Diversity Activities: Fundraising Communication

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Course: Proposal Writing, Grant Seeking and Fundraising Communication (for upper-level Professional Communication BA students and MA students). The course was designed with an EDI focus.

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Activity 1: Increasing Diverse Donor Participation in Fundraising Campaigns. Students imagine they work for a non-profit community organization in a diverse low-income urban neighborhood and are tasked with raising funds to support a range of programs (after-school tutoring, English lessons for adult newcomers, youth sports teams, employment counselling, and seniors' social groups). Students are asked to identify strategies to bring meaning to donors' philanthropy for each of four demographically diverse groups and propose gain-frame and loss-frame appeals to target each donor.

Activity 2: Designing EDI-Positive Communications and Events for a Diverse Donor Base. Students imagine they work as fundraisers for a hospital in a rapidly changing multicultural community (50 per cent of the population are members of a visible minority; the top country of birth for community immigrants is India). The objective is for students to adapt existing fundraising events to this expanded donor base and propose new events that engage the growing South Asian population. Students work in groups to develop a headline, a message and an event description.

Activity 3: Simon Says AI Chatbot Client Interview Simulation Activity. "Simon" is an AI chatbot built by Ryerson University PhD (ABD) student Tanya Pobuda. "Simon" incorporates a client-interview simulation for a fictitious HIV/AIDS hospital and advocacy nonprofit that plans to open a 10-bed in-patient unit. In groups of 5, students open a slide presentation to learn about the nonprofit cause and mission. Via a chatbot link, students conduct a short "interview" with their client "Simon" to obtain basic information about his needs. Students return to the slide presentation and discuss which headline, message and event, from a range of options, would be most appropriate and strategic for the campaign.