

## **Findings from user interviews**

### **Orientation Experience**

- All the interviewees were anxious about the new environment on the first day of orientation.

### **Online Search**

- Maize Page
  - o outdated and has a lack of information.
  - o Overwhelming to go through 1,400 + student organizations
- Pros
  - o can read general information about the student organizations
  - o sometimes offer useful information about classes and career path.
- Cons
  - o Only good information about the student organizations is provided online
  - o Difficult to build an interpersonal connection with the group
- Suggestions
  - o Online live feedback session can help students to ask questions and understand about the organization without going to the offline events

### **Searching Strategy**

- Students tend to do online search first and attend offline events to know more in depth.
- Check SNS groups like Facebook groups
  - o Find SNS groups to see the past activities

### **Searching Pattern**

- Students search student organizations to get necessary information, to find their interest groups and to avoid any feelings of being left out.
- The necessary information about student organization can differ and depends on the purpose of searching one.

### **Necessary information to make a decision**

- Summary to understand what they do
- Meeting schedule to check availability
- Maturity level to avoid any not wanting situations
- Previous activities to see how active the organization is and to understand what they do normally
- Culture to check if he/she can belong to the group
- Commitment level to check the level of flexibility and freedom
- Number of members

### **Offline Search (Reckham Student Organization Event/ Festifall)**

- Pros
  - Free Stuff
  - Able to build an interpersonal relationship
  - Able to ask detailed questions to understand the organization more in depth
  - Able to explore and find unexpected student organization that interests him/her
- Cons
  - There were too many people in the event, so sometimes difficult to either start a conversation with the current members or talk for a long time
  - Bad Booth Map made them difficult to search
- Suggestions
  - Information about you can make a bond and connection with people
    - “You are not alone. You can find friends here. It is not about getting a free water bottle.”

### **Reasons to join**

- Feeling the sense of intimacy
- Able to socialize with new people
- Unintentionally joined because his/her friends wanted to participate
- An opportunity to try new things without paying any money
- Can either fill or replace the needs with similar interests

### **Leave or no longer participate**

- Busy with classes
- Felt left out from the group
- Emails receiving are overwhelming

### **Method of communication**

- Information about meetings or any events are communicated by emails

### **Launching a new student organization**

- Steps
  - Have an idea → constitution approval → gather people (more than 10) → Official
- Reasons to launch
  - Found uniqueness that can help others
  - Other departments have it and seem very useful
  - Heard voices and needs from peers
- Necessary info to recruit new members

- The purpose of the student organization
- Show the difference and strength compared to other organizations
- Logistics of the group
- Career path advice
- Show level of commitment
- Show the level of expertise or make approachable as possible
- Meeting Schedule
- Stopped student organizations
  - Too specific interest that couldn't attract many people

#### **How a new student organization was originally formed or launched**

- Same voices around the people (there can be people with similar interests)
- Other departments are doing it (Saw the value in other student organizations)
- Past Experiences (Wants to fill the missing gap and recall the happy memories)

#### **Important Quotes from the interviewees**

- Interviewee 1, a PhD student at the School of Music, Theatre & Dance
  - Depends on the purpose of finding a new organization, the necessary information differs
  - **"We always have an area where that needs to be filled up by something that we don't have. When we go into a new environment, we need a social place, like a student organization, that helps us to fill the gap we are missing. We either fill it ups with similar interest we had before or replace it with something else."**
- Interviewee 2, a master's student at the School of Information
  - Interviewee 2's strategy to avoid of getting a feeling of being left out was to find a group or a student organization during the orientation
  - **"Festifall happens only once, so everybody is going to be there. And, you know every option is there. You have a whole buffet."**
  - "You are always prepared for career fair, but I was not prepared for Festifall. I wouldn't prepared for Festifall."
  - "I regret signing up for mailing lists during Festifall. I get a bunch of emails I am not part of."
- Interviewee 3, an undergraduate student at the School of Information
  - **"I never looked up MaizePages, because I knew there is no useful information I can find."**

- Interviewee 4, a PhD student at Communication Studies
  - “Already had an interest and a purpose in climbing, so just had to find out about how to make it happen.”
  - “Website helps to search with a specific keyword I want to search. Offline helps when I don’t have a specific interest in something and just want to explore and to belong to a group.”
  - **“I looked up MaizePages once, but I was overwhelmed by the number of student organizations I need to go through.”**
  
- Interviewee 5, an undergraduate student at the School of Business
  - Prescreening and interpersonal interaction matters when searching for a possible student group
  - **“I looked for information on websites to prescreen the student organizations of his interest and went to Festifall to verify and build an interpersonal relationship.”**
  - “I think students who didn’t do research or couldn’t prescreen before coming to Festifall tend to ask general questions. So, they don’t realize how good the student group really is.”