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DATE: May 11, 2018
TO: Eileen Coogan
FROM: Shelley Robertson
RE: Evaluation memo

INTRODUCTION

Allegany Franciscan Ministries' Fellowship for the Common Good is a 12-month leadership development program for community-based leaders to improve their knowledge and develop their leadership skills. The expected impact is that fellows will use what they have learned for the good of their community. AIM was hired to deliver the interactive program, which includes in-person and virtual sessions, coaching, and other leadership supports. Allegany Franciscan Ministries commissioned an evaluation of the program to determine whether it is meeting its goals. Evaluation questions are as follows:

- Did the fellows develop as civic leaders?
- Do the fellows take action to advance their communities?
- What worked during this first year, what didn't, and what did we learn?

Data in this memo are from the following sources:

- Interviews with 12 of the 15 fellows; an additional fellow responded via email.
- Baseline assessment of coaching goals.

Please see the evaluation framework for a complete description of the questions, indicators, data collection and analysis methodology. Because this memo is intended for Allegany Franciscan Ministries and AIM, no additional background is provided.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

100% of fellows reported tangible benefits from participating

Fellows reported a number of benefits from participating in the program. The most prevalent was the content of the sessions, followed by the coaching. A few representative quotes are provided below:

- Another one was organization, which is for profit and nonprofit.
- I learned a lot about [how] communities work. The asset mapping was very eye-opening to me.
- The greatest benefit from my perspective is the life coach. That has been the greatest benefit in moving me forward in my leadership skills in the community, questioning and challenging my thoughts and action for why I do things in a community, having me look at it in a different perspective.
- I love the fact that we were all assigned, and we have the opportunity to have coaches to help with just some of the things that we personally may be facing. But also, that can help provide feedback with the projects that we all have chosen.

83% of fellows have applied their learning

Ten of the 12 fellows (83%) interviewed provided an example of applying what they learned. For example, two fellows have started a nonprofit, another has built their board, a third has engaged five pastors in a coalition, and a fourth has established new relationships with local government officials: "I used to go to the council meeting, the county and city commissioner meetings. I used to go to those on the defense. Since I'm on one of the fellows now I have more private conversations with the commissioners versus I'm going to see you at the committee commission meeting and that's where we are going back and forth." Other applications related to soft skills. For example, one fellow reported applying their new skills "at my job. Certain managers, I can't go to them for certain things; certain employees, I can't go to them for certain things." Another noted that "Putting my mind to one thing has definitely been something that's helped me that I learned through the fellowship." A third noted, "[Public versus private] is one of the things that I actually did differently ... that I'm adapting [to do]."

When asked, only six fellows identified any barriers to applying their new skills and knowledge and only one (the barrier of time) was mentioned more than once.

Two-thirds of fellows increased their community engagement

Eight of the 12 fellows (67%) stated they had become more engaged in their community since beginning the fellowship. One reported participating in events like food drives and neighborhood cleanups, another reported attending community meetings, while a third reported being a speaker at local schools. Other fellows noted they were already very engaged and two reported reducing their engagement to be more productive with their remaining commitments.

In terms of their network, fellows reported networking with other fellows and expanding their network outside of the fellowship. A few also mentioned using their network. For example, one person reported referring a client to a fellow who could help, while another was disseminating information on programs through his network.

The fellowship can improve communication, scheduling, and travel arrangements

Fellows were asked what Allegany Franciscan Ministries and/or AIM could do better in the future. Please note that fellows were very pleased with the fellowship overall and were specifically encouraged to provide feedback. Only a few items were mentioned by more than two fellows: communication, scheduling, and travel arrangements. As one fellow noted, “We are receiving a lot of different requests. We’re receiving a lot of different statements from different components of the program and it’s a bit confusing.” A few specifically noted that the coaches provided conflicting information. Another noted, “I believe that they should have the agenda for the whole program at the beginning. People should know what they’re truly getting into ‘cause I believe that a lot of people did not know.” Regarding travel arrangements, fellows recommended doing the tours as group, that there should be more information about the community provided, and that fellows from that community could provide ideas for the tour.

The following ideas were only mentioned by one or two fellows each but may be helpful in program planning: recruiting fellows at the same level of leadership, more connection to the Common Good Initiative, different consultants, no dress code, provide funding for projects or helping fellows access resources, allow fellows to nominate people for next year, clarity about expectations for the project (is it an exercise or a proposal?), distribute the stipend quarterly and clarify its use re: expenses, provide training on the tablet, improve the virtual sessions, and have the fellows from each community participate in the virtual sessions as a group at a local site.

The next section provides baseline data on the coaching assessments.

