, etc.) (Christian, 2012).

- “Make position descriptions match more closely what people will be doing so that they know ... what they will be doing” (e.g. office hours, example week, repeating projects, potential projects, administrative tasks, etc.) (Nelson, 2012).
- Train staff to work with, motivate, and supervise interns and volunteers (Christian, 2012).

Reports of knowledge retention presenting an issue occurred primarily in the form of comments to the effect that there was low institutional memory, little documentation of activities, and a high employee turnover (Molly, 2012; Nelson, 2012). Much of the knowledge being acquired by the SSI and its employees was subsequently being lost.

One example of knowledge retention being an issue was the 2011 Energy Civil War. Despite having been planned twice before, the event had little documentation of what was done or how it was done (Nelson, 2012). Staff struggled to figure out what had been done in the past before finally giving up and starting from scratch (Nelson, 2012). The end result was a poorly conceived event that took up too many resources and wasn't very effective. If knowledge of the event had been retained from previous years, it might have been more successful or might not have been planned in the first place.

The impact of inconsistent and inadequate knowledge retention is very large. When it relates to a previous event, the lack of knowledge forces staff to start from scratch, redoing often-significant amounts of work, and delaying activities unnecessarily (Molly, 2012). When it relates to a specific circumstance or responsibility, the lack of knowledge forces staff to take longer than necessary in reaching the goal or risk fumbling by moving

too quickly (Nelson, 2012). Either way, it has an enormous impact on the on-going efficacy and efficiency of the program and its staff.

Potential solutions include:

- When possible, have outgoing staff train their successors (Jami, 2012).
- Provide training on how each of the positions works together (Jami, 2012).
- Provide clearer direction to staff on what projects to do when they're just starting out (Molly, 2012).
- Require activity documentation (Molly, 2012).
- Prioritize staff retention (Nelson, 2012).
- Provide a more "formal and in-depth transition process and ... packet" (Nelson, 2012).
- Consider grooming volunteers and interns for staff positions (Nelson, 2012).
- Consider hiring for the beginning of spring term (Nelson, 2012).
- Clarify position responsibilities and activities to better match up what staff expect with what they will find themselves doing (Nelson, 2012).
- Take steps to address employee satisfaction, happiness, productivity, and growth opportunities (Nelson, 2012).
- Require staff to participate in ongoing documentation, reflection, and assessment (Nelson, 2012; Molly, 2012).
- Consider implementing two-year terms with a one-year overlap on each end (Jami, 2012).

- Help staff reduce stress and maintain a healthy “work/home life” balance by arranging more regular and frequent office hours (Nelson, 2012).
- Provide regular professional development / career advancement opportunities (e.g. ongoing training of transferrable skills such as “empowerment and community organizing”) (Nelson, 2012).
- Make sure staff know how their work impacts the larger picture (Nelson, 2012).
- Have out-going staff create and incoming staff receive more documentation of “technical and non-technical” information on how to do the job, what resources are available, and “what other projects have been done and how they were done,” including: “handouts, resources, worksheets, [and] materials” (Molly, 2012).

4.4 Limitations

4.4.1 Constraints & Considerations

The methodology for this study was constrained primarily by the need to consider potential participant risk and researcher bias. This constraint alone played a pivotal role in everything from the basic structure of the study to the questions asked. The methodology as constrained secondarily by the time and resources available. Were this a masters thesis with two years to complete and a small research budget, the methodology might have looked at more populations, used a larger number of testing tools, asked a wider range of questions, or conducted a more comprehensive analysis. As it was, the scope and purpose were created to be addressable through a handful of short, in-person interviews with a small population and a basic analysis of the results.

4.4.2 Size

The surveyed population was quite small (fewer than 25 individuals) and only one student-coordinated program was included. This gives the findings a narrow scope of valid application and makes them only secondarily indicative of issues faced by these types of organizations as a whole. In addressing the research question posed, a case-study format was chosen for this study. In the event that further research is done on the topic of organizational development in student-coordinated social enterprises, with a focus on those organizations as a group, it might be appropriate to conduct a larger study with a wider population and more programs.

4.4.3 Risk

Due to the steps taken to reduce participant risk, some helpful information may not have been recorded, while some unhelpful information was. It is unlikely that any egregious issues that would have been raised by a participant were missed due to these steps. That said, when it comes to systemic problems, it isn't necessarily the enormous and unaddressed instances of failure that are the most problematic, but the numerous and ignored. This doesn't make the findings less valuable, it simply means the findings may not be comprehensive.

4.4.4 Bias

Due to the relationship between the student researcher and the subject (Morgan Dumitru is co-director of the SSI), there is potential that responses from participants, questions from the researcher, or interpretation of responses could have been biased. Knowing this, a few steps were taken during the design of the study:

1. All members of the research team were asked to maintain personal information gained through this study a confidential matter unless doing so would pose legal or safety concerns (information gained during this study will not knowingly be used by members of the research team to influence the employment or professional career of participants). At the beginning of each interview, participants were reminded that their participation was purely voluntary, that they could cease involvement at any point in time, that their involvement could be under a pseudonym if desired, and that the information they provided would be strictly confidential even if they chose to use their real name. (No names were used in the final report, the report didn't include information that would allow responses to be traced to a specific participant, only through that report will data gathered be made public, and there will be no subsequent research or reports.) In addition, relevant information held by members of the research team prior to the interview was not made available to participants.
2. The in-depth interview questions were established by Don Neubaum, the principal investigator, and approved by the OSU IRB prior to use. While clarification questions could be asked, they were explicitly intended to only reference information provided by the participant or by the pre-approved prompts.
3. Only information gained through interviews and background research of academic and public sources was used in the study. Furthermore, the interview notes, initial analysis, and subsequent reports were all made available for review by Don Neubaum, the principal investigator, who had no prior relationship with the subject and thus no appreciable bias.

Given the steps taken to address this issue, the research team feels confident that this potential for bias didn't overly limit the findings of this study *for the intended purposes of this study*. If the study were to be used as the basis for a more general or ambitious purpose, the study might need to be repeated with an unbiased research team. As it is, the results should be sufficiently accurate for the intended purpose.

4.4.5 Validity

The validity of this study does not appear to be questionable for two reasons: (1) the scope and purpose of the study accommodate for imperfections in the methodology, and (2) the intended use of the data doesn't overstep the bounds of what might be a valid application, given the limitations mentioned above. So long as these limitations are recognized and accounted for, the study and its findings should be valid.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to diagnose systemic issues facing the SSI and identify (1) their potential causes and impacts, and (2) a handful of solutions that could have the greatest potential to improve the program. To do this, the study collected qualitative data through a series of in-depth interviews with (A) employees of OSU directly responsible for some aspect of the SSI, and (B) members of groups, organizations, and parties that a member of group A identified as having collaborated with the SSI on a project. Potential participants were identified through a review of publicly available information, and were recruited using emails from an official OSU address to their publicly available address providing IRB-approved recruitment content and materials.

Once potential participants agreed to participate, they scheduled an initial interview with a member of the research team. At the very beginning of that interview, consent was obtained in writing. After consent was gained, participants were asked a series of open-ended scripted questions. Interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes.

Participant responses were then compared across interviews and participants to identify: (1) systemic issues facing the SSI, (2) categories into which those issues might fall into, (3) potential prioritization of those categories, and (4) potential solution(s). Once these were identified, a select number of existing pieces of literature on these issues were referenced to verify their validity and expand the potential solutions to those issues.

This process and its findings formed the foundation for this paper.

