

The highlights shared in our report this year came at the suggestion of our student leaders and are due to their leadership. Our highlights for this year celebrate our first graduating class of Bonners as well as continue to build on the strengths of our Bonner Leadership Team and the challenge of improving our usage of BWBRS.

CELEBRATING BONNER SENIORS

This year marks our first class of graduating Bonner Seniors! We graduated five Bonners out of our inaugural group. We are proud of the five students who overcame the challenges of shaping a new program. Bonner was new to Macalester four years ago when a group of 15 bright-eyed and eager first years set foot on campus prior to orientation for their Bonner retreat. We navigated through a year of firsts for all involved. We learned that students saw this “new” Bonner program as an opportunity to put their stamp on the program and design something new. While this was definitely a “new” program to Macalester, the Bonner model was not so new. We learned the dance between students taking a lead and helping to shape what Bonner would look like at Macalester and the fact that the program model was well established. This group has navigated through a rocky river and those who made it to the end have made a tremendous impact on the program.

Our seniors were celebrated at the end of the year through a ceremony led by our community building committee and the Bonner Leadership Team. Each senior was introduced by a fellow Bonner who shared something they appreciated about them or a special account of what that Senior meant to them. From the reactions of the seniors, it was prevalent that this was meaningful to them. As part of the dinner Bonners wrote notes of appreciation to one another that they received at the end of the semester. Each of the seniors prepared a presentation to share with the Bonners and staff. The underlying theme was that of gratitude for the experience of being in the Bonner program and how each of them was impacted by being involved in the program. They most appreciated the community that was being built and that this was constantly a work in progress but that support from their peers, staff and the overall network exists to ensure that “Bonner Love” is at the heart of this community.

BONNER LEADERSHIP TEAM – THE BLT

The Bonner Leadership Team (BLT) was the idea of Bonner Congress Representatives Tsesa Monaghan and Suzanne Oh and Bonner Senior Intern Emily Lesnick in 2010. They began their leadership roles thinking about how to engage more Bonners in leadership of the Macalester program over the summer at SLI. They jumped in at the start of the year with flushing out the details of determining size, developing an application process for recruiting applicants, and selecting members for the BLT. The membership structure was to have two representatives from each class year, the Congress Reps, and the Senior Intern. By Congress, they had selected our first leadership team.

The BLT in its first year took responsibility for increasing BWBRS usage as well as developing standards for distributing community fund dollars, and a year-end Bonner Celebration. This year the students on the BLT carried out these projects but worked on refining their processes and setting clear expectations and guidelines for BLT leadership and the Community Fund.

They were most proud of creating a BLT Constitution (aka By-laws). This idea stemmed from several conversations between the Bonner Coordinator and the co-Senior Interns and the Coordinator and BLT members where they expressed frustration with circular conversations and not feeling that decisions once made were always followed. This sounded all too familiar to non-profit board issues and conversations, so it was suggested that the group develop a set of by-laws and document in minutes what decisions were

made so they could be referred to in the future. The students worked diligently to determine length of terms of BLT members, structure, meeting frequency, and a process for making decisions and recording them. This effort will set the base for the efficacy and future success of the BLT.

BWBRs

This year we have greatly improved our BWBRs usage; however, we continue to find this area challenging.

The logging and tracking of student service hours increased dramatically due to the increased leadership and responsibility of the Bonner Leader Team (BLT) and one of the Bonner Senior Interns. The BLT held BWBRs Bonanzas at the beginning and end of the semester. Bonners dropped in for conversation, snacks and, most importantly, enter their hours, and get assistance with BWBRs. These events increased usage and reduced the amount of administrative time staff devoted to those tasks.

Increased support from one of the Senior Interns specialized in BWBRs also aided in this increase. Our Senior Intern was able to provide 1:1 attention and support to students behind in their logging of hours. She shared expertise and led by example in her diligence of maintaining her own BWBRs hours as well as responsibility for our Bonner program overall BWBRs maintenance. Her proficiency in the system allowed her to help train students in developing their CLAs and provide ongoing support for using CLAs to define position goals and measure progress toward them.

The administrative upkeep of BWBRs this spring was shared by the Bonner Senior Intern and Bonner Coordinator. This was effective as the Senior Intern entered new community partners, positions, and training and enrichment activities. She diligently followed up with staff to make sure that she had information to keep the training and enrichment activities up to date.

The Senior Intern also incentivized the logging of BWBRs hours by recognizing students who entered their hours regularly by sending them candy through their campus mail. She was proud of the fact that at the end of the first semester 41 of 43 Bonners had entered some hours into the system. Overall we had a 76% of our Bonners entering some hours into BWBRs. This has been a great increase for our program.

To facilitate and encourage entering of hours into BWBRs next year we will be adding a “channel” into our students home page for entering in their student employment hours. The students will then have a reminder when they enter in their work hours that they then need to enter in their BWBRs hours. The Senior Interns also suggested making sure that students understand the big picture and how the Foundation utilizes the information in BWBRs.