

YMCA New Program Initiatives

Staff Report to BOG

November 17, 2009

Background

At the annual Board of Governors retreat on September 20, 2009, the board engaged in a discussion of potential new programs for the University YMCA to implement. A list of 16 programs compiled through conversations with board members, staff, students, and other Y constituents in the 6 months prior was presented to the board before the retreat to rank and provide comment. Based on individual responses, board members were placed in small groups to discuss the benefits, hurdles, and resource requirements of each program. This report represents the opinions and information generated in those discussions as well as additional research and analysis provided by staff. A detailed overview of each of the program initiatives discussed in this report is provided in the Appendix.

Criteria for selection

Four criteria were identified to evaluate the various program initiatives for further consideration:

1. Potential Benefit – Program has clear benefits for the target audience and advances the mission of the YMCA.
2. Staff Compatibility – Program matches the skills, competency, and interest of current staff. Program does not require hiring of additional staff to proceed.
3. Engagement – Key stakeholders are engaged and excited about the program. These stakeholders include the board, other members of the YMCA, community and university partners, and the target audience.
4. Feasibility – Program can be piloted or implemented with current building space, financial and staff resources.

Recommendations

Based on the above stated criteria, the staff divided the various programs into three different categories. The first category includes 4 programs that staff recommends we proceed in implementing.

- Art at the Y
- Student Leadership Development Program
- Faith and Social Justice
- Alternative Orientation (Freshman Camp)

These programs meet all 4 criteria established above (see Chart 1). Staff recommends that pilot programs be planned for each, or if a pilot has already occurred or is planned, effort should focus on evaluation and development as an ongoing program.

Chart 1.

Project/Program Ideas	Short Description	Potential Benefit	Staff Compatibility	Engagement	Feasibility
Art @ the Y	Incorporate arts programming in our building that are mission related	Yes	Yes - Ann	Yes	Yes, but need to explore funding opportunities
Student Leadership Development Program	Build ongoing program to train students in social justice work and organizing communities around change	Yes	Yes - Kasey	Yes	Yes
Faith and Social Justice	Organize interfaith initiative that mobilizes communities of faith around social justice	Yes	Yes - Ann	Yes	Yes
Alternative Orientation (Freshman Camp)	Based on freshman camp concept seeks to engage students prior to start of school year	Yes	Yes - Kasey	Yes	We may need some seed money to start

The second category of projects are ones which meet some but not all of the criteria. All 5 of these programs in this second tier meet the Potential Benefit criteria but in 4 of 5 cases require additional staff or further exploration with potential partners. In addition, staff identified a variety of hurdles related to the feasibility of all five of these programs (see Chart 2). The five programs in the second category are:

- Activist-in-Residence
- Summer Peace Camp
- Criminal Justice System
- 10,000 Villages/Peace Store
- Third Floor Living and Learning Community

Based on our review, the staff recommends further research and exploration before we consider fully implementing these programs. In the coming months, staff will continue to investigate opportunities that would allow these programs to become viable. Depending on the project, this may include exploring potential partnerships or seeking funding through grants or fundraising opportunities. For example, the Activist-in-Residence program, the main hurdle facing the Activist-in-Residence is identifying sources of financial support. As noted earlier, the Appendix of this report contains an overview of all of the nine projects in these first two categories, including greater detail about specific hurdles, collaborations, resources needed and start-up activities.

Chart 2.

Project/Program Ideas	Short Description	Potential Benefit	Staff Compatibility	Engagement	Feasibility
Activist-in-residence	Invite international social justice/environmental activists for a week to discuss/share issues facing their communities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Need \$ for speakers at a minimum
Summer Peace Camp	Offer families a "value based" summer camp for school aged kids focusing on non-violence, conflict resolution activities	Yes	Not currently	Need to explore partnerships further	Building not ready, possibly in 2011
Criminal Justice System.	Raise awareness of racial disparities in local criminal justice system	Yes	Yes	Need to explore partnerships further	Need additional staff to help move project forward
10.000 Villages/Peace Store	Use building to help promote economic development in Third World by selling art/crafts	Yes	Not currently	Need to explore partnerships further	Building space and zoning need to be resolved
Third Floor Living and Learning Community	Develop programming to make 3rd floor residences into a mission driven program	Yes	Not currently	Need to explore partnerships further	Building not ready, need \$ for staffing

Finally, six programs were not selected for further implementation. These programs face the most significant barriers in “Engagement,” “Feasibility,” and/or “Staff Compatibility.”

