01
The Problem

DePaul University, known for its top ranked business and technology programs, came to PeopleGrove looking for a way to expand alumni mentoring culture and accelerate career networking opportunities for all DePaul students.

Prior to working with PeopleGrove, DePaul had built a mentoring program and cultivated strong relationships with faculty in the Driehaus College of Business, but realized engagement and buy-in was not consistent across all colleges. In order to solidify a culture of mentorship and bring career conversations and mentoring into the wider campus ecosystem, the DePaul Career Center recognized that there was a need to integrate mentoring into undergraduate courses and leverage technology to do so.

02
Goals

The DePaul goal was three-fold:

1. Educate faculty about the benefits of alumni mentoring
2. Increase perceived value of career exploration amongst students
3. Incorporate ASK (Alumni Sharing Knowledge) Network participation directly into undergraduate curriculums

03
Strategy

Leslie Chamberlin, Associate Director of Alumni Services at the DePaul Career Center, led the effort to integrate the DePaul ASK Network across campus. To do so, she articulated a compelling success story, connected with faculty to understand their needs and how the ASK Network could support them, and then embarked on a tour of classrooms, career fairs, and other forums across campus to drive signups and student engagement.

Step 1: Develop Relationships with Faculty

The first step was to leverage the faculty, who are regarded as having tremendous influence over students, past and present. By developing relationships with faculty who were teaching career-development related courses, the Career Center worked with these instructors to integrate the ASK Network into their existing curriculums. This resulted in a large number of students creating profiles and utilizing the platform.

Step 2: Prove Value Through Coaching

To demonstrate immediate value, alumni were made available to students in preparation for DePaul's quarterly job fairs. During this preparation, students and alumni worked on "elevator pitches," storytelling, and interview etiquette. Not only did this "light mentoring" excite students about the power of alumni mentoring, the exercise also gave mentors a better understanding of undergraduate needs.

Step 3: Operationalize Mentorship

After an extremely successful launch, the ASK Network began to scale through overwhelmingly positive word of mouth. The Career Center set out to develop easy methods for mentees to engage with alumni mentors. They created three-step processes for outreach, informational interviews, and thoughtful follow-ups. This content was incorporated into student workshops and presentations, and shared with faculty to integrate into course assignments.

04
Impact

The ASK Network has been incorporated into courses as a mandatory requirement for students across disciplines - ranging from the College of Science and Health to the College of Education. The ASK Network is also currently being utilized by a wide range of traditional and nontraditional students, with increases in student and alumni engagement, student preparation, and company connections.

05
Key Learnings to Building a Robust Alumni Program

- Create personal connections with faculty, educate them about the benefit of alumni networking for their students

- Provide tangible examples of how alumni mentoring adds value to students

- Develop structured course assignments around the platform or program