
Advising and Counseling Center (ACC) AQIP Action Project

Spring 2008 Focus
Group Summary

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**Advising and Counseling Center (ACC)
AQIP Action Project
Focus Group Summary
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The goal of the Advising and Counseling Center (ACC) is to provide a comprehensive advising and counseling center for students. The ACC will coordinate and support a program that provides students with academic information and personal counseling, and assist students in developing sound educational, career, and professional goals in order to make more effective decisions about courses and programs according to their values, interests, and skills.

Focus sessions were held during the spring 2008 semester for two purposes. Two sessions addressed the ACC AQIP Action Project. Members of Institutional Research and Planning met with two student groups on campus; SJC Student Government and the Trades and Technology Student Advisory Group. The students were asked about student orientation, placement testing, and their advisors. The results of these sessions follow in this report. Six additional sessions followed up to the fall 2007 semester, Noel-Levitz national survey on student satisfaction. Students were asked about advising, financial aid, instruction and registration. The results from the Noel-Levitz sessions can be found in the Summary of Noel-Levitz Focus Groups report.

At the ACC focus sessions an introduction and questions were handed out and read to the students. A copy of the hand-out is attached. Also attached are the detailed student responses and a copy of the AQIP Action Project with Annual Update.

<u>Group</u>	<u># Present</u>
Student Government	13
Trades and Technology Student Advisory	10

Student Orientation

Most of the students in both groups have attended new student orientations. Nothing was singled out as the “best.” Individual responses include

- It was in-depth and thorough.
- Nothing was wrong with it.
- The aviation orientation was a great experience.
- It was chaos getting all the computers going.

Suggestions for improvement include

- All students should have to go. I should not be excluded because I have a degree.
- Give more breaks and have refreshments.
- Make some parts optional so we don’t have to hear about stuff we already know.
- Better organization of the hand-outs and the speakers.

Placement Testing

Most of the students in both groups understood how the placement tests would be used. Responses ran the gambit from “liked the idea” to “simple” to “boring” to “hated it.” One

student responded that the testing room was small and stuffy, and suggested that the room have a fan.

Advisor

Most of the students in both groups indicated that they know their advisor. It was suggested that (1) advisor be assigned at orientation and (2) the cumulative credits be set lower than 24 so students know and work with their program advisor sooner.

While one student indicated that he was introduced to his program/faculty advisor “right away,” others responded that they had to ask for one or they got theirs by accident or only when needed. One student learned who his advisor was after he was “locked out” from registering for classes.

There were mixed responses about advisor knowledge. One student is getting plenty of help with her plans to transfer to Fort Lewis. Another student responded that his advisor is “totally lost.” A few students responded that they use the catalog and don’t depend on an advisor.

Students also had mixed responses about the information they have received. Some students received additional information from programs such as EDGE, aviation and automotive while others had only been given a packet of information without any explanation. Students also responded that financial aid and scholarship qualifications were difficult to determine.

Because the focus groups reached very few students (23), the Advising and Counseling Center should not rely heavily on the information in this report. However, the center may be able to glean some ideas for improvement from this report.

Advising and Counseling Center (ACC)
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Focus Group Hand-Out

The goal of the Advising and Counseling Center (ACC) is to provide a comprehensive advising and counseling center for students. The ACC will coordinate and support a program that provides students with academic information and personal counseling, and assist students in developing sound educational, career, and professional goals in order to make more effective decisions about courses and programs according to their values, interests, and skills.

Student Orientation

- a. What were the best parts?
- b. What areas should be changed?
- c. How would you improve student orientation?

Placement Testing

- a. Did you understand what the placement test was going to be used for?
- b. Were you prepared to take a placement test for Math and English?
- c. What were you told before and after the placement test?

Advisor

- a. Do you know who your advisor is?
- b. Did you receive a program or faculty advisor?
- c. How did you find out who your advisor was?
- d. Is your advisor knowledgeable about your program or transfer options?
- e. Were you provided with information on:
 1. An Education Plan
 2. Career and Life Plan
 3. Interest Inventory
 4. Resources available to you
 5. Financial Aid and Scholarship opportunities
 6. Developing a schedule