- Energy Auditing for local Low-Income Households
- What Are We Doing Here (Course/Seminar Series)
- Civics and Ethics
- Sustainable Champaign County
- Global Issues in Local Classrooms
- Think Global, Buy Local

Although many of these projects have potential as future Y programs, the staff is recommending that no specific efforts be invested in advancing them at this point in time.

Appendix

Individual Program Evaluations

The following pages contain a more detailed overview of the nine projects listed in the first two categories and for which staff is recommending further action. The summaries reflect comments from the Board/Staff Retreat and include greater detail about specific hurdles and benefits, potential collaborations on campus and in the community, resources needed and start-up activities. The projects included are:

Category #1 - Staff recommends proceeding with implementation

- Art at the Y
- Student Leadership Development Program
- Faith and Social Justice
- Alternative Orientation (Freshman Camp)

Category #2 - Staff recommends further research and exploration before we consider fully implementing these programs

- Activist-in-Residence
- Summer Peace Camp
- Criminal Justice System
- Third Floor Living and Learning Community
- 10,000 Villages/Peace Store

Project

Art at the Y

Description Some of the most profound insight, critique, and creative thinking around the issues which comprise the mission of the Y happen in and around the arts. The Y can deepen and expand the exemplification of its mission by engaging in quality arts programming. A revolving exhibition space could be established in Murphy Lounge, inviting artists whose work speaks to justice/environmental/faith issues to show their work, and engage us all in new and thoughtful ways. Not only could this bring new people into our building but it would provide an opportunity to work with students and faculty in the College of Fine and Applied Arts and a number of community organizations.

Type of Project - Social Justice, Environment, International, Faith, Ethical Leadership

Collaborations

Campus: College of Fine and Applied Arts, student organizations

Community: C-U Gallery Guild, Parkland Art Gallery, Springer Cultural Center

Resources Needed

Staffing: 5-10 hrs wk plus significant staff time the week of exhibition installation, may require more significant time investment in the program development stage.

Building Space: Murphy Lounge as rotating exhibition space

Funding: Funds needed for exhibition installation system (initial and largest cost), and for quarterly opening receptions and promotion materials (i.e. exhibition postcards). The Illinois Arts Council and the Urbana Arts Grant program may be possible funding sources.

Hurdles and Benefits

Hurdles: Initial funding for display equipment, establishing the Y as an art venue. There are also some questions about liability that would need to be resolved.

Benefits: This project would add to the depth of Y programming in new ways, and bring in new audiences.

Possible Pilot Project

Host an initial exhibition by inviting a prominent regional artist to kick- off the program.

Start-Up Activities/Tasks

Continue to explore similar exhibition series, seek advice and help from area experts. Formalize materials for correspondence with artists- call for entries, exhibition checklists, and liability waivers. Establish a working group for this project, comprised of key partners.

Project

Student Leadership Training

Description In 2007, we sponsored an Activist Conference for student leaders. This project would expand that effort into something broader and more in-depth. Training could be both in-house sessions or bringing in other organizations (Wellstone Camp, Midwest Academy, Community Media Workshop, etc.) with certain expertise. Program staff already put together two training sessions this semester. Chicago is the home of some of the best known organizer training institutes (Midwest Academy, Gamaliel Foundation, NTIC, and Industrial Area Foundation). The idea of establishing a local institute that draws on some of the resources for student leaders and links them to social justice efforts in their home communities has some interesting possibilities.

