

The Underground Coffeehouse

AS Office of Assessment
Structure & Program Advisory Committee



*The AS Assessment Process
2012 Board Recommendations*

Introduction

The Underground Coffeehouse is an office within AS Productions that provides weekly programming to the Western community. In the past year, The Underground Coffeehouse has made major changes to the programming provided to offer a wider range of activities on nights that are popular to students. This is the currently approved mission statement for their office:

The Underground Coffeehouse Programming sponsors free weekly concerts featuring students, local and regional performers, weekly open mics to give Western students and local community musicians the opportunity to share their talents, weekly trivia nights to allow students to engage actively and meet others in their campus community, and weekly club sponsored events to provide a venue for clubs to outreach to the community and gain more active participation in their events. The Underground Coffeehouse provides free comprehensive and accessible programming Monday through Thursday in the Viking Union Underground Coffeehouse VU 350.

Programs/Services Provided

Before The Underground Coffeehouse made their substantial changes to their programming at the tail end of the 2010-2011 academic year, they hosted weekly Tuesday open-mic nights, and Wednesday and Friday weekly concert series. In their new model, they introduce two new nights of programming and took away the Friday night concert series due to student feedback about nights they are interested in attending. In the new model, their programs that are provided weekly to the Western community are as follows:

- *Monday – **Trivia Night***
- *Tuesday – **Open-Mic Night***
- *Wednesday – **Weekly Concert Series***
- *Thursday – **AS Club Night***

Strategic Recommendations

1. Change the Underground coffeehouse statement of purpose to reflect the current trajectory of the office's programming.

This change is an alteration from the old mission statement in its curt language and its clarity, as well as emphasizing the program's dedication to civic concerns and individual expression. The revised statement is as follows:

The Underground Coffeehouse programs weekly events in VU 350, including trivia night, open mic night, live music showcasing local and regional talent, and AS club night in order to entertain students and strengthen their connection to the Western community. The Coffeehouse also serves as a venue for creative expression and appreciation as well as social engagement.

The specificity of this mission statement has been discussed as an issue, but given the success of the aforementioned programming changes, it seems likely that this statement will prove to be representative in the coming years, and informative to those unaware with the programming in the venue.

2. Advise the creation and implementation of better means of evaluations, assessment, and standardization of practices.

The office should seek to standardize assessment priorities, categories, and practices for better comparison from year to year in order to identify areas for improvement in the future. These policies are to be managed internally by the AS Productions Assistant Director for Marketing and Assessment, with the outside consultation of the AS Office of Assessment.

3. Recommend that steps be taken to improve the overall attendance and reputation of Underground Coffeehouse Trivia Nights.

The office coordinator, the ASP Marketing Coordinator for Arts and Entertainment, and the ASP Assistant Director for Marketing and Assessment should evaluate the best format of trivia night format to increase the attendee satisfaction and retention. The office should provide themed trivia nights and/or themed trivia rounds for every trivia night— evaluate which is more successful in terms of satisfaction and attention, and use these results to cater to the tastes of the students regularly served—as well as reaching out to those under-served. Students not currently reached ought to be the focus of marketing campaigns.

Staff ought to develop means of host preparation and recruitment in order to increase host-attendee engagement and excitement, which will create a stable audience for this important AS-affiliated location.

An awareness of assessment pertaining to these stated changes will identify and ensure improvements in the short- and long-term.