2018 Circle of Excellence Awards
Judges Report

Please complete the following form to report on your category and the winners. If you are judging a category with multiple subcategories, please complete one form for each subcategory. Email completed forms to Stephanie Fisher at awards@case.org by Friday, May 11.

Name of Category or Subcategory: Diversity Programs

Host Coordinator: Justin M. Gibson

Judging Session Date: April 26, 2018; April 29, 2018

Total Number of Entries Received: 24

Category/Subcategory General Observations (please include a paragraph or two about the overall strengths, weaknesses and/or trends observed in the category/subcategory):

The selection committee was impressed by the thoughtfulness that went into each of the projects that were submitted for consideration. Each one was designed to address the needs of the institution, to reach out to underrepresented communities within their respective organizations. Each one should be commended for their support of creating a more just community.

One part of the selections that we noticed is that very few of the projects centered on the alumni and donor experience. While we understand that current and prospective students are the lifeblood of any institution, we were hoping to see efforts put into engaging and cultivating alumni who may not have been before. Additionally, we felt that many of the projects were not creative and/or innovative; they were recreations of initiatives that many institutions have used before. While there is great value in benchmarking from your peers, we weren’t able to score very high in the area of innovation.

Comments on Winning Entries (please include a few lines about each entry receiving an award):

Award Level (Grand Gold, Gold, Silver or Bronze): Gold
Winning Institution: Syracuse University

Title of Entry: Coming Back Together at Syracuse University: A Unique Approach to Diverse Alumni Engagement

Comments: The committee was extremely impressed with this entry for several reasons: it blended two underrepresented segments of the alumni community together for a common experience (Black and Latino alumni), they far surpassed their total engagement number (more than 200% increase), and far surpassed their goal for fundraising (from ~$250k to $1 million).

We also loved how students were included in the planning and execution, how engaged the Chancellor was in the events, the use of notable alumni, and the different events that were added.

Award Level (Grand Gold, Gold, Silver or Bronze): Silver

Winning Institution: Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech)

Title of Entry: 2017 Inclusive Leaders Academy Launch and Closing

Comments: Having and analyzing data is important for any new initiative that an organization undertakes, and we were impressed how GA Tech used a 2012 campus climate survey as the basis for this project. Diversity and inclusion work is everyone’s responsibility, and by creating culture champions GA Tech is able to develop competent leaders on their campus and in the community.

We would be interested in the how the institution is taking the next step – how are they creating leaders in the greater community. Maybe using your alumni is the way...

Award Level (Grand Gold, Gold, Silver or Bronze): Bronze

Winning Institution: Ohio University

Title of Entry: The Black Alumni Reunion (BAR) Planning Committee

Comments: While the Ohio University Black Alumni Reunion has demonstrated the ability to achieve successful engagement and collaboration between alumni volunteers and the institution, the program has not gone beyond current benchmarks set by previous affinity programs. Many alumni associations and affinity groups have very similar experiences in varying sizes and scopes. However, what the committee was impressed with was how the volunteers came together to overcome some very
challenging obstacles in working with the University, as well as negative sentiments among Black alumni. Please continue to work with the OU administration as partners and not adversaries, and keep working to engage your alumni to come back to campus and contribute to the social and educational ecosystem.