Fontys

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COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS
BUILDING ATTENTION

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Introduction
Purpose of analysis

The purpose of this competitive analysis is to understand and evaluate the strategies employed by other universities to enhance project awareness regarding student projects. Student projects, encompassing academic research, entrepreneurial initiatives, community service, and other extracurricular activities, often lack visibility both within the university community and in the broader public sphere. This analysis aims to find effective practices, platforms, and programs that have been successful in elevating the profile of student projects. By identifying these strategies, the analysis seeks to provide actionable insights that can be applied to improve project awareness, engagement, and collaboration among students, faculty, alumni, and potential external partners. Ultimately, the goal is to foster a more vibrant and interactive academic community that recognizes and supports student achievements and innovation.

Research Question

How are other universities addressing this issue? What are some of the solutions?

What is the issue?

- Student lacking awareness in other student projects (to be validated with this document or with future interviews)

Raising awareness?

To start measuring it and be able to use findings from this document, I first need to define what exactly does it mean to "raise awareness". According to a definition from The Cambridge Dictionary it means – "knowledge that something exists or understanding of a situation or subject at the present time based on information or experience".

Approach

The analysis involved selecting and evaluating universities known for their innovative strategies in raising project awareness. The focus was on identifying successful practices that could be adapted for the current project.

Initial Findings

To start off I found out universities that share a similar issue in missing project awareness, like:

DataPro Consultancy Services:

This institution faces challenges in managing and coordinating numerous student clubs due to the absence of a centralized platform. This results in communication gaps, difficulties in organizing events, and a lack of visibility for students interested in joining clubs. The "Centralized Platform for Student Clubs in University (GITAM)" project is designed to streamline and enhance the management of student clubs within the university. Leveraging Python-based web technologies, this platform offers a centralized hub for communication, collaboration, and organization.

DataPro's Solution:

The proposed Centralized Platform introduces a web-based solution that serves as a hub for all student clubs within the university. It provides features such as centralized event calendars, communication channels, document sharing, and membership management, aiming to simplify the organization and participation in club activities. (DataPro, n.d.)

Takeaways:

- Since the company has a similar problem, there is potential for their solution to work for the Building Attention project.
- Potential solution – a web-based centralized platform solution

University of California, Berkley

Peer Mentorship Programs: Implementing peer mentorship applications can assist in increasing awareness. For instance, the University of California, Berkeley, has a "Peer Advising Program" where senior college students mentor juniors and sophomores, providing peer-review feedback on each other's work. Through these relationships, mentors regularly share their own project experiences, which helps mentees grow and become more aware of the diverse opportunities and tasks available on campus (Office for Students, n.d.).

Takeaways:

- Implementing peer mentorship programs can effectively increase student awareness of various opportunities and projects available on campus.
- Mentors share their own project experiences, helping mentees become more aware of diverse opportunities on campus

Project Showcases and Competitions

Many universities arrange occasions in which college students can exhibit their work. For example, at Stanford University, the annual "Student Project Showcase" allows college students to present their studies and innovative tasks to peers, faculty, and enterprise professionals. These occasions frequently encompass competitions with prizes, which can further encourage college students to participate and spread awareness of their work (Center for Engaged Learning, 2020).

Takeaways:

- The "Student Project Showcase" allows students to present their research and innovative projects to a wide audience, including peers, university faculty members and professionals.
- A showcase can spark conversation, inspiration and potential collaboration.

Results & Insights

From this competitive analysis, I found valuable information on how other universities are solving this issue. Important insights include:

- Awareness through mentorship – a program that is proven to effectively increase student awareness about what's going around them through achieving real-life working experience from mentors.
- Student Project Showcase – students presenting projects to a broader audience helps bringing focus and awareness towards their project. Throughout these events there is the certainty of receiving inspiration, sparking conversation or even a potential collaboration.
- Centralised Platform – a web-based platform, which by having features such as event calendars, communication channels and project overview, increases project awareness in student projects.

Conclusion

After researching for this document, it is evident that mentorship programs, project showcases, peer-review from mentors and centralized platforms are all effective strategies for increasing student awareness.

Regarding the project at hand, out of these strategies, one of them has already been implemented at the TQ building – Innovation Insights. Although its only twice per year, it has been very effective in bringing the focus to students by showing the innovative projects they work on at Fontys UAS.

One of the insights I found very interesting as a potential solution – a web-based platform that can act as a central hub for all students, faculty members & visitors. This scalable solution may not only serve showcasing student projects, but also have various feedback mechanisms, collaborative tools etc.

Reflection

In reflection this document has helped me understand more of how I can increase student awareness surrounding student projects and gave me ideas and inspiration of what I can implement and test for my project.

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