

MODEL PROJECT #1  
**ENGAGING WESTERN STUDENTS ON THE SIX POINTS BOARD**

Presenter, Daniel Bruce, Executive Director  
(Maryo Ewell's notes)

"It's all about relationships."

There are many ways to engage students who might become board members and Six Points has done all:

- Go to the Career Services office in the Academic Resource Center – you might land an intern who might ultimately become a board member
- Go to the various departments – psychology, sociology, recreation – to see about a possible intern, especially one who might see working with you as a capstone project
- When you're talking to the departments, see if there is a faculty member who might want to do a class project around you which might let an especially interested person emerge
- Ask current students involved with you to bring their friends
- Post a notice (sample is attached) on campus saying that you're seeking board members. (This poster brought forward 5 candidates – 2 of whom landed up on the board, and 2 on committees!)

But, there is more to it than just "landing" a student!

- You need to have a matrix of skills desired for the board (see attached) so that there can be an explicit skillset that you – and the student – know is needed on the board; you don't want to just add a student for the sake of adding a student. Thus you know that you'll get needed skills; the student will have clarity on what you want from the and will be more comfortable "jumping in"
- You need to be flexible. It may be that you get an awesome student who is about to graduate – if having a student on the board is an organizational value, you may need to change your by-laws accordingly
- You need to really want to hear what the student has to offer. This person may bring a very different perspective to your board. You WANT that perspective, and you want to ENCOURAGE that perspective – you don't want the student to just sit there passively – and the perspective may make you uncomfortable. That's not a bad thing at all.
- You should have an intentional "pipeline" – matrix → seeking out people with the skills you want → engaging them first as committee members so you both can assess the "fit" → moving them on to the board. Some may find they are happy just doing volunteer work or committee work – and may realize they do not want to step up and assume a governance role. And that is just fine!
- Give them the opportunity to participate in a way that brings their unique skillsets AND their network of friends. And don't assume they can't fundraise! Daniel offered an example where their student member approached the Student Association and secured funds for the Six Points prom.
- Your organization can learn what a new generation thinks and how they want to participate – which is not necessarily how the traditional board member/"Boomer" generation thinks and participates

Finally, make it worth the student's while, too:

- Help ensure that it's a genuine resume-builder for them – not only by listing their board affiliation, but also what leadership and results they were able to achieve
- When you interview them as a potential board member, make sure it's a genuine, serious interview so that you will give them interview skills that they can apply as their career progresses
- Help ensure it's a genuine learning opportunity for them
- Give them opportunities to be an important, contributing board member
- Be clear in advance the role you hope they can pay