University Outreach: New task or new mindset?

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Who are we? Why do we care?

- Justin
  - Ambassador of North America (based in Rochester, New York), CommOps, Marketing, Diversity Team… generally, a generalist
  - Student at Rochester Institute of Technology
- Jona
  - Ambassador of Europe (based in Tirana, Albania) and part of Localization Team and Diversity Team
  - Student at University of Tirana
  - Member of Open Labs Hackerspace

Who are the Ambassadors?

An Ambassador is…

- Voice
  - Representing Fedora and the project at events across the world
  - Putting people behind a name (despite popular belief, Fedora isn't all powered by robots… mostly)
- Outreach
  - Bringing Fedora into new and exciting places for new and exciting people
  - Impacting a future generation of users and contributors of all ages
- Advocacy
  - Teaching and showing how Fedora improves the computing experience, makes life easier, protects your freedom
- #WeAreFedora

Who are the Campus Ambassadors?

The Campus Ambassadors are…

- Outreach to students at variety of different levels (university, high school, primary school, other levels)
- Campus ≠ Student
  - Includes professors, teachers, system admins, and other faculty members
- Impacting all kinds of students
  - Obviously, computing students are applicable (programming, software in Fedora, creating projects with Fedora, etc.)
  - Overlap with non-technical students too: literature, philosophy, sciences, mathematics, liberal arts… Fedora and open source can wear many different hats
- Working at all levels of teaching to help bring **information and resources** about Fedora and open source technology into discussion

Well… umm…

- That all sounds great, right? Unfortunately, it's not quite reality
- Campus Ambassadors program was proposed around 2009
  - Never fully took off or was launched
- It's a complicated history
- …and we want to help offer clarity to the situation!

Looking back

Origin stories

- Because of no launch, the original program does not have much of a documented past
  - Also is not actively maintained today
- Why did it start?
  - Improve outreach towards students exposed to open source and Fedora
  - Putting Fedora in hands of students today to grow the platform tomorrow
  - Bringing in younger contributors to help bring new ideas to the Fedora Project
- What worked? What didn't?
  - Program was discussed but never fully lifted off – stagnated over time
  - Not easy to find info like this today

EDU Activity: By the numbers

- Number of events focused towards students / education by release:
  - F20: 11
  - F21: 4
  - F22: 2
  - F23: 5
- The caveat
  - More than likely there are more events… but it's difficult to find a record of them or any info about impact
  - Sourced from the events page on the wiki and past recorded events

Looking here

Do you mean… here right now?

- It exists, *but* no clear way about how it fits into the overall Ambassadors program
  - Requirement to be an Ambassador first and then become a Campus Ambassador (although that was just recently changed)
- Needs more direction and focus… some energy!

Event strategy

- Conferences work well for bringing in large variety of people, including students (see: *I contributed, but now what?*)
- Showing and teaching students what kind of things they can build with Fedora and open source is a popular draw for them
- Exposing difference places of Fedora and open source is also a draw (it's not all programming, seriously)
- Showing user freedom / empowering the user (through open source) can also be popular – you have the power to shape your desktop, not a company

Tools and utilities

- Badges
  - Great way to gauge impact at events
  - Putting number to who interacted with Fedora and took the time to scan the badge
  - Also useful at seeing previous and future involvement with the badges (checking in on their accounts months later and seeing what badges they have earned)
- Datagrepper
  - Understanding the way our contributors are interacting and engaging with the project
  - Fedmsg is the firehose of contributions, Datagrepper is the nozzle

Looking ahead

Four main areas to look at

Onboarding   Not just students

Mentorship   Visibility

Onboarding

Looking at: Onboarding

- Need clear steps for students and faculty members to get involved (1-2-3)
- Bringing people in and connecting them
  - Connecting dots to make people feel involved and part of the community
  - Providing them with resources and interactions they need – physical meeting space is powerful
- Addressing mentorship and how to guide new students towards being Fedora advocates without creating hurdles
  - Mentors or mentorship? Regardless of how it happens, needs to be simpler and easy to bring motivated individuals into the Project

Mentorship

Reevaluating: Mentorship

- Empowering current Campus Ambassadors and students to mentor each other
  - "Standard" training helps set right path for interested participants
  - After they are trained, they can train others if resources + guidance are available
  - Tl;dr? Teaching to teach!
- Similar to other programs, lightening qualifications on mentorship policy will be important for it to flourish
  - Perhaps… mentorship, not mentors
  - Removing the status / title as a "mentor" and looking at mentorship as the method
  - Tl;dr? We need to have people to bring more people in – burnout is concern

Not just students

Resources beyond just for students

- Empowering instructors, professors, teachers, system administrators, other faculty members at schools is a huge part of a new direction
  - Students are not the only players here
- The people who have the power to bring Fedora + open source to students
- Having specific guidelines for faculty members would also be useful
  - "Creating a Fedora lab" (although a student version may also be helpful)
  - "Teaching with open source and Fedora"
  - "Using open source and Fedora in your infrastructure"
  - "Breaking down proprietary walls in your school"
- Noting difference between university + high school level

Visibility

Improving: Visibility

- Establishing a commons for Campus Ambassadors is important… even if mailing lists and IRC are not the preferred commons
  - Mailing lists and IRC still have their role for logged participation, meetings, and keeping the project open
  - Are there things we can improve for the contributor experience? (see: Fedora Hubs)
- End of the day, the work happening needs to be seen and easily referenced
  - Reports are important, documenting success is important
  - Current method is not the most efficient – are there other platforms for communication that we could be using? Or better tools? Utilizing social media? What else?

Reach out to us!

IRC: #fedora-campusamb
Mailing list: campus-ambassadors@lists.fedoraproject.org

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Open discussion