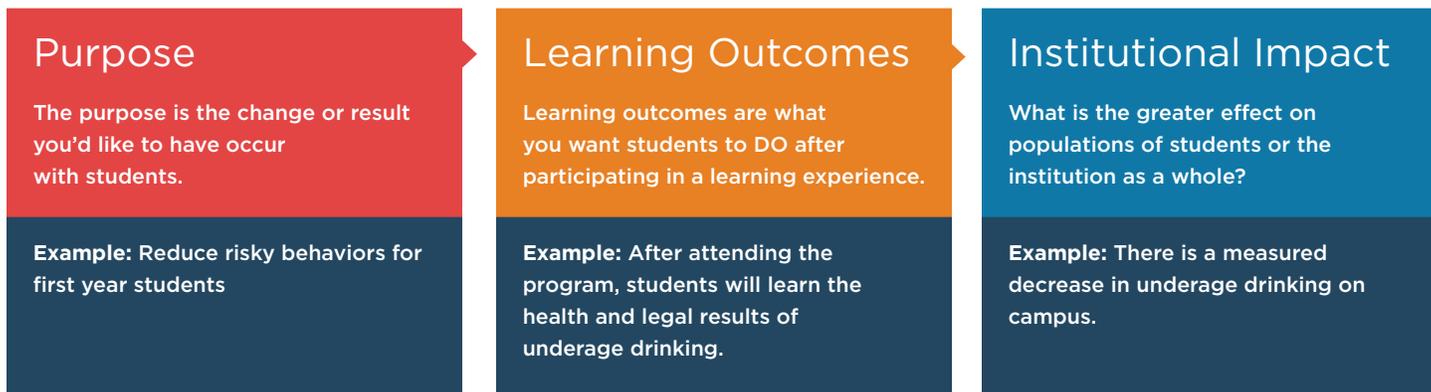


Intentionality

What does it mean to be intentional?

Being intentional means you are programming with specific goals or outcomes in mind. Maybe there may be broader changes you are hoping to make at your institution or you are hoping students achieve specific learning outcomes. Below you will find an example of different goals you may have for your programs and initiatives.



Why the emphasis on being intentional?

Some may ask, if we just want to avoid the “shotgun” approach, why not just have a few signature events? The answer is simple – just limiting the number of events still does not necessarily provide a purpose to those events. Intentionality is more than just hosting a few key events throughout the year. According to NSSE data, Kuh (2003) says we must be more deliberate with our student interactions, meaning we have to think about what we want students to get out of programs and experiences on campus.

First, intentional engagement provides a better experience for the student. Braskamp (2007) argues an institution that empowers and enables a student to answer the big questions of who they are and encourages them to explore their identity is one that would be highly sought after by prospective students. Intentional programming with a specific student or a specific outcome in mind can be a prime starting point of a student’s self-exploration.

While many departments now include student “engagement” or “involvement” in their titles, there are some that go so far as to recognize departments or positions as “student development” which cannot be accomplished without intentionality.

Secondly, it seems everything in higher education can in some way be tied back to retention and persistence. Institutions report a higher rate of student success for students who are actively involved on campus (Friedlander & MacDougall, 1992; Sacramento State University, 2011). Not only does student involvement increase retention and graduation rates, but it is vital to student development. In fact, involved students have higher rates of emotional and intellectual growth than their uninvolved peers (Cooper, Healy, & Simpson, 1994). It is integral to keep students involved to maximize their experience at an institution.



Know Your Audience

Any good presenter knows you have to understand your audience to have the biggest impact. The same can be said for engaging students on campus. You have to not only know what they want but also how they want it. Think about the populations you are specifically trying to address on campus. Being intentional also gives you more of an advantage to help students understand why their involvement in programs is important to their personal and professional development. Throughout this eBook we will highlight specific student populations and provide tips and best practices for how to engage them.