5.2 Overview of the Results

The findings of the study indicate that there are issues of particular concern surrounding (1) the amount and the quality of communication within the program, (2) the capacity of the program and its staff, (3) the internal and external support enjoyed by the program and its staff, (4) the engagement of students and staff in the program, and (5) the acquisition and retention of knowledge within the program. The collective impact of these issues, in the estimation of study participants and the research team, has been substantial but not insurmountable. If not addressed, however, these issues could retard future progress and jeopardize the program.

It was also found that, despite these issues, the SSI has accomplished a great deal. With dozens of successful projects and events each year that involve thousands of OSU students, the SSI is in many respects a very successful program (Oregon State University Department of Student Leadership and Involvement, 2012). Part of this success stems from the fact that as “a [relatively] big program” (it has ten paid staff and a \$700,000 budget), the SSI does a more than most other student-coordinated programs on campus (Darren, 2012; Tania, 2012). Part of the success, though, is that “the SSI ... is ambitious” and relatively well run (Tania, 2012). Study participants found the breadth and depth of work going on within the SSI unbelievable and reported that it was “pretty amazing that the SSI [operates as well as] it does given that ... [it is] wholly student-run” (Tania, 2012; Jessie, 2012). This general sentiment, of being “impressed by everything the [SSI] has done” was echoed throughout the interviews (Molly, 2012). It was also noted that the “issues [the SSI has] run into are common of many groups” (Molly, 2012).

More important than either of these is the clear indication that student-coordinated programs can be held to a much higher standard of continual assessment and improvement than they have been. A student-coordinated program is an organization – not a club or group – and benefits from being treated as one. With that in mind, it is important to understand the similarities and differences between student-coordinated programs and other organizations. First, the issues identified in this study face many types of organizations. They are unique to student-coordinated programs only in their prevalence, manifestations, and solutions. For example: knowledge acquisition and retention issues could be more common in student-coordinated programs than they are in other organizations, engagement issues may manifest differently for student-coordinated programs than for other organizations, and a communication issue might have one solution when experienced by student-coordinated programs and another solution when experienced by other organizations. Second, ongoing assessment and improvement benefits many types of organizations, but occurs less frequently in student-coordinated programs. The reasons for this aren't quite clear, but it likely bears some relation to the support and decision making structure of these programs. Assessment and improvement might just be more difficult when the program is staffed by a student cohort with a high rate of turnover. That said, without this type of ongoing work, there is no way for the program to figure out how well it is efficient or effective it is, let alone figure out how to improve.

Student-coordinated programs provide some of the best opportunities for future leaders to develop experience. Ongoing assessment and improvement of these programs would not

only improve their ability to provide these opportunities, it would also teach this important skill set to those future leaders.

5.3 Implications and Value

OSU ranks among the top universities in the world when it comes to sustainability efforts, and this study revealed that the SSI still sees considerable room for growth (Earth Day Network, 2012). The implications of this are that all student-coordinated programs likely have potential for improvement, and it is likely that some have room to improve in the same areas as the SSI. The findings of this study could be of great value not only to similarly sized, structured, and focused organizations looking to pursue their own auditing and development efforts, but also to individuals and organizations considering conducting further research on these types of organizations.

CHAPTER 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Applications

The single most important recommended application of this study is this: continually assess and improve student-coordinated programs in the same way you would any other organization or venture.

The findings of this study suggest that there are a large number of potential solutions to the issues facing the SSI. A complete list of the solutions proposed by participants can be found in Appendix E. Solutions identified through the review of existing literature that was conducted can be found throughout Chapter 4.2. A small collection of those solutions can be found below:

- Provide clearer direction to staff on what projects to start with (Molly, 2012).
- Prioritize staff retention (Nelson, 2012).
- Address employee satisfaction, happiness, and growth (Nelson, 2012).
- Require participation in ongoing documentation, reflection, and assessment (Nelson, 2012; Molly, 2012).
- Provide ongoing training and support to help staff improve in their positions and more successfully and appropriately plan projects or activities (Eve, 2012).
- Provide director with a wider range and depth of formal trainings focused specifically on the position (Christian, 2012).
- Address student engagement and volunteering (Christian, 2012).
- Encourage internal socializing and team building (Nelson, 2012).

- Ensure that staff can delineate between the roles and responsibilities of all positions within the organization (Molly, 2012).
- Hold people accountable for their commitments (Erik, 2012).
- Hold regular, structured one-on-one meetings (Nelson, 2012).
- Continue to develop the internship program (Molly, 2012).
- Explore new ways to develop a community of student volunteers (Jami, 2012).
- Prioritize time and resources on only the most impactful programs (Molly, 2012).
- Improve advising and supervision model (Tania, 2012).
- Encourage collaboration on projects (Molly, 2012).
- Consider focusing on “programs and initiatives that ... engage a larger number of students,” faculty, and staff (Tania, 2012).
- Take a “critical look at the work ... occurring and [figure out] how to better address and follow the strategic plan,” including adjusting the plan (Tania, 2012).
- Limit the number of people information has to pass through (Darren, 2012).
- Clearly communicate needs, responsibilities, and expectations (Tania, 2012).
- Ensure that goals are “agreed upon, clear, understood, frequently identified, and easily identifiable” (Nelson, 2012).
- Require documentation for each event, project, or campaign of what it is, how it fits with the programs goals, and what it will require in terms of financing, administration, marketing, and staff support (Nelson, 2012).
- Debrief every project, event, and campaign, and the processes supporting those activities (Christian, 2012).
- Have a “single person be [the] lead on a single project” (Jessie, 2012).

- Formalize the process for planning projects and clarifying needs and expectations (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Create an alumni network and board of advisors to improve knowledge retention.
- Encourage the development of initiatives that deepen the program and provide more opportunities for individuals to grow and develop within the SSI (e.g. volunteer opportunities, internship program, employee advancement, board membership, etc.).

Some of these solutions are unique to student-coordinated programs. As noted in Chapter 6.2, further research would be required to identify which solutions are unique and which aren't.

That there are policies and practices supporting the program that are largely outside the control of the program's leaders need not influence interpretation of this study's results, but should be taken into account by anyone looking to use the results to assist them in reviewing or improving other programs.

6.2 Knowledge Gaps

A number of knowledge gaps still remain, despite the findings of the study. Those gaps include: (1) the prevalence of organizational development issues across student-coordinated programs and similarly size, structured, and focused organizations, (2) potential solutions to the issues faced by student-coordinated programs in particular when struggling with organizational development, (3) solutions that are unique to student-coordinated programs, (4) reliable differences between student-coordinated programs and

other organizations, (5) protocol for regularly conducting audits or assessments of student-coordinated programs, and (6) practices which, if employed, might allow student-coordinated programs to improve their capacity, efficiency, and efficacy without having to face the same issues encountered by the SSI.

6.3 Future Investigations

Future investigation on this topic, focused either on the SSI or on another student-coordinated program should consider the following recommendations in adapting this study:

1. If possible, use a case study without the complications presented to the research team by their focus on the SSI.
2. If possible, plan on at least twelve months to conceive, implement, analyze, and report on the study.
3. Conduct a second round of interviews at least two to four weeks after the first round, to allow time for initial analysis, and consider conducting a third round to wrap up any loose ends found during formal analysis of the data.
4. When conducting follow-up interviews, use a set questions that is based on an initial analysis of the data gathered during the first round of interviews.
5. Redesign the questions and the data collection methods to facilitate more rigorous assessment. (Consider asking a small number of the most important quantitative questions during an interview or to have participants complete a brief survey in addition to the interview.)