Type of Project - Ethical Leadership, Social Justice, Environment

Collaborations

Campus: Illinois Leadership Center, Student Government, School of Social Work, Housing, Cultural Houses

Community: Experts/Local activists/Non-profit leaders to facilitate workshops, Community Media Workshop, YWCA, IDF

Resources Needed

Staffing: **Start-up:** 5 hrs per training if outside consultants are used. **Long term:** .25 FTE, but may be able to restructure current leadership development efforts (i.e. time spent attending student meetings) so that time is distributed between these efforts rather than hiring new staff. Eventually would like a full time staff person whose focus is on student leadership development. This would go beyond training sessions to include 1-on-1 advising, community outreach/ organizing, and other programs that support student development such as activist-in-residence or a social justice living & learning community.

Building Space: Meeting space.

Funding: Honorarium for presenters (range: \$0-1,000) and \$50-100 per workshop for food and supplies. Multi-day training workshops could cost more. Long-term funds may be needed for designated staff if current staff or student intern not available. Possible funders include Lumpkin Foundation, SORF.

Hurdles and Benefits

Hurdles: Financial limitations to the number of outside consultants we can bring

Benefits: Increased effectiveness of student leaders carrying out the Y's mission, expanded reach to students involved in social justice, international and environmental work outside of YMCA programs

Possible Pilot Project

Direct Action Organizing Workshop and Community Media Workshop in fall 2009.

Start-Up Activities/Tasks

Survey students about what they have learned already, how they learned skill, what has worked? What do you want to learn more about? Collect feedback about pilot workshops. Explore additional workshops (example: fundraising, grant writing) based on responses. Contact training institutes to learn what they can offer as well as costs.

Project

Faith and Social Justice

Description For many people, involvement in justice issues has its origin in their religious faith. Rooted in the interfaith tradition of the Y, faith and justice programming would seek to provide rich fodder for conversations, growth, and action in this area. A series of events could be organized to bring in speakers working and writing in the field, with broad ecumenical appeal. Such speakers could connect with local congregations during their visits, and could be broadcast as guests on WILL's *Keepin' the Faith*. The Y is uniquely positioned at the intersection of the University and broader community, and could (and does) serve as a natural hub for people of faith who are involved in the work of justice.

Type of Project - Social Justice, Faith

Collaborations

Campus: Department of Religion, the Religious Workers Association (RWA), WILL, and Interfaith in Action (RSO)

Community: Interfaith Youth Core, Interfaith Alliance, CU Ministerial Alliance, and a number of diverse communities of faith

Resources Needed

Staffing: 5-10 hours per week

Building Space: Meeting space, space for public talks and programming

Funding: Honorarium for guests, marketing

Hurdles and Benefits

Hurdles: Establishing a unique program which can bring together others who are doing similar things, as well as new audiences.

Benefits: A substantive program which would round out Y programming for this part of our mission

Possible Pilot Project

Invite one guest to participate in multi-faceted program, including public talk, WILL interview, and involvement with one or more local congregation.

Start-Up Activities/Tasks

Create a working group on this subject, representing the collaborators listed above.
Establish a relationship with Interfaith in Action.

Project **Alternative Orientation (Freshman Camp)**

Description For decades, the Y's Freshman Camp helped introduce new students to campus life. This project does not envision us returning to that role. Rather it envisions reaching out to a smaller set of students who have the potential to be leaders on campus. The idea would be to identify and encourage a group of students to come to campus a few days early to participate in an Alternative Orientation which would introduce them to current student leaders, offer leadership training sessions and familiarize them with our student programs. As we restructure the Bailey Scholarship program, we could incorporate incoming freshman into this program. Being selected to attend Alternative Orientation should be an honor and recognition of their leadership efforts in high school. To help recruit, we could reach out to organizations such as the Mikva Challenge and Teachers for Social Justice.

