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# Big iDeas Proposal - "Omega Delta Phi's Young Knights Program"

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## Big iDeas Proposal – “Omega Delta Phi’s Young Knights Program”

### Participants:

- Pablo A. De Santiago – 4<sup>th</sup> yr Jr. Management Science
- John Trujillo – 2<sup>nd</sup> year Mechanical Engineering
- Vernon B Washington – 4<sup>th</sup> year Accounting
- Kee Lee – 4<sup>th</sup> year Accounting
- Winfred Ko – 3<sup>rd</sup> year Accounting and Economics
- Cleve Moten – 4<sup>th</sup> year Jr. Economics and Psychology
- Danny Fernandez – 4<sup>th</sup> year Accounting
- Jake Fields – 2<sup>nd</sup> year Psychology
- Ricardo Tovar – 2<sup>nd</sup> year Chemistry and Math
- Ben Perez – 3<sup>rd</sup> year General Business
- Julio Lopez – 4<sup>th</sup> year Economics and International Studies
- Daniel Briones – 4<sup>th</sup> year Economics with financial applications
- Various Omega Delta Phi SMU alumni

### Faculty and staff who will be consulted for advice:

- Fernando Salazar – Coordinator of Hispanic Student Services
- Raul Magdaleno – Meadows School of Art Diversity and Community Outreach
- Hector Rivera – Associate Professor in school of education

Outside help and coordination from Education is Freedom, a nonprofit organization designed to eliminate the barriers to higher education and promote equality of opportunity in college attendance. Offices located at local DISD schools like North Dallas, Adamson, and Madison. They will match up the mentors from SMU Omega Delta Phi with the mentees from DISD schools. Contact info:

Maria J Vasquez:

[mvasquez@educationisfreedom.org](mailto:mvasquez@educationisfreedom.org)

### Problem:

Many promising young students go to DISD high school with the wrong mentality. This mentality keeps many of them from challenging themselves and looking beyond high school. Here is an example of certain attitudes that can keep these young students from further pursuing an education:

- Content with simply passing classes instead of excelling

- Would rather work immediately after graduation instead of continuing with a post-secondary education
- Have not really thought about the future.
- Unknowing of what they should do now in order to achieving their dream

Solution:

A program focused and getting the high school students looking towards the future – ODPhi’s Young Knights Mentoring Program.

We are each assigned two students from local Dallas high schools. These high school students will not necessarily be the ones at the top of their class; instead we want students with GPAs around 3.0, because they show promise but still have room to improve. Each member must meet with these students on their own time at least once a month for 3 hours at a time. In addition, we shall hold group get together twice a month with our mentees.

We begin by surveying the mentees with a survey to evaluate their current attitudes towards high school, post-secondary education, and the future. At the end of the semester we again give the survey to see how their attitudes have changed. Also, we see how the program has affected their grades by comparing GPAs for the semester with their cumulative GPAs. We do this as a measure of our techniques effectiveness.

When we meet with the students we help them not just by tutoring. There exists plenty of tutoring programs already out there (Group Excellence, TAKS tutoring, and other tutoring programs.) We focus on changing their attitudes about education and the future.

We plan on these attitudes through providing workshops, career interest assessments, visiting college campuses, helping fill out scholarship and summer program applications, and by simply being good role models.

We know test our ideas and refine them this spring semester and build upon what was effective.

We want the funding from BigIdeas so that we can have adequate resources to change these high school students’ lives.

Calendar/timeline:

Program begins August 2009 and ends Spring 2010.

Assessments and surveys will be given at the quarter, one-half, three-quarter, and end of the program to track and document progress

Anticipated Benefit:

- Quality community service that can change the lives of these DISD students, some of which may be future SMU students.
- Different approach to mentoring through stressing the future rather than just tutoring can be explored. This could provide an opportunity to test different approaches to

mentoring which could be used by programs like the Hispanic Youth Symposium which will be coming to SMU starting this fall.

- Provides a model for other people to use.

Budget for August 2009 – Spring 2010:

Transportation	\$200
College Entrance Support Materials	\$350
Career Interest Assessment Materials	\$200
Copying and Printing Expenses	\$100
Guest speakers	\$150
Miscellaneous	\$100
<u>Total Anticipated Budget:</u>	\$1,100

Person Responsible For Funds:

Pablo Alejandro De Santiago

President of SMU Omega Delta Phi (a multicultural service/social fraternity)