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. STUDY PROTOCOL

1. Protocol Title: Internal Audit of the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative

Personnel

2. Principal Investigator: Don Neubaum
3. Student Researcher(s): Morgan Dumitru
4. Co-investigator(s): N/A
5. Study Staff: N/A
6. Investigator Qualifications: Dr. Donald Neubaum is an Associate Dean for Research & Faculty Development in the College of Business at Oregon State University. He received his Ph.D. from Georgia State University in 1998 with a major in Strategic Management and a minor in International Business. His research experience is in strategy, governance systems, ethics, corporate entrepreneurship, family business, and corporate social responsibility. Mr. Morgan Dumitru is a senior in Environmental Economics, Policy, and Management, the Co-Director of the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative, and a mentee of Dr. Neubaum's. From his work managing student staff and volunteers at the SSI, his experience providing financial coaching to at-risk populations through the Financial Clinic, and his CITI training, Morgan has developed and displayed the skills necessary to conduct the interviews and analysis required by this study.
7. Student Training and Oversight: It is Dr. Neubaum's conclusion that Mr. Dumitru has the knowledge and skills needed to conduct the research protocol without further training. However, to ensure the study is properly conducted, human subjects are protected, and IRB related documents are completed in a timely manner, Dr. Neubaum will (a) meet with Mr. Dumitru on a weekly basis to discuss the execution of the study and confirm that everything is being done appropriately (in the event that this is not the case, Dr. Neubaum will put an immediate halt to the study), (b) review all study-related decisions before implementation, and (c) hold Mr. Dumitru responsible for completing and submitting IRB materials in a timely manner (if this is not done, Dr. Neubaum will halt the study and take steps to ensure such materials will be submitted before approving any further activities related to the study). Dr. Neubaum will not be absent for any extended period of time during the study.

Funding

8. Sources of Support for this project (unfunded, pending, or awarded): This study is unfunded.

Description of Research

9. Description of Research: The data gathered during this research will be used to write an Honors College thesis identifying how the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative might change its policies and practices to more effectively and efficiently fulfill its mission. The primary applications of the research are (a) within the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative, and (b) within similarly sized, structured, and focused organizations. The student researcher conducting the study is currently an outgoing Co-Director of the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative. The final product, a bound thesis, will be kept on-hand by the University Honors College as a physical reference and made available online as a digital reference. Because the final product is available to the public, it will also be accessible to the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative. However, no information beyond that made public will be shared with the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative. (This will include a summary and analysis of the results, but will not include raw or aggregate data.) Due to the nature of the research project, there is no specific hypothesis being tested.
10. Background Justification: Despite receiving significant amounts of student fee funding, official endorsement by important parties, and hours upon hours of paid and unpaid labor, student-run programs tend to be underserved when it comes to support for organizational development. The reasons aren't quite clear, but they likely due to the typical structure, focus, and turnover seen in these organizations. Because organizational development is not heavily supported, growing pains tend to be deep and persistent. An example of an organization currently going through this phase is the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI). Since its creation five years ago, the program has seen a roughly 1,200% increase in paid staff and 600% increase in funding. While successful by most measurements, the organization has displayed symptoms of systemic issues. This research hopes to identify and address those issues. Doing so will benefit (a) the SSI by providing an analysis of the issues it faces and a possible roadmap for how to address those issues, (b) similarly sized, structured, and focused organizations by providing a collection of issues they might face as well and ways of addressing those issues if it is clear that they are occurring, and (c) the student researcher by providing an opportunity to gain experience researching and planning organizational development needs within a young, small, social enterprise. As of yet, little research has been done – or is being done – on this aspect of these organizations. While this project won't completely fill that gap, it will provide a stepping-stone for future research. Eventually, with enough research, it might be possible for young, student-run social enterprises to improve their capacity, efficacy, and efficiency without having to face the same issues again and again
11. Multi-center Study: N/A
12. External Research or Recruitment Site(s): N/A
13. Subject Population

- a. Participant Characteristics: Belong at least one of two unique populations: OSU students and employees or members of a group that has collaborated with the SSI.
- b. Total Target Enrollment: 25
- c. Vulnerable Population(s): None.
- d. Inclusion Criteria: Participants must be (A) employees of OSU directly responsible for some aspect of the SSI, or (B) members of a group, organization, or party that a member of group A identified as having collaborated with the SSI on a project or event and been a potential witness to an issue with the SSI.
- e. Exclusion Criteria: Potential participants who self-identify on the consent form as being of a vulnerable population, being under the age of 18, being a non-English speaker, or having an insurmountable bias will not be included in the study. It will be left up to potential participants to decide for themselves whether they believe they fall into one of those categories.
- f. Chronological Sequence of Events Involving Human Participants:
 - i. Potential participants meeting inclusion criteria A will be identified.
 - ii. Potential participants meeting inclusion criteria A will be recruited using an email with IRB-approved content and materials. Because of the role of the student researcher in the SSI, there is a chance that potential participants will decide to not participate in the study. It is the goal of the study team to ensure that involvement and information from a potential participant in the study will not be knowingly used by members of the research team to influence the employment or professional career of participants in any way, positive or negative. To this end, recruitment materials emphasize that involvement in the study is completely optional and that participants may choose at any time to withhold information or withdraw from the study completely.
 - iii. Potential participants meeting inclusion criteria A will be provided with a consent form detailing the study, their role in the study, and the plans for utilizing and disseminating the data collected. (Including how they can obtain a copy of the final report.) At this point, potential participants will be provided with a link to a secure online poll to schedule an interview. Once they have indicated their availability for an interview, they will be contacted to verify a specific time and location for the interview. To ensure that potential participants are able to discuss the study with a researcher before consenting to be a participant, researchers will schedule the interview before receiving

the consent form. At the beginning of the first interview, the researcher will review the consent form with the participant, answer any questions they have, and then have the potential participant sign the form. Once a consent form has been signed, the individual will be considered a participant in the study.

- iv. Participants meeting inclusion criteria A will participate in one-on-one, one-hour in-depth, semi-structured interview with a researcher. After this interview, they will be asked verbally if they would like to participate in a second one-hour in-depth follow-up interview. If they choose to participate in the second interview, they will schedule an interview with a researcher to do so. If they choose not to participate, they will be thanked for their participation and provided with information reminding them (a) how the data will be used, and (b) how they can obtain a copy of the final report.
- v. Potential participants meeting inclusion criteria B will be identified using publicly available contact information on members of groups and organizations mentioned in interviews with participants meeting inclusion criteria A. These potential participants will be recruited using an email with IRB-approved content and materials.
- vi. Potential participants meeting inclusion criteria B will be provided with a consent form detailing the study, their role in the study, and the plans for utilizing and disseminating the data collected. (Including how they can obtain a copy of the final report.) At this point, potential participants will be provided with a link to a secure online poll to schedule an interview. Once they have indicated their availability for an interview, they will be contacted to verify a specific time and location for the interview. To ensure that potential participants are able to discuss the study with a researcher before consenting to be a participant, researchers will schedule the interview before receiving the consent form. At the beginning of the first interview, the researcher will review the consent form with the participant, answer any questions they have, and then have the potential participant sign the form. Once a consent form has been signed, the individual will be considered a participant in the study.
- vii. Participants meeting inclusion criteria B will participate in one-on-one, one-hour in-depth, semi-structured interview with a researcher. After this interview, they will be thanked for their participation and provided with information reminding them (a) how the data will be used, and (b) how they can obtain a copy of the final report.
- g. Recruitment: Recruitment materials are not included in the protocol document, but are included at a different location in this application.