Type of Project - Ethical Leadership, Social Justice, Environment, International, Faith

Collaborations

Campus: Housing, Admissions, Illinois Leadership Center, RSOs, campus ministries

Community: Local community leaders could be invited to talk about local issues in the community and ways students could be involved

Resources Needed

Staffing: .5 FTE, summer for program development

Building Space: Meeting space, space for guest to reside if over one night

Funding: Food, supplies, lodging and marketing materials (~ \$12/student if no lodging)

Hurdles and Benefits

Hurdles: Difficult to market to incoming freshmen, we need to see if there are ways we can send information out. Also for this project to be successful it is critical to line up commitments from students to come to campus early to attend session week-end prior to school.

Benefits: Students will be introduced to the Y as a fun, dynamic community. First year students will become more familiar with the University experience and resources. Students will identify issues they are interested in and explore ways to act on these issues. Students will learn about the resources provided by the YMCA. Students will connect with YMCA students who are working on issues they are interested in. Data will be collected on the interests of students for recruitment and follow-up.

Possible Pilot Project

Alternative Orientation program in Fall 2010.

Start-Up Activities/Tasks

Review curriculum used by other groups (ie Bonner Foundation). We also need to contact and develop working relationships with possible feeder organizations such as Teachers for Social Justice, Youth in Government and Mikva Challenge. Finally we need to secure commitments from current student leaders who will be returning in 2010 who will help plan and organize session next fall.

Project

Activist-in-Residence

Description This series would invite social justice activists from around the globe to talk about current struggles in their corner of the world in order to gain a better understanding (i.e. the nature of the conflict, how the communities engaged in these struggles view the U.S., and what we need to know about what is happening). These may not always be global issues but rather local issues and struggles taking place in communities from around the globe, such as the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, peace efforts in Thailand/Burma or labor struggles in Latin America. Guests would “live” in Champaign-Urbana for 7-10 days, interacting with students, faculty, and community residents in a variety of academic and non-academic programs, workshops, trainings, and informal discussions. Significant effort would be made towards planning opportunities for students, faculty, and community members to establish collaborative partnerships and plan actions around issues being addressed.

Type of Project - Ethical Leadership, Social Justice, Environment, International, Faith

Collaborations

Campus: Center for Global Studies, Cultural Houses, Allen Hall Unit One, campus ministries, student organizations

Community: Communities of Faith, local schools, non-profits/community organizations such as Champaign County Health Care Consumers, IMC, CCY, AFSC etc.

Resources Needed

Staffing: 5-10 hrs wk plus significant staff time the week before and the week of visits, may require more significant time investment in the program development stage.

Building Space: Meeting space, space for guest to reside

Funding: Honorarium, travel, food, and lodging for activists (range: \$5,000-10,000), additional funds for related events (~\$200-500) and marketing (\$500). Funding for additional staff if current staff cannot take on responsibilities and/or if we expand beyond 1-2 guests/semester. Possible funding source: University of Illinois Public Engagement Grant

Hurdles and Benefits

Hurdles: Time/costs of bringing international guests (Visas, etc.); Center for Global Studies has offered to handle administration of these tasks. Significant financial costs to bring in speakers.

Benefits: Potential for long-term collaborations with those “doing the work” overseas, one-on-one interaction with those “on the ground,” local capacity building through workshops and meetings, put a “human face” to conflicts and problems in other countries

Possible Pilot Project

Bring 1 guest, potentially for a shorter period of time and pilot types of activities. Attempt to connect with an already visiting activist or scholar and plan engagement activities with community and student organizations. Bring a domestic activist and plan programs around their visit similar to those that would be planned for an international activist.

Start-Up Activities/Tasks

Submitted proposal to Center for Public Engagement for funds. Develop list of potential international activists and community/campus partners.

Project **Summer Peace Camp**

Description There are a growing number of families in our community who are looking for alternative summer camp options with meaningful content for their kids. This project would offer families "value based" summer camp for school aged kids with an emphasis on non-violent conflict resolution, discussions about peace issues, promoting diversity and learning about many different of cultures around the world. Our building is underutilized in the summer; this project would be good use of our space and would have little other programming to conflict with. This project would bring young progressive families with small children into our building, likely fostering new friends and partners.

