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3 Dec 2017

Project Proposal

Starting Fall Orientation 2016, New Student Programs has been re-crafting the programming for Fall Orientation at The Evergreen State College. Multiples parts of the programming has been transferred. Along with this change came a switch from a informal check-in process that didn't require strict tracking to an ongoing transition to having consequences for not attending sessions.

In the past, assignment of sessions, particular faculty sessions, there has been an un-balanced participation level, that is assigning all registered students to sessions not just student who have registered and checked-in to orientation week. This can lead to one faculty session having slim participation and another being full.

Further, there identified need to be able to assign students to sessions that may focus on groups of students needs, such a transfer vs new student or even veterans. Finally, with the advent of more strict tracking requirements exposes a need to more consistently track attendance and outcomes from Orientation.

Through this, to be able to process check-in more efficiently, one key part of check-in has been a nametag, a tag with the name, preferred pronouns and A# of each student. On the back the tag has included a list of "mandatory" sessions assignments for a particular student. The tags is scanned at the start of each large session. Until ID cards are fully printed, this tag works also as the primary way to use meal plans in the Greenery and other Aramark food services on campus.

Starting in 2017, there has been a mandatory service learning component for first-year new students . This complicates check-in/registration for orientation further since there is a now a user-facing choice, not just assigned by the program.

As a developer, this problem interests me to develop a slightly more complex than my past experiences with web application development. Further, being that my solution will depend on web technologies uses at the college, it lets me learn technologies I am not as well acquainted with as others. Particularly, knowing Evergreen uses PHP as it's primarily development language for web apps, I will be gaining skills in that language.

Current Solution:

Currently, New Student Programs uses an Excel spreadsheet file using multiple sheets and formula to check-in students. Due to be built in Excel there are opportunities for students to check-in multiple times, the data is insecure within the document files and is not able to adapt to the needs of the program.

Scope:

The client has a few different roles/work-flows currently used in the Excel check-in system. That model inspires a solution:

- Before Orientation: a list of registered new and transfer students are generated and imported, this would be maintained going forward into a new system due to how that report is generated.

- Student-facing: Student would be able to check-in with a token given during registration for Orientation, then they would confirm information such as:

  - Preferred Name
  - Preferred Pronouns
  - Service-learning commitment, a servicing learning session that takes student into the community to work with organizations off-campus.

- During Orientation: staff must should be able to combine check-in data with attendance data to track student participation within the sessions.

- After Orientation: staff must be able to export data and/or generate attendance reports to influence planning and flag students who did not attend regularly to

Proposed Solution:

My proposed solution would use a web application written using a model-view-controller model. My primary language for the project will be PHP and I will use MariaDB/MySql as the database of choice.

Schedule:

- Week 0-1 (including winter break): plan out technology solutions (language, datastore):

- Week 1-2: basic student-check-in functionality complete
- Week 2-4: insertion of student data and formatted output for tag
- Week 5: queue for photo-taking
- Week 6-7: finishing up – including data export or report system
- Week 8-9: drafting and submitting review of solution