14. Consent Process

- a. Consent will be obtained in writing at the beginning of the first interview using the “Consent Form” included in this application. This form details the study, the role of participants in the study, and the plans for utilizing and disseminating the data collected. Completion of the “Consent Form” requires confirmation that the study has been explained to them, all their questions have been answered, and they agree to take part in the study. To ensure that potential participants are able to discuss the study with a researcher before consenting to be a participant, the first interview will start with the researcher reviewing the consent form with the participant, answering any questions they have, and then having the potential participant sign the form.
- b. Written hardcopy consent forms will be collected in person by the researcher at the beginning of the first interview with a participant. This will take place at the location selected by the potential participant during the secure online poll to schedule the interview. The interview locations are intended to respect participants’ privacy, and should be able to protect the privacy of potential participants prior to the signing of a consent form, as well. The method of collection was recommended by Candi Loeb of IRB, and should meet any concerns about respecting potential participant’s privacy.
- c. Researchers will provide potential participants with a digital copy of the consent form before scheduling an interview, review the consent form in person with potential participants before the first interview, and answer any questions or concerns participants may have in person before the first interview. These steps should be sufficient to ensure that participants understand the study and their role in it.
- d. Non-English speakers and adult subjects lacking the capacity to consent will be excluded from the study due to privacy, confidentiality, and logistical concerns.
- e. Potential subjects under the age of 18 will be excluded from the study due to privacy, confidentiality, and logistical concerns.

15. Assent Process: N/A

16. Eligibility Screening: Potential participants will be screened in one of two ways:

- a. Potential participants meeting inclusion criteria A will be pre-screened using publicly available information. After they have been pre-screened, they will be contacted with recruitment information. If they choose to participate in the study, they will then be asked to complete the included “Consent Form.” This form requires that the potential participant self-screen as not being under the age of 18 or having a bias which they believe would be insurmountable. (The

other exclusion criteria, it was suggested by Candi Loeb of IRB, would not be necessary to include because the chance of encountering them was so low in this specific study. Given that the consent form must be signed with the knowledge of a research team member, there will be opportunities to address the issue if such a potential participant does express interest.) If they respond to the recruitment information and submit a completed consent form, they will be considered to have passed the appropriate screenings. The information gathered will be retained by the researchers but will not be included in the study as it is of no use and doing so would be without the consent of the individual.

- b. Potential participants meeting inclusion criteria B will be identified using publicly-available information on groups identified during interviews with participants meeting inclusion criteria A. This pre-screening, of having a participant mention a group involved in an incident, is unavoidable because in order to describe in detail a time when something did not go as well as it could have, the participant will need to provide information on the parties involved. (For the purpose of privacy, names of individuals will not be collected during interviews, but will be sourced from publicly available information on the group.) Due to the topic being studied and the steps in place to protect participants and potential participants, this method of pre-screening shouldn't appreciably increase the risk faced by those involved. Once potential participants have gone through this pre-screening, they will be contacted with recruitment materials. If they respond to the recruitment materials, they will be asked to complete the included "Consent Form." This form requires that the potential participant self-screen as not being under the age of consent or having a bias which they believe would be insurmountable. (See earlier note about the other exclusion criteria.) If they respond to the recruitment information and submit a consent form, they will be considered to have passed the appropriate screenings. If they did not respond to the recruitment information or responded but did not successfully submit a consent form, no private information will have been gathered. The information gathered will be retained by the researchers but will not be included in the study as it is of no use and doing so would be without the consent of the individual.

17. Methods and Procedures

- a. Procedures
 - i. A review of publicly available information will be conducted to identify potential participants who meet inclusion criteria A: employees of OSU directly responsible for some aspect of the SSI.
 - ii. These potential participants will be sent an email from an official OSU address to their publicly available address providing IRB-approved recruitment content and materials.

- iii. Participants who respond to the recruiting email will be sent a follow-up email with a consent form and a link to a private online poll where they can indicate their availability (i.e. time and location) for an interview. (Times will range from 9 AM to 9 PM, and locations will range from public to private and on-campus to off-campus.) Their submissions to this poll will be visible only to the research team. Once they have indicated their availability for an interview, they will be contacted to verify a specific time and location for the interview. To ensure that potential participants are able to discuss the study with a researcher before consenting to be a participant, researchers will schedule the interview before receiving the consent form. At the beginning of the first interview, the researcher will review the consent form with the participant, answer any questions they have, and then have the potential participant sign the form. Once a consent form has been signed, the individual will be considered to be enrolled in the study.
- iv. During the interview, participants will be asked a series of open-ended scripted questions. Each question will be followed by at least one clarifying non-scripted question. If they indicated on their consent form that an audio recording could be made, their responses will be recorded digitally to a .mp3 file-format. Either way, the interviewer will take notes with either a laptop or a pen and paper during the course of the interview to ensure a record is being kept and facilitate analysis of any audio recordings.
- v. Once either 55 minutes has passed or all questions have been answered, the interview will be complete, and the participant will be verbally asked if they would like to participate in a second one-hour in-depth follow-up interview. If they choose to participate in the second interview, they will be sent a follow-up email with a link to a private online poll where they can indicate their availability (i.e. time and location) for that interview. (Times will range from 9 AM to 9 PM, and locations will range from public to private and on-campus to off-campus.) Once they have indicated their availability, they will be contacted to verify a specific time and location. If they choose not to participate, they will be verbally thanked for their participation and provided with written information reminding them (a) how the data will be used, and (b) how they can obtain a copy of the final report.
- vi. During the second interview, participants will be asked a different series of open-ended scripted questions designed to get them to elaborate on and explore the answers they provided during the first interview. Each question will be followed by at least one clarifying non-scripted question. If they indicated on their consent form that an audio recording could be made, their responses will be recorded

digitally to a .mp3 file-format. Either way, the interviewer will take notes with either a laptop or a pen and paper during the course of the interview to ensure a record is being kept and facilitate analysis of any audio recordings. Once either 55 minutes has passed or all questions have been answered, the interview will be complete, and the participant will be verbally thanked for their participation and provided with written information reminding them (a) how the data will be used, and (b) how they can obtain a copy of the final report.

- vii. Following each interview, data gathered during the interview will be reviewed for mention of groups or organizations whose members might meet inclusion criteria B: members of a group, organization, or party that a participant meeting inclusion criteria A identified as having collaborated with the SSI on a project or event and been a potential witness to an issue with the SSI.
- viii. These potential participants will be sent an email from an official OSU address to their publicly available addresses, providing IRB-approved recruitment content and materials.
- ix. Participants who respond to the recruiting email will be sent a follow-up email with a consent form and a link to a private online poll where they can indicate their availability (i.e. time and location) for an interview. (Times will range from 9 AM to 9 PM, and locations will range from public to private and on-campus to off-campus.) Once a signed copy of their consent form has been received and they have indicated their availability for an interview, they will be contacted to verify a specific time and location for the interview.
- x. During the interview, participants will be asked a series of open-ended scripted questions. Each question will be followed by at least one clarifying non-scripted question. If they indicated on their consent form that an audio recording could be made, their responses will be recorded digitally to a .mp3 file-format. Either way, the interviewer will take notes with either a laptop or a pen and paper during the course of the interview to ensure a record is being kept and facilitate analysis of any audio recordings.
- xi. Once either 55 minutes has passed or all questions have been answered, the interview will be complete, and the participant will be verbally thanked for their participation and provided with written information reminding them (a) how the data will be used, and (b) how they can obtain a copy of the final report.

b. Analysis and Interpretation

- i. Recordings, hand-written notes, and typed notes from the interviews will be collected and, if necessary, converted to a digital file format.
 - ii. The responses in these documents will then be compared across interviews and participants to identify: (1) systemic issues facing the SSI, (2) categories that those issues might fall into, (3) potential prioritization of those categories, and (4) potential solution.
 - iii. Once these have been identified, a select number of existing pieces of literature on these issues will be referenced to verify their validity and expand the potential solutions to those issues.
 - iv. Using this information and the analysis of the study data, a report will then be drawn up.
- c. Estimated time commitment for a participant's involvement: At 60 minutes per interview and fifteen minutes per pre-interview scheduling and paperwork engagement, with a minimum of one and maximum of two interviews possible per participant, the estimated time commitment for a participant's involvement is 75 to 150 minutes.