Type of Project - Social Justice, Ethical Leadership, International, Faith

Collaborations

Campus: College of Education, Vis-a- Vis (Y student group), Interfaith in Action (RSO), GEO

Community: Interfaith Alliance, CU Ministerial Alliance, Mennonite Church, Quakers and other communities of faith that have an interest in and experience with this type of project

Resources Needed

Staffing: Start-up activities would require at least a half time staff person for 6-8 months to research curriculum options, to recruit and staff a planning committee, to identify contacts in to organize outreach and publicity efforts. Once the project is started it would likely require 5-10 hours per week ongoing, with significantly more time spent in spring and summer

Building Space: We would need significant space during summer months for programming. Upcoming construction makes it unlikely this project could start prior to summer of 2011.

Funding: Initial staffing, curriculum and materials, camp counselors, publicity, space preparation. Fees could support the operation of the camp but start-up funds would likely be necessary to fully implement.

Hurdles and Benefits

Hurdles: This project is very different from everything else we do in programming at the Y. Key variables for success include strong curriculum, understanding demand for this service and costs associated, recruiting local experts in child care and education.

Benefits: Provide a service to the community particularly young families, developing skills and awareness among kids in our community, bring these new constituencies to the Y

Possible Pilot Project

Consider offering a Saturday workshop on conflict resolution for kids, involving some of the partners

Start-Up Activities/Tasks

Research curriculum possibilities through Southern Poverty Law Center and other university communities. Establish a planning committee representing the collaborators listed above. The Planning Committee would need to measure feasibility in terms of families interested; select and develop curriculum; recruit college students to serve as counselors; determine any licensing, space and code requirements; prepare space, purchase materials; and develop registration mechanisms, determining tuition fees and scholarships.

Project

Criminal Justice System

Description – Nationally, the Louis Gates incident with the Cambridge police highlighted the racial disparities of our criminal justice. Locally, the shooting of Kiwane Carrington in Champaign provided a painful reminder that our criminal justice system often treats people of color differently - that the scales of justice are weighted against some people more than others. One of the top issues in minor communities is the discriminatory aspects of our criminal justice system and many members of the local African American community are deeply concerned about the fairness in our local justice system. At a recent BOG meeting, a board member noted that this is not a 'black' community issues but one for our whole community. If our mission calls on us to "challenge" communities to practice "responsible leadership for social justice", do we have a responsible to address this issue?

Type of Project - Social Justice

Collaborations

Campus: Cultural Houses, Law School, Minority Student Organizations, Amnesty International, La Colectiva, Community Psychology (research), Social Work (Intern)

Community: Citizens for Peace and Justice, IMC, YWCA, communities of faith, ACLU, community members leading local effort around shooting Kiwane Carrington

Resources Needed

Staffing: We probably need a minimum of a half-time staff who would serve as an organizer - conducting one-on-one interviews, setting-up group meetings, gathering information, measuring interest of possible collaborating organizations. This could be done by an SW intern or other student who at least 2 hours of week. Some training might be needed.

Building Space: Meeting space.

Funding: Start-up funds would be needed if current staff or student intern not available. Possible funders include - IDF (\$10-25k), Civic engagement (\$20k), Sociological Initiatives Foundation (\$10-20k). This project has the potential to receive funds from national foundation that support community organizing, social justice and criminal justice reform.

Hurdles and Benefits

Hurdles: It will be important to not step on the toes of current efforts by community residents. It will be critical that we find a way to collaborate and not intrude.

Benefits: This project provides an opportunity to work with minority communities, expand our own diversity. Strengthen ties with communities of faith in town that are concerned with social justice. It can expand our profile in the community. Most importantly it advances our mission by addressing a fundamental issue of social justice.

Possible Pilot Project

After initial meetings, we could sponsor a series of campus 'conversations' about criminal justice system to determine who might be interested, mobilizing campus support

Start-Up Activities/Tasks

Interview current people active on issue to determine how we can help/fit in - what is our role? Hire staff or intern if current staff not involved. Reach out to key constituencies on campus - to develop a campus response to situation - not just a black community problem.

