

A Chicken and Egg Dilemma... How a Masters-Focused College Can Build and Retain the Interest of an External PSM Board of Advisors and Still Pay the Bills

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The College at Brockport has built a strong external PSM Board of Advisors whose input has been critical to our successful PSM program development. In the fall of 2010, the campus will admit its first class of graduate students to the Biological Sciences Masters of Science PSM track. In the future we anticipate adding a master's program in applied mathematics and a graduate certificate program composed of the professional development (i.e. "plus") courses for science professionals. In this poster we will present the ways in which one may seek out and find the participation of advisory board members from business, industry, non-profit, and governmental agencies. Here we will share tips and tricks that we have used to solicit new members, and we will provide advice on how to best bring new members up to speed on the PSM program concept, while carefully addressing the benefits to their organizations.

The poster features a yellow background with a green header and footer. The header includes the College at Brockport logo and contact information. The title is in bold black text. Below the title is a subtitle and a section heading. The main content is a numbered list of 10 items arranged in two columns. The list is framed by a thin black border.

**A Chicken and Egg Dilemma:
Advisors to The College at Brockport
PSM Masters program in Biological Sciences**

How to get them and how to keep them

1. Email survey to assess interest in the Bio and Life Science professional community.
2. Alumni focus groups
3. Friends of friends (BINGO !)
4. New member notebook and print materials
5. Choose members at level below CEO
6. Meetings each semester at times, places, days of week preferred by board members
7. Prepare materials in advance
8. Email communication
9. Career Services involvement (internships)
10. Chicken and Egg benefits to securing board early

We will showcase the new board-member kit that we have created and other examples of orientation materials that inform new members of pragmatic but essential steps to creating a sense of unity with the campus's PSM mission, and a spirit of team collaboration with the campus's internal PSM Advisory Council. We will also discuss the sampling frame from which we surveyed members via email. This pool of candidates included leads

from former students, and from lists of bio and life-science firms in the Rochester regional area, which represented a good match for the needs of our premier start-up program in biological sciences. Lastly, we will also discuss the conscious decisions that the internal advisory council made in terms of board of advisor selection and recruitment. For example, we steered away from inviting members that are engaged at the highest levels of large multinational organizations (e.g., CEOs) choosing to focus, instead, on operational level leaders such as directors of engineering so that we could be more assured of our ability to secure internships for our students in labs and other units of the organization in which they can gain expertise. Similarly, we also chose to reach out to small business owners and to Ph.D. scientists whose backgrounds would be appropriate for mentoring students and for lab leadership.

Thanks to the support of the Alfred Sloan P. Foundation, it has been possible for our campus team to create programs even in the midst of a budget crisis and economic stress. While the acquisition of a strong Board of Advisors can be viewed as a chicken and egg dilemma in which it is difficult to determine which facet of the PSM program to work on first—the program, the faculty buy-in, or the external support from Business/ Industry/Non-profit/Governmental agencies—we believe that the establishment of a sound board of advisors serves as a fulcrum for development of each of the subsequent steps in the development cycle. As such, we advocate for the creation of an appropriate board of advisors early in the development cycle, even at the cost of increased complexity and additional time commitment.