
**STATE BAR OF ARIZONA
YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION
GENERATION X-CELLENCE IN THE CLASSROOM**

I. Project Description

Generation X-Cellence in the Classroom is a program that was created by the State Bar of Arizona Young Lawyers Division to encourage high school students to participate in their community and government. The program sends Generation X aged speakers who have experience with one of the three branches of government into high school civics classes. This program helps students first realize how government is an ever-present part of their lives. Then, the speakers talk about their own experiences in government and gives the students specific ideas about how and why to get involved in government.

II. Project Planning/Development

A. Identification of Need

Locally and nationally, declining voter turnout and comments by many of today's teens clearly indicate that many people feel there is no reason to vote in today's elections because their vote can't make a difference. This program shows them that there is a reason to be involved – even if they aren't yet old enough to vote.

B. Determination of Project Goals and Design

1. Decisions to be made

a. Options - Project Goals

The goal of this program was to “wake teens up.” The first part of achieving that goal is to help teens realize how omnipresent government is in their lives. Next, the speakers share their own stories about how they got involved. They challenge the students to also get involved.

The Arizona program focuses on high school students because they are studying civics theories and standards. The program and its awareness of the government makes the materials presented more realistic.

b. Options - Project Design

Format. Generation X-Cellence sends one speaker into classrooms with no more than 30 students. Each speaker gives a general introduction to the subject and then asks students a number of questions to help them realize that government is important to them even if they don't think it does. The speaker talks to them about decisions that governments make for them like driver's licenses, curfews, and employment rules. As an incentive, every time the speaker asks a question and someone correctly responds, the

speaker throws out a candy bar as a reward. The Q&A session lasts for about 20 minutes. Then the speaker gives the students specific ideas about how they can get involved in government themselves.

Selection of Speakers. The most important part of this program is to select speakers that students are likely to relate to. Generation X-Cellence speakers are approximately 30 to 40 years old and have some experience with one of the three branches of government.

Many of the speakers in the program were not attorneys, but may involve lobbyists and those who work for the executive branch of government.

Choice of Date. The Arizona program works closely with the schools involved to pick a date and time that will work for them as well as the speakers.

Audience. The Arizona program advertises the program to all high schools in Maricopa County. An Excel spreadsheet from the School Chief was obtained to make sending out program letters as easy as possible.

2. Decision Making Process

In addition to the YLD attorneys who helped create the program, Generation X-Cellence was developed by a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from: US Senators McCain and Kyl, Congressmen Pastor & Hayworth, Young Republicans and Young Democrats, Kids Voting Arizona, The Arizona Secretary of State's Office and a number of other groups.

3. Considerations in Project Planning

a. Community Resources

Each member of the Steering Committee sends out an email to all of his/her "political" friends to see if they would be willing to speak to a classroom. The Arizona program generated over 50 volunteers who were willing to help staff the program.

b. Personnel

The Generation X-Cellence Chairman handles all of the administrative demands of the program. The State Bar reimburses the Chairman for program expenses.

c. Other (Equipment/Physical Needs)

The program does not require any visual aids or special accommodations.

III. Implementation ... How to Replicate This Project

A. Timetable

An affiliate should begin planning this project approximately seven months in advance.

Seven Months Prior to the Program

1. Appoint Chairman

Six Months Prior to the Program

1. Recruit Steering Committee

Five Months Prior to the Program

1. Host Steering Committee meetings
2. Determine scope, goals and objectives (these may differ depending on each location)

Four Months Prior to the Program

1. Establish general program dates
2. Recruit speakers

Three Months Prior to the Program

1. Mail out letters to schools
2. Develop speaker outlines

Two Months Prior to the Program

1. Schedule schools and speakers

Three Weeks Prior to the Program

1. Mail program materials to schools and speakers

One Week After the Program

1. Program director sends thank you letter to speech and school.

IV. Bibliography/Other Resources

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