18. Compensation: No compensation will be given to participants

19. Cost: The only costs associated with the study are: (1) the time and energy of the researchers and participants, (2) the printing costs associated with the paperwork and final report, and (3) any rental fees on equipment necessary to collect data.

20. Drugs or Biologics: None.

21. Dietary Supplements: None.

22. Medical Devices: None.

23. Radiation: None.

24. Biological Samples: None.

25. Anonymity or Confidentiality

- a. Data will be stored in .docx, .xlsx, .rtf, .pdf, and .mp3 files on a password-protected laptop with an encrypted, online, password-protected backup to a secure storage facility off-site. This data will be retained until at least December 31st, 2015. Due to the nature of the study and the data being collected, data will not be de-identified. Doing so would greatly diminish the value of the data, and likely make it not worth storage. However, the data will

not be used for any research besides the final report of this study, and that report will not include any identifiers. Steps have been taken to make this clear to participants.

- b. The only direct identifiers will be the names of the individuals as recorded on their consent form. (If agreed to by participants, names may also be recorded in study notes and audio recordings.) These identifiers will be used because using any other identifier would be either (a) more intrusive, or (b) more disruptive to the study given the small sample size, the limited personal data collected, and the structure of the study.
 - c. If the participant indicates on their consent form that they wish to be on record under a pseudonym or participation code, all further communication and documentation of their participation in the study will use that identifier. Participation of a given individual in the study is information that will only be made publicly available if indicated on the consent form.
 - d. The only link between pseudonym and direct identifier will be contained in the consent form, which will be retained as a .pdf on a password-protected laptop with an encrypted, online, password-protected backup to a secure storage facility off-site for as long as the study data is retained. This is necessary documentation of the appropriate execution of the study, and will only inform (a) the involvement of the potential participant in the study, and (b) the records kept and made public of that individual's participation in the study.
 - e. The only identifiers provided to anyone outside the research team will be those consented to by the participant on the consent form. If a pseudonym or participation code is used instead of a direct identifier, the link between them will not be provided to anyone outside the research team.
 - f. No copies of the consent form or other research study information will be retained in the subjects' records.
 - g. Information collected during the course of this study will not be used for any future studies, nor will it be made available to anyone outside the research team except through the production of the final report.
26. Risks: The risks associated with participation in this study can best be classified by the inclusion criteria mentioned previously.
- a. Participants meeting inclusion criteria A are at risk of having their employment and professional career negatively impacted by the information they might reveal. This risk is being addressed by providing the option of response coding and confidentiality.

- b. Participants meeting inclusion criteria B are at risk of social, political, or professional blowback from members of the SSI for the information they might reveal. This risk is being addressed by providing the option of response coding and confidentiality.

In addition, the following risks are shared by all potential participants:

- Breach of Confidentiality: There is a risk that we could accidentally disclose information that identifies you.
- Internet/Email: The security of information sent via email or collected online cannot be guaranteed. Information sent via email or collected online can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses.

If researcher is made aware of an adverse event or unanticipated problem, they will (1) contact the principal investigator immediately for instruction, and (2) contact the participant and provide them with the option to have their information expunged from the record of the study. In anticipation of the possibility that an adverse event or unanticipated problem will arise without the knowledge of a researcher, participants will be instructed to contact first the principal investigator and then the Internal Review Board for resolution of the event or problem.

Note that no deception is being used during this study, that all risks are addressed in the consent form, and that the only anticipated risks are those taken knowingly and willingly by participants.

27. Benefits: The primary benefit to individual participants is the knowledge that they are contributing to the improvement of the SSI and the creation of research on issues faced by young, student-run, student-fee funded social enterprises. The benefits to society are the creation of that research and the improved ability of the SSI to pursue its vision for student efforts at OSU to create a culture of sustainability and empower a new generation of leaders.
28. Assessment of Risk:Benefit ratio: Given the content and structure of this study and the ability of participants to choose their level of involvement, confidentiality, and identifier coding, it is the opinion of the research team that the potential benefits of this study far outweigh the potential risks to participants who may choose to participate.

APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Internal Audit of the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative
Principal Investigator: Dr. Donald Neubaum
Student Researcher: Morgan Dumitru
Sponsor: OSU University Honors College and OSU College of Business
Version Date: April 6, 2012

1. What is the purpose of this form?

This form contains information you will need to help you decide whether to be in this study or not. Please read the form carefully and ask the study team members questions about anything that is not clear.

2. Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to diagnose systemic issues facing the Oregon State University (OSU) Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI) and identify a handful of solutions with the greatest potential to improve the program. The data gathered during this study will be used in an Honors College thesis. This report is publicly available, but will not be directly reported to any third parties (including the SSI). (Note: no identifiers will be used in the final report.)

Up to 25 individuals may be invited to take part in this study.

3. Why am I being invited to take part in this study?

You are being invited to take part in this study because you are at least 18 years old and are either: an employee of Oregon State University (OSU) directly responsible for some aspect of the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI) OR a member of a group that has collaborated with SSI

If you fit into these categories but believe that you have a bias that would not allow you to provide an impartial interview about SSI you should not participate in this study.

4. What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in up to two interviews lasting approximately one hour. In the first interview we will talk about your experiences with SSI. During the second interview you will be asked to provide additional clarification about your responses during the first interview but you can decide not to participate in a second interview.

Recordings: Audio recordings may be made during interviews. This is done to verify the accuracy of notes. If you would prefer audio recordings not be made, please indicate your choice below.

5. What are the risks and possible discomforts of this study?

The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the being in the study include:

Professional Risk: There is a risk that information you might reveal might impact your employment and professional career. This risk is being minimized in three ways: (1) we will provide you with the option to maintain your involvement in the study confidential and be on the record of the study under a pseudonym or participant code of your choosing, (2) we will not ask you to share any knowledge that you are uncomfortable sharing, and (3) we have asked all members of the research team to maintain personal information gained through this study a confidential matter unless doing so would pose legal or safety concerns (information gained during this study will not knowingly be used by members of the research team to influence the employment or professional career of participants).

Breach of Confidentiality: There is a risk that we could accidentally disclose information that identifies you. This risk is being minimized by: (1) providing opportunities for response coding and confidentiality, (2) providing secure storage of research data, and (3) using identifiers only on internal documents.

Internet/Email: The security of information sent via email or collected online cannot be guaranteed. Information sent via email or collected online can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses. This risk is being minimized by using official OSU addresses for study correspondence.

6. What are the benefits of this study?

We do not know if you will directly benefit from being in this study, but by participating, you will contribute to the creation of research on issues faced by young, student-run, student-fee funded social enterprises.

7. Will I be paid for being in this study?

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

8. Does any member of the study have a conflicting interest?

The student researcher working on this study, as an outgoing Co-Director of the SSI, has a potential conflict of interest. Findings from this study will be used for the student researcher's thesis and will not be directly reported back to SSI. This study has been designed in part to reduce the impact of this interest.

If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact the Institutional Review Board Office at (541) 737-8008.

9. Who will see the information I give?

The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Research records (including audio recordings) will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Federal regulatory agencies and the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. Some of these records could contain information that personally identifies you.

