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3-2016

Competition for a Cause

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Callahan, Erin, "Competition for a Cause" (2016). *SEHS News for Alumni*. 11.
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School of Education and Health Sciences

COMPETITION FOR A CAUSE

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Competition for a Cause

The course description for the Health and Sports Science Sales and Fundraising class reads, “Examination and understanding of sales and fundraising techniques. Students will gain first-hand experience in developing new skills for the job market.” In reality, it’s so much more than that.

Students gain first-hand experience and develop new skills, to raise funds for philanthropic causes. Every student must raise a minimum of \$1,250, and the class total is donated to either the Front Row Foundation or the John R. Schleppe Career Enhancement Fund.

The Front Row Foundation is a charity that gives “front row experiences” to children and adults with life-threatening illnesses at the live event of their choice. The John R. Schleppe Career Enhancement Fund was established to recognize Dr. John Schleppe’s contribution and leadership to the University of Dayton Sports Management program. The fund enables a selected student to attend professional conferences after graduation to gain networking opportunities in the job search process.

The Sales and Fundraising class began in 2006 as an elective, but professor Peter Titlebaum quickly saw the need for students to gain more sales and fundraising experience before they graduated. The class became a requirement in hopes of building every student’s portfolio and preparing them with essential experience for the job market. Titlebaum soon realized that not every student was comfortable with the idea of public speaking or sales—but that only motivated him more.



Professor Peter Titlebaum

“Students need to be exposed to this, it’s an important skill we all need,” he said. “I will use any method possible to reach these kids—whatever it takes to get them to understand sales. And by the end of the class, I’m not asking them to love sales, fundraising or public speaking, but I want them to have a strategy when they have to do them.”

In addition to the sales opportunities throughout the semester, Titlebaum tried something new in the 2015 fall semester. He created a philanthropy tournament, where students select a cause of their choice and construct a series of fundraising presentations. The tournament is organized bracket-style and some students advance each round while others are eliminated, depending on votes from the class. The students receive feedback after each round on how they can improve, and are not graded on whether or not they win the tournament, but by how well they present based on what they were taught. However, there is an incentive beyond the grade: the four top students are awarded money to donate to the cause of their choice.



This year's donations were to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (\$500), The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (\$250), the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation (\$100), and the V Foundation for Cancer Research (\$100).

At the end of the semester, Ryan McGarvey reached a new individual record of \$2,368 raised, and the class raised a new collective record of \$30,468. That total far surpassed the 2013 individual record of \$1,940 and the 2014 class record of \$24,064.

Titlebaum states in his syllabus, "Goals are how success is measured." While goals are one motivator and contributor to the class's success, the philanthropy tournament has offered a unique motivator as well.

"By working towards something they care about, students are less intimidated, less resistant, and it shows that it works," Titlebaum said.

Students who have taken the class agree, and have described the class as helpful, practical and impactful. Maik Schoonderwoerd, the tournament's first place winner, was inspired by the loss of a close friend to suicide.

"I really took it to heart, and I think because I had a cause I really cared about, I was able to win the whole tournament," he said.

Brennan Schlabig, the tournament's third place winner, added, "As the presentations went on, it became less about multiple sclerosis, and more about why I wanted to raise the money for it. I learned the ability to sell yourself with anything you do," he continued, "because people are going to buy into you, your story and your values more so than the product you're selling."

Erin Callahan '15

Check out one of the winning presentations in the video below!

ALEXANDER KELLISON, MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH



0:00 / 5:10

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