Advising and Counseling Center (ACC) AQIP Action Project
Focus Group Responses

TOPICS	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED	STUDENT ACTIONS/EXPERIENCES	COLLEGE CHANGES
ADVISOR			
Do you know who your advisor is?	Some don't know what an education plan is.	Most of the Trades and Technology group knew who their advisor was. One student just found out.	Need a lower credit hour limit so people know their advisor sooner.
Did you receive a program or faculty advisor?	Is that a written plan?	You have to speak to one after 24 credit hours because they lock you out of your account. I had to speak with him to get my account opened back up.	Students need to be setup with an advisor at orientation so they can walk through your degree and classes needed.
How did you find out who your advisor was?	Some thought you had to write a letter for each scholarship.	Half of the Student Government group knew who their advisor was.	Incoming freshmen need an advisor. It would make knowing what to take a lot easier.
Is your advisor knowledgeable about your program or transfer options?	Some thought you could write one letter and use the same letter for all scholarship applications.	I see a different one every time.	
Were you provided with information on: An Education Plan, Career and Life Plan, Interest Inventory, Resources available to you, Financial Aid and Scholarship opportunities, Developing a schedule		I received an advisor after my account was locked because I had more then 24 credit hours.	
		I was introduced to my advisor right away. He walked me over to the instrumentation room and told me everything I need to know.	
		I had to request an advisor myself.	
		I was seeking help in other areas. The person who helped me became my advisor.	
		I asked someone. She came to me and said, "I am your advisor."	
		I have been researching colleges online. Then I go talk to my advisor.	
		I am just transferring to Fort Lewis so I think I will be okay.	
		My advisor was totally lost.	
		Two of the Student Government group use the catalog as their advisor.	
		My advisor told me to look at the student handbook.	
		I love advising and counseling. They are really helping me transfer to Fort Lewis.	
		They have education plans in the councilors' office.	
		In aviation, the instructor has a word document that outlines the whole aviation program and the order of the classes.	
		Did the Career and Life Plan in the EDGE program.	
		Get Career and Life Plan information from the instructor.	
		Contractors come in and tell us about jobs.	
		Search the newspapers for Career ideas.	
		Businesses come in and search students for employees.	
		Took an Interest Inventory at Farmington High.	
		An Interest Inventory was not part of advising and Counseling.	
		There are many Scholarships available but it is hard to search for them. It took me over a half an hours to find where it listed qualifications for scholarships.	
		EDGE helped me with my Financial Aid and Scholarship paperwork.	
		In high school, they were always telling you to check for Financial Aid.	
	The scheduling information was helpful with developing a schedule.		
	I received a singel packet of information and no one went over the contents. I only used 4 out of the 6 things in the packet.		
	DAISY does not jive with the written Education Plan I have.		
STUDENT ORIENTATION			

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TOPICS	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED	STUDENT ACTIONS/EXPERIENCES	COLLEGE CHANGES
<p>What were the best parts?</p> <p>What areas should be changed?</p> <p>How would you improve student orientation?</p>		Most of the Trades and Technology group went through student orientation.	Each student needs to go - lots of good information. I was told I didn't need to go since I had a degree and had to learn everything the hard way.
		One student went through it a very long time ago. Said they did a very good job.	Just because you have a degree does not mean you don't need orientation.
		It went into depth; pretty thorough.	There should be more breaks.
		It was chaos getting all the computers going.	They should have refreshments.
		For aviation it was a great experience - got to meet everyone in the program and all the instructors and staff. It was a catered lunch and it was a great team building experience.	The materials need to be more organized in the folder; arranged to follow the speakers.
		Three of the Student Government group did not go to orientation. One was a transfer student.	Have topics be optional, so if a student is knowledgeable in that area, the student doesn't have to waste time sitting in orientation being bored.
		It was fine. I saw nothing wrong with it.	Improve registering on-line, it's easier to do it on paper at this point.
		It was long and boring.	
PLACEMENT TESTING			
<p>Did you understand what the placement test was going to be used for?</p> <p>Were you prepared to take a placement test for Math and English?</p> <p>What were you told before and after the placement test?</p>		I was told I did not need to take the placement tests because I have a degree. I ended up taking classes that I was not prepared for.	The room was small and stuffy. They need a fan. It is hard to concentrate when the room is hot and stuffy.
		Yes, we understood why we were taking the test.	
		Testing is good.	
		I liked the idea of the placement test.	
		It helped a lot. I'm glad I took it.	
		It was simple.	
		It was boring.	
		It was a breeze.	
		It was short and nice.	
		I hated it.	
		I didn't have any problems.	
		We were used to taking tests after all the testing in high school.	
		After the test, the person told me you need this and this. So I took the classes, and I didn't need those classes. I wasted my time and money.	
		I liked that I got instant results. They look at your score and say you need this class.	
	The lady in the testing center was unclear.		
	Before the test, we were told to turn off our cell phones.		
OTHER			
	What are we doing about more parking with all the construction?	I have a Bachelor degree and my computer class was over 5 years old. I am required to take the class again but will not use the information learned in the class on the job. I feel like retaking the class is a waste of my time and money.	
		The lady at the front desk in the library is consistently rude, grouchy, and not at all helpful. The coffee shop is awesome!	