When the results of this project are published, your identity will not be made public.

To help ensure confidentiality, three steps are being taken:

Records will be kept on a password-protected computer with an encrypted, password-protected backup to a secure storage facility off-site until at least December 31st, 2015. Due to the nature of the data, these records cannot be completely de-identified.

The only identifiers will be the information you provide on your consent form, and the name, pseudonym, or participation code you choose to have associated with your study records. If you indicate below that you wish to be on record under a pseudonym or participation code, all further documentation of your participation in the study will use that identifier.

The published report will be available in print through the University Honors College and online through the OSU Library System.

10. What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. If you choose to withdraw from this project before it ends, the researchers may keep information collected about you and this information may be included in study reports.

If at any time you are not comfortable answering a question, simply say so and the interviewer will move to the next question. You do not have to share any knowledge that you are not comfortable sharing.

11. Who do I contact if I have questions?

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Dr. Donald Neubaum at (541) 737-6036 or by email at don.neubaum@bus.oregonstate.edu.

If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu.

12. What does my signature on this consent form mean?

Your signature indicates that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Participant's Name (printed): _____

(Signature of Participant)

(Date)

(Signature of Person Obtaining Consent)

(Date)

Please initial below if appropriate.

_____ I do not agree to be audio recorded.
Initials

_____ I do not agree to have my name associated with my involvement in this study. Instead, I
Initials wish to have the following identifier used for my involvement in this study: _____
_____.

APPENDIX C. RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

A. For recruiting potential participants who meet inclusion criteria A.

Hello,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a short-term study on the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI) being conducted for an honors thesis. The goal of this study is to diagnose systemic issues facing the SSI and identify solutions with the greatest promise. We feel that you, as an employee of OSU responsible for some aspect of the SSI, you will have insights that can contribute greatly to our understanding of the issues facing the SSI and the potential solutions to those issues.

While successful by most measurements, the organization has displayed some symptoms indicating that there might be systemic issues to address. This isn't uncommon for this type of organization. Despite receiving significant amounts of student fee funding, official endorsement by important parties, and hours upon hours of paid and unpaid labor, student-run programs such as the SSI tend to be underserved when it comes to support for organizational development. This isn't due to neglect necessarily, and may be caused by the structure, focus, and turnover seen in these organizations. All the same, there may be issues that need addressing. This research hopes to identify and address those issues within the case study of the SSI.

The data gathered during this study will be used in an Honors College thesis. This report is publicly available, but will not be directly reported to any third parties (including the SSI). When the results of this project are published, your identity will not be made public.

The research team recognizes that there is some amount of risk associated with participation in this study. This risk is made more prominent by the fact that the student researcher conducting interviews is currently an outgoing Co-Director of the SSI. We are doing everything we can to minimize that risk, but want you to be aware of it in any case. To that end, please remember that participation in this study is optional. If you do participate, you will not be asked to share any knowledge you are uncomfortable sharing. Furthermore, non-participation will in no way be held against you. (Note: If you are not at least 18 years old, or if you believe that you have a bias that would not allow you to provide an impartial interview about the SSI, you should not participate in this study.)

Should you choose to participate, you will be involved in at least one, and as many as two, 60-minute interviews. As an unfunded study, we cannot offer you compensation for these interviews, but you can walk away with the knowledge that you have contributed to the creation of research on issues faced by young, student-run, student-fee funded social enterprises. If you are interested in being involved or would like to know more, please contact us.

With sincere thanks, **Morgan Dumitru**

Study #5288: Internal Audit of the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative
Primary Investigator: Dr. Donald Neubaum (don.neubaum@bus.oregonstate.edu)
Student Researcher: Morgan Dumitru (dumitrum@onid.orst.edu)

B. For recruiting potential participants who meet inclusion criteria B.

Hello,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a short-term study on the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI) being conducted for an honors thesis. The goal of this study is to diagnose systemic issues facing the SSI and identify a handful of solutions with the greatest potential to improve the program. We believe that you, as a member of a group, organization, or party that has collaborated with the SSI, you might have insights that could contribute greatly to our understanding of this topic. More specifically, information we've collected indicates that you were involved in a case where a collaboration between your organization and the SSI did not go as well as it could have, or was not handled as well as it could have been. While we are primarily interested on your perspective of this case, we are also interested in any other information you might be willing to provide.

While relatively successful by most measurements, the SSI has displayed some symptoms indicating that there might be systemic issues to address. This isn't uncommon for this type of program. Despite receiving significant amounts of student fee funding, official endorsement by important parties, and hours upon hours of paid and unpaid labor, student-run programs such as the SSI tend to be undeserved when it comes to support for organizational development. This isn't due to neglect necessarily, and may be caused by the structure, focus, and turnover seen in these organizations. All the same, there may be issues that need addressing. This research hopes to identify and address those issues within the case study of the SSI.

The data gathered during this study will be used in an Honors College thesis. This report is publicly available, but will not be directly reported to any third parties (including the SSI). When the results of this project are published, your identity will not be made public.

The research team recognizes that there is some amount of risk associated with participation in this study. This risk is made more prominent by the fact that the student researcher conducting interviews is currently an outgoing Co-Director of the SSI. We are doing everything we can to minimize that risk, but want you to be aware of it in any case. To that end, please remember that participation in this study is optional. If you do participate, you will not be asked to share any knowledge you are uncomfortable sharing. Furthermore, non-participation will in no way be held against you. (Note: If you are not at least 18 years old, or if you believe that you have a bias that would not allow you to provide an impartial interview about the SSI, you should not participate in this study.)

Should you choose to participate, you will be involved in a single 60-minute interview. As an unfunded study, we cannot offer you compensation for these interviews, but you can walk away with the knowledge that you have contributed to the creation of research on issues faced by young, student-run, student-fee funded social enterprises.

If you are interested in being involved, or would like to know more, please contact us.

With sincere thanks, **Morgan Dumitru**

Study #5288: Internal Audit of the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative
Primary Investigator: Dr. Donald Neubaum (don.neubaum@bus.oregonstate.edu)
Student Researcher: Morgan Dumitru (dumitrum@onid.orst.edu)

APPENDIX D. TESTING MATERIALS

Introductory Questions

Ask during every interview.

1. Can you please confirm the name, pseudonym, or participation code you indicated on your consent form as the proper method of identifying you throughout this study?
2. Is this space comfortable for you?

Initial A

Ask during first interview with participants meeting inclusion criteria A.

1. Can you think of a recent example of a time where something did not go as well as it could have, or was not handled as well as it could have been?
 - a. What happened? What details are important to the understanding the problem?
 - b. Where in the process did the problem occur?
 - c. What other parties, groups, or organizations were involved, if any?
 - d. What was the nature of the problem? How might it be classified?
 - e. How important to the program was, or is, this issue or class of issues?
 - f. In your opinion, was this a one-time issue or a systemic issue?
 - g. Do you have any thoughts on how this issue, or class if issues, might be addressed?
2. Can you think of a not-so-recent example of a time where something did not go as well as it could have, or was not handled as well as it could have been?
 - a. What happened? What details are important to the understanding the problem?
 - b. Where in the process did the problem occur?
 - c. What other parties, groups, or organizations were involved, if any?