Project

Living and Learning Community

Description This project seeks to develop the 3rd floor residences into a more mission driven program by becoming a “Living and Learning Community”. It would incorporate opportunities for social justice education and community action into the YMCA private certified residence modeled after similar learning community programs offered by the University of Illinois. Currently there are no Living and Learning Communities on campus with a social justice or environmental activism theme. As we look at renovating our building this could add more of a mission purpose to our 3rd floor dorms. It could also incorporate an Activist-In-Residence project.

Type of Project - Ethical Leadership, Social Justice, Environment, International, Faith

Collaborations

Campus: Housing, Illinois Leadership Center, RSOs, campus ministries

Community: Will likely work with a variety of community organizations on programming

Resources Needed

Staffing: .5-1 FTE to develop program and train RA, Resident Advisor

Building Space: 3rd floor residence would require significant upgrades and renovations

Funding: Funding for renovations of third floor and staff salary, would also require an increase in programming budget for 3rd floor.

Hurdles and Benefits

Hurdles: Cost for renovation of 3rd floor dorms, significant time investment to develop program and make renovations, requires most significant financial resources of all programs proposed.

Benefits: Brings 3rd floor in line with the Y mission, could be tied in with Bailey scholarship, offers a holistic Y experience for students engaged in the Y mission, and may open the door for grant opportunities that could fund programs open to non-residents. Could serve as a place to house Activist-in-Residence.

Possible Pilot Project

Increase mission related programming directed at current residents that might encourage students interested in these issues to become third floor residents.

Start-Up Activities/Tasks

Identify people on campus who share an interest in the development of this type of live and learn community. Research grants and consider potential for this program when making all future building plans so as not to preclude possibility.

Project

10,000 Villages

Description – This idea is modeled after a program that was operated by the Heartland Peace Center in Springfield which had a number of programs that promoted peace. One of their programs was a store similar to 10,000 Villages which sold goods made in third world countries and helped promote economic development in those countries by creating a market for their goods. Not only are the international and economic development aspects of this project in line with our mission, but it provides another opportunity to bring folks into our building and introduce them to our work. One possible option would be to explore a partnership with 10,000 Villages which already has the expertise, infrastructure and reputation.

Type of Project – International, Social Justice

Collaborations

Campus: The development of a 10,000 Villages store in our building could strengthen our ties to with many different international communities. It also provide a great opportunity to bring a wide range of people who might not currently know about the Y into our building.

Community: Rather than try to start-up our own store, we could use this as an opportunity to develop a partnership with the Mennonite Church and others active in 10,000 Villages.

Resources Needed

Staffing: Initially, we would need to invest some staff time into exploring whether or not 10,000 Villages might be interested in a partnership. There are also several hurdles (see below) that we would have to investigate further to see if this is a viable project.

Building Space: This project would require space in our building. Further research would have to determine minimum space needs. It is unlikely that we would be able to start such a project if other hurdles are cleared until after the upcoming construction project is completed.

Funding: In the long run this project should be self supporting and possibly provide a revenue stream in terms of rent or other financial arrangements. However, there could be a need for some start-up funds to prepare the space properly and maybe some promotional efforts.

Hurdles and Benefits

Hurdles: There are three key hurdles that would need to be addressed to determine if this is a viable project: 1) Partnership with 10,000 Villages; 2) Space needs and availability; and 3) Possible zoning questions need to be researched.

Benefits: This project would bring many new people into the University YCMA and increase our visibility. It helps advance our mission by promoting cultural diversity and assisting low-income populations in other countries providing a market for their goods. Finally, it promotes a mission related use of building and could provide a source of revenue.

Possible Pilot Project

We could explore an arrangement with 10,000 Villages to use our building during an upcoming holiday season as a satellite location to see the level of interest and the potential of having a more permanent arrangement.

Start-Up Activities/Tasks

Before committing to this project we would need to further investigate and resolve the three hurdles noted above.