FELLOWS COACHING GOALS AND BASELINE ASSESSMENT

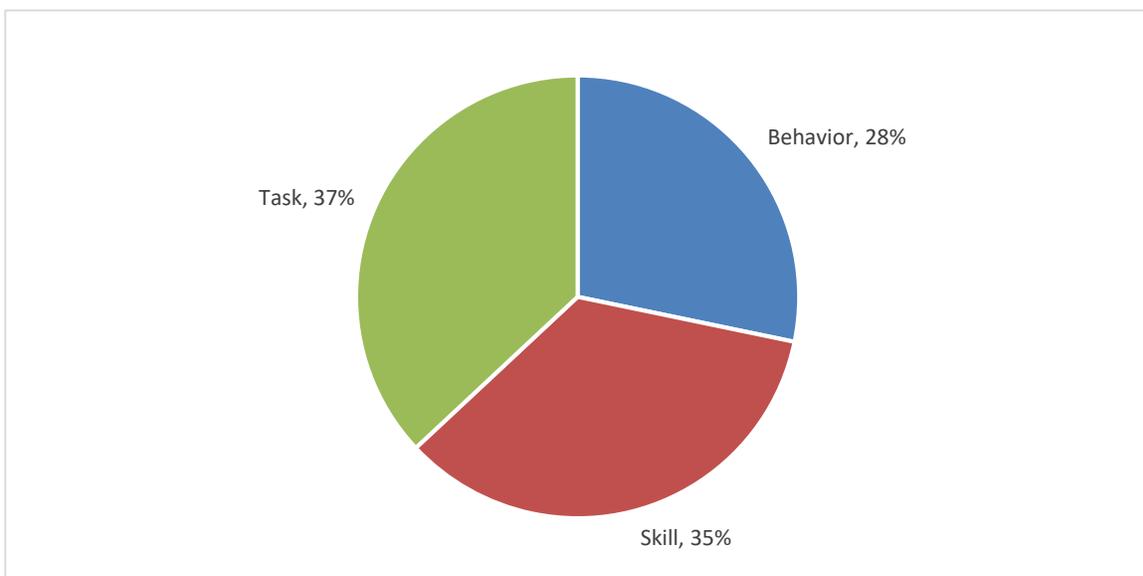
Coaches were asked to conduct baseline assessments of their fellows' goals using a simple tracking tool designed with input from the coaching facilitator. Each goal was categorized as a skill, behavior, or task and rated from 1 to 5. Figure 1 has the rating guidelines.

Figure 1: Rating guidelines

<p>Skill: (1) never use – (5) frequently use</p> <p>Behaviors: (1) never – (5) almost always</p> <p>Task: (1) have not yet begun – (5) task is complete</p>
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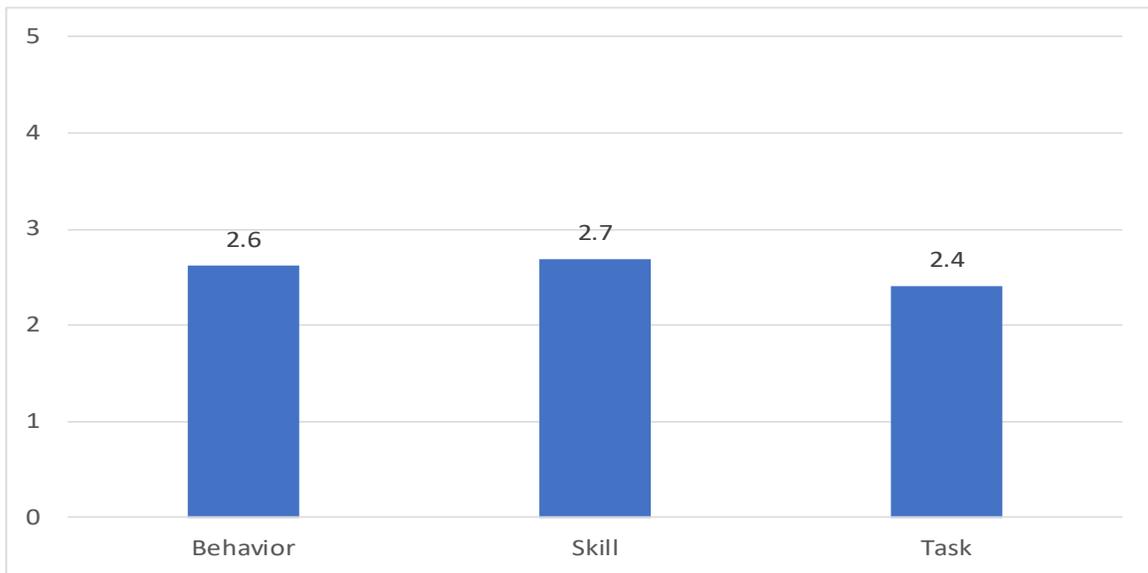
Coaches provided baseline assessments on 15 fellows; there were 46 goals. Figure 2 provides the types of goals fellows have identified. As shown, task goals are the most common, followed by skill, and then behavior. Please see the Appendix for a complete listing of fellows' goals.

Figure 2: Type of goals



Finally, Figure 3 provides the baseline rating, by goal type. As shown, baseline ratings are similar for each type of goal. The overall baseline rating was 2.6 out of 5. These data will be updated in June and in October to chart fellows' progress.

Figure 3: Mean baseline ratings, per goal type



RECOMMENDATIONS

Please note that the recommendations are based on data from the in-person session conducted in January and interviews with fellows conducted in April.

- The team may wish to consider whether it should be a goal for the fellows to engage with each other and, if so, if additional time should be made for that. The team may wish to consider if that goal, if important, could be better supported with technology.
- AIM may wish to review the coaching goals to ensure they are aligned with the fellowship's goals: developing as civic leaders and advancing communities.
- Fellows recommend improving communication, scheduling, and travel arrangements.