- d. What was the nature of the problem? How might it be classified?
 - e. How important to the program was, or is, this issue or class of issues?
 - f. In your opinion, was this a one-time issue or a systemic issue?
 - g. Do you have any thoughts on how this issue, or class if issues, might be addressed?
3. Can you think of other examples of a time where something did not go as well as it could have, or was not handled as well as it could have been?
- a. What happened? What details are important to the understanding the problem?
 - b. Where in the process did the problem occur?
 - c. What other parties, groups, or organizations were involved, if any?
 - d. What was the nature of the problem? How might it be classified?
 - e. How important to the program was, or is, this issue or class of issues?
 - f. In your opinion, was this a one-time issue or a systemic issue?
 - g. Do you have any thoughts on how this issue, or class if issues, might be addressed?
4. Is there anything else you think I should know?
5. Would you like to do a second interview?

Initial B

Ask during first interview with participants meeting inclusion criteria B.

1. Information we've collected indicates that you were involved in a case where something being collaborated on between your organization and the SSI did not go as well as it could have, or was not handled as well as it could have been. What can you tell us about that case from your perspective?
 - a. What happened? What details are important to the understanding the problem?
 - b. Where in the process did the problem occur?

- c. What was the nature of the problem? How might it be classified?
 - d. How important was, or is, this issue or class of issues?
 - e. How could things have been done differently?
 - f. How did it influence your perception of the SSI or your future involvement with the program?
 - g. In your opinion, was this a one-time issue or a systemic issue?
 - h. Do you have any thoughts on how this issue, or class if issues, might be addressed or avoided in the future?
2. Can you think of any other examples of times where collaboration between your organization and the SSI did not go as well as it could have, or spawned an issue that was not handled as well as it could have been?
- a. What happened? What details are important to the understanding the problem?
 - b. Where in the process did the problem occur?
 - c. What other parties, groups, or organizations were involved, if any?
 - d. What was the nature of the problem? How might it be classified?
 - e. How important was, or is, this issue or class of issues?
 - f. In your opinion, was this a one-time issue or a systemic issue?
 - g. Do you have any thoughts on how this issue, or class if issues, might be addressed or avoided in the future?
3. Is there anything else you think I should know?

Follow-Up A

Ask during first interview with participants meeting inclusion criteria A.)

1. So far, we've discussed a number of different cases. Can you summarize for me the following for each of those cases?
 - a. What happened?
 - b. Where in the process did the problem occur?

- c. What was the nature or classification of the problem?
 - d. How important to the program was, or is, this issue or class of issues?
 - e. In your opinion, was this a one-time issue or a systemic issue?
2. Information we've gathered indicates that another instance – one that we did not discuss during our last interview – also occurred. Can you tell me what happened there from your perspective?
- f. What happened? What details are important to the understanding the problem?
 - g. Where in the process did the problem occur?
 - h. What other parties, groups, or organizations were involved, if any?
 - i. What was the nature of the problem? How might it be classified?
 - j. How important to the program was, or is, this issue or class of issues?
 - k. Compared to the other instances we've discussed, how would you rank this instance? Why do you think this might not have come up during our last interview?
 - l. In your opinion, was this a one-time issue or a systemic issue?
 - m. Do you have any thoughts on how this issue, or class if issues, might be addressed? How could things have been done differently?
3. Can you think of any other examples of times things did not go as well as they could have, or where an issue was not handled as well as it could have been?
- a. What happened? What details are important to the understanding the problem?
 - b. Where in the process did the problem occur?
 - c. What other parties, groups, or organizations were involved, if any?
 - d. What was the nature of the problem? How might it be classified?
 - e. How important was, or is, this issue or class of issues?
 - f. In your opinion, was this a one-time issue or a systemic issue?
 - g. Do you have any thoughts on how this issue, or class if issues, might be addressed or avoided in the future?

Is there anything else you think I should know?

APPENDIX E. POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- When possible, have outgoing staff train their successors (Jami, 2012).
- Provide training on how each of the positions works together (Jami, 2012).
- Provide clearer direction to staff on what projects to do when they're just starting out (Molly, 2012).
- Require activity documentation (Molly, 2012).
- Prioritize staff retention (Nelson, 2012).
- Provide a more "formal and in-depth transition process and ... packet" (Nelson, 2012).
- Consider grooming volunteers and interns for staff positions (Nelson, 2012).
- Consider hiring for the beginning of spring term (Nelson, 2012).
- Clarify position responsibilities and activities to better match up what staff expect with what they will find themselves doing (Nelson, 2012).
- Take steps to address employee satisfaction, happiness, productivity, and growth opportunities (Nelson, 2012).
- Require staff to participate in ongoing documentation, reflection, and assessment (Nelson, 2012; Molly, 2012).
- Consider implementing two-year terms with a one-year overlap on each end (Jami, 2012).
- Help staff reduce stress and maintain a healthy "work/home life" balance by arranging more regular and frequent office hours (Nelson, 2012).
- Provide regular professional development / career advancement opportunities (e.g. ongoing training of transferrable skills such as "empowerment and community organizing") (Nelson, 2012).
- Make sure staff know how their work impacts the larger picture (Nelson, 2012).
- Have out-going staff create and incoming staff receive more documentation of "technical and non-technical" information on how to do the job, what resources are available, and "what other projects have been done and how they were done," including: "handouts, resources, worksheets, [and] materials" (Molly, 2012).
- Provide staff with training on "the steps needed to execute a project at OSU," including how to articulate "requests, needs, and timelines," effectively "motivate people," and get "faculty and staff to respond faster" (Erik, 2012).
- Provide more frequent check-ins between the faculty advisors and the director(s) (Erik, 2012).
- Provide more transparency on goals, timelines, and progress to help identify when there may be a need for additional information (Erik, 2012).
- Consider establishing a different liaison within facility services to help facilitate project execution (Erik, 2012).
- Train staff on OSU standards concerning: care, design, communication, legal issues, food service, and event planning (Eve, 2012).
- Provide ongoing training and support to help staff improve in their positions and more successfully and appropriately plan projects or activities (Eve, 2012).
- Teach staff "to say 'no'" (Eve, 2012).
- Provide director with a wider range and depth of formal trainings focused specifically at their position and the unique demands it placed on a person (e.g. advanced facilitation and communication methods, etc.) (Christian, 2012).

- “Make position descriptions match more closely what people will be doing so that they know ... what they will be doing” (e.g. office hours, example week, repeating projects, potential projects, administrative tasks, etc.) (Nelson, 2012).
- Train staff to work with, motivate, and supervise interns and volunteers (Christian, 2012).
- Focus on having awesome, tangible, and “productive [projects] for students to get involved in” (Christian, 2012; Erik, 2012).
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to have ownership in the program and its activities and opportunities to pursue leadership roles (Jami, 2012).
- Explore ways to exert pressure on students to become engaged (Jami, 2012).
- Come up with a plan to address student engagement and volunteering (Christian, 2012).
- Train staff on “communication, team building,” recruitment, and facilitation (Christian, 2012).
- Increase visibility among students of issues facing the SSI (Jami, 2012).
- More effectively and efficiently use media and media coverage to advertise to the student body (Molly, 2012).
- Consider brainstorming solutions with other student programs that are (a) facing the same issue, or (b) have addressed the same issue in the past (Molly, 2012).
- Engage staff in a “journey as a staff to learn something or improve something” sustainability related (Molly, 2012).
- “At the start of the year, have project coordinators identify other organizations who work [in their] areas, and have sit-down meetings ... to figure out plans and coordinate ... work” (Eve, 2012).
- Assist staff in better balancing their personal and work lives (Nelson, 2012).
- “Make sure staff know what is expected of them going [into their position] so they can handle what they will be doing” (Nelson, 2012).
- Have more internal social gatherings “so that staff can get to know each other better and have more fun” working together (Nelson, 2012).
- Help staff focus on a small number of really engaging projects (Cody, Follow-Up Interview, 2012).
- Provide proper training and supervision to ensure that staff are engaged where they need to be engaged (Eve, 2012).
- Make sure that everyone agrees on the larger goals for the SSI, and are actively engaged in those goals through their projects (Nelson, 2012).
- Set standards at the highest programmatic level to address the lack of institutional support (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Sit down with members of the administration to figure out “how the SSI fits into the administration’s sustainability goals,” and what support is needed by the SSI in order to fill that role (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Conduct research on how high a priority sustainability issues are to students, faculty, and staff, and how effective the SSI is in addressing sustainability issues (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Improve the advising and support structure directly external to the program (Erik, 2012).
- Encourage regular and proactive communication with the external organizations supporting the program (Darren, 2012).
- Increase the planning timeline for activities to accommodate the realities faced by other university units (Darren, 2012).
- Sit down with external organizations to “figure out how to [better] use each other as resources and work together” (Eve, 2012).
- Create more accountability between the SSI and external organizations (Eve, 2012).

- Make sure staff can delineate between the roles and responsibilities of all positions within the organization (Molly, 2012).
- Look for opportunities to have outside mentors for individual staff members to give them perspective and help augment internal support (Molly, 2012).
- Have Director(s) take an active role in collaborating, brainstorming, and helping plan projects, events, and campaigns (Molly, 2012).
- Make it clear to staff what they can ask of each of the positions (Molly, 2012).
- Arrange for more interaction between coworkers (Jami, 2012).
- Require attendance at certain events and activities, either months in advance or in the actual position descriptions (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Encourage or require collaboration between staff on areas of mutual experience or responsibility (Jami, 2012)
- Use electronic media to create a data management system that collects and organizes data about the program and its activities in one place, ensuring that the activity planning process naturally fits with the system so as to encourage full utilization (Erik, 2012).
- Hold people accountable for their commitments (Erik, 2012).
- Require, at the beginning of the year, a “project description and plan [from each coordinator] that correlates [the project] to the goals and budget” of the program, so that from the beginning everyone knows what is going on (Nelson, 2012).
- Hold regular, structured one-on-one meetings between staff and supervisor to discuss how things are going, plan or debrief activities, address needs or desires, and “focus ... on how things fit together” (Nelson, 2012).
- Hold regular, structured meetings between faculty advisors and the director (Tania, 2012).
- Find opportunities to increase formal documentation in ways that help staff without overly burdening them (Nelson, 2012).
- Establish a clear advising model (Tania, 2012).
- Clearly identify what needs to be communicated between which individuals within the program (Tania, 2012).
- Provide training to advisors on “what a facilitated advising model looks like and how decisions are made” (Tania, 2012).
- Establish set roles for group projects (Molly, 2012).
- Consider adjusting position descriptions to require partnership between coordinators (Molly, 2012).
- Continue to develop the internship program (Molly, 2012).
- Explore new ways to develop a community of students who volunteer with the SSI (Jami, 2012).
- Lower staff workload (Nelson, 2012).
- Organize and divide work differently between staff (Nelson, 2012).
- Help staff separate their personal and work lives (Nelson, 2012).
- Prioritize time and resources on only the most impactful programs (Molly, 2012).
- Consider sustainability across staff cohorts when setting precedents (Tania, 2012).
- Create a training model to “train directors to do the work they’re currently doing” (Tania, 2012).
- Provide staff with more training on “project development ... and goal communication” (Tania, 2012).
- Improve support model between faculty advisors and directors as well as between directors and staff (Tania, 2012).

- When appropriate, encourage staff to collaborate on projects (Molly, 2012).
- Reposition program within the institution to have more direct power or influence (Molly, 2012).
- Brainstorm project ideas as a team (Molly, 2012).
- Find allies willing to “stand up for and defend the SSI’s message when running into” issues, allies that are “willing to ruffle feathers and push for change when appropriate” (Molly, 2012).
- Come to consensus as a staff on what message(s) the SSI is willing to stand behind (Molly, 2012).
- Consider focusing on “program and initiatives that ... engage a larger number of students,” faculty, and staff (Tania, 2012).
- Take a “critical look at the work currently occurring and [figure out] how to better address and follow the strategic plan,” including adjusting that plan (Tania, 2012).
- When appropriate, don’t hesitate to fully utilize resources and support available within the SLI and Memorial Union (MU) (Tania, 2012).
- Making it clear what university units can expect from the SSI in terms of “ways of doing things,” “non-traditional ... process[es],” and “response-rates” (Erik, 2012).
- Where possible, limit the number of people information has to pass through (Darren, 2012).
- Be comfortable addressing differences in cultures, views, opinions, goals, or expectations early on (Christian, 2012).
- Expect and support a higher level of firmness or assertiveness from staff (Christian, 2012; Jami, 2012).
- When possible, divide responsibilities by project instead of type of work (Allan, 2012).
- Create more support staff and intern positions (Allan, 2012).
- Make the purchasing process / protocol more automated, streamlined, and predictable (Allan, 2012).
- Make sure “people have a clear[ly] designated position and role and [make sure there is an] agreed upon protocol for handling different situations” (Allan, 2012).
- “Rethink what [current] protocol ... demands of people” (Allan, 2012).
- More “effectively use and prioritize advising time” (Tania, 2012).
- Establish responsibility for “scheduling and planning ... important check-in meetings” between staff, supervisors, and advisors (Tania, 2012).
- Clearly communicate expectations, especially for “regular meetings, check-in[s], debriefs, facilitation, training, [and] hiring” (Tania, 2012).
- Include all stakeholders (i.e. staff, interns, fee-board members, faculty advisors, and student volunteers) in some level of socializing and team building (Tania, 2012).
- Make sure goals are “agreed upon, clear, understood, frequently identified, and easily identifiable” (Nelson, 2012).
- Make sure agreements between the SSI and its vendors and collaborators are clear and enforceable (Allan, 2012).
- Require documentation for each event, project, or campaign of what it is, how it fits with the programs goals, and what it will require in terms of financing, administration, marketing, and staff support (Nelson, 2012).
- Have staff establish “goals for their position” that tie into the “larger goals of the SSI” (Nelson, 2012).
- “Have more planning and visualizing concept conversations with staff” about what the SSI is doing, including the activities of staff, interns, directors, advisors, and fee board members (Nelson, 2012).

- “Post goals of the SSI in the office so that staff can be visually reminded of what they are working towards” (Nelson, 2012).
- “Start staff meetings with the SSI mission statement to remind everyone what they are doing there” (Nelson, 2012).
- Debrief every project, event, and campaign, and the processes supporting those activities (Christian, 2012).
- When there is an issue that has been successfully addressed, communicate with staff “how things should have gone differently” (Christian, 2012).
- Creating a “flow chart with a purchasing process approved and agreed to by [the] SSI and AABC” (Allan, 2012).
- Having a “single person be [the] lead on a single project” (Jessie, 2012).
- Formalize the process for planning projects and clarifying needs and expectations (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Create a protocol to clarify who is involved and how (Jessie, 2012).
- Emphasize “the importance of each project the SSI works on:” to the program, to the university, and to the community (Cody, Initial Interview, 2012).
- Emphasize the “importance of email correspondence and following up ... if you don’t hear back” (Cody, Follow-Up Interview, 2012).
- Arrange physical meetings between necessary parties (individual staff or internal/external collaborating groups) on a regular basis (Jessie, 2012; Darren, 2012).
- Have fail-safes to ensure communication is occurring (Jessie, 2012).
- Create an alumni network and board of advisors to improve knowledge retention.
- Encourage the development of initiatives that deepen the program and provide more opportunities for individuals to grow and develop within the SSI (e.g. volunteer opportunities, internship program, employee advancement, board membership, etc.).

