

COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

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*Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional
Effectiveness*

New Student Focus Groups: English Fall 2016

AD HOC Report

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Introduction

As part of the student equity plan and at the request of the English department's faculty inquiry group, the office of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness conducted focus groups with students to obtain feedback on first-time students' experiences at College of the Canyons. The purpose of the focus groups was to gather feedback particularly with regard to institutional factors with the following research questions:

- To what extent is College of the Canyons welcoming and inclusive to all students?
- How do the students' first experiences including placement, impact their entrance into English 101?

The resulting information is intended to inform decisions about English placement and other departmental planning efforts. In addition, the results will be disseminated to Executive Cabinet, Management Advisory Council, College Planning Team, and instructional deans.

Methods

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Institutional Effectiveness with the help of English faculty developed nine broad questions designed to gather participant input on experiences with online courses. These were:

1. Describe your experience starting at COC. What steps did you take to enroll? Was the enrollment process smooth?
2. What resources were you introduced to as a new COC student? How helpful were those resources?
3. Aside from attending class, what do you do on campus? How involved are you? Have you made new friends on campus? What have you learned from your friends? What have they learned from you?
4. To what extent do you feel welcome and included on campus?
5. How well does the campus encourage social interaction? How well does the campus encourage intellectual interaction?
6. How respectful are people on campus towards you and your points of view? Do you feel comfortable speaking freely?

7. Have you made connections with faculty and staff on campus? How do they help you meet your goals?
8. How was your experience with the English Placement process?
9. How is your semester going? Do you think that you will be successful in your classes? English Class assistance? Tutoring usage?

Two focus group sessions were conducted in fall 2016 on Nov 30th and Dec 1st at the Learning Center. Participants were recruited via email announcements. The recruitment pool consisted of students who were enrolled in an English course below 101 level who had a placement record in 2015-2016 and were flagged as first-time students (admit status =1). These students (n=1,163) received an email with a link to a google form that allowed them to select their desired date of participation. Student equity funds provided \$25 Barnes and Noble gift cards to participants and the Basic Skills Student Outcomes Transformation Program funded lunch during the sessions.

The focus group was facilitated and audio-recorded by the facilitator and responses. The session began by obtaining consent via signed informed consent forms. Participants were encouraged to share their opinions freely without fear of negative repercussions and were informed that their responses would be audio recorded and their personally identifying information would not be linked to their responses to focus group questions. Student demographic data were pulled from Datatel using student IDs of those who participated.

A total of seven students participated in the focus groups with 4 in the first session and 3 the second session.

Results

Demographics & Background

Age. Three participants were 18, two were 19, one was 20 and one was 41 years old.

Gender. 5 of the participants were female and 2 were male

Ethnicity. 3 participants identified as Latino/Hispanic, 3 identified as *White* and 1 participant identified as *Asian*.

Educational Goal.

- One student was transferring the following semester to an all English University in Rome.
- Another student indicated that they plan to attend a California public University as their funding through DSPS services would cover the cost.
- One student indicated wanting to transfer to CSU Long Beach, CSU San Diego or San Francisco to finish a BA in Criminology/Criminal justice.
- One student was a working and returning student whose goal was to obtain an Associates because workplaces are now asking for college degrees. Both the student and their spouse were enrolled in classes at COC toward this goal.

Student Groups.

The following student groups were represented in the focus groups: DSPS (1), EOPS (1), Adult re-entry and first-generation (1).

English Course Enrollment.

Of the participants, 2 students placed into, and enrolled in ENGL-091 and 5 placed into and were enrolled in ENGL-096.

The following section presents the focus group findings with regard to the themes of: campus climate, campus engagement, classroom experience, course experience, challenges and suggestions that were made by the participants during the focus groups.

Enrollment/Matriculation

Participants described their experience with enrollment and application process as fairly easy and indicated that the process was self-explanatory. Most expressed concern for not being able enroll in the courses that they need because of their late registration dates.

- “I did not like that when I registered for Math, it didn’t tell us that we need an access code and so when I came to class I had my book and he said to be able to turn in homework you need to have a code, and the code was like \$110 plus the book that I got, since it was rented.”
- “Since this is my first year, I took a summer class, ASL 101, after I graduated and I didn’t know I used my priority registration for summer so when I got my fall, it was like 2 weeks or a week before school started so I really didn’t have much a choice for courses, even for Spring, it’s not even that good because classes start like February 2 or so, and I got January 18, and nothing is really going to be open by then. I planned my schedule in advance, but it was the complete opposite. All the good teachers were taken, all the good times and dates so it was like I kind of got all the leftovers. I’m going to stay over 2+ years because I didn’t even get my computer science class this year, which is my major, so how am I supposed to start my major when I haven’t even taken the class for it.”
- “There was this, thing that if you signed up for it and, you could get your assessment and orientation done on the same day and get priority. I guess that only worked for my fall semester class because my winter class is late.”
- “I think I went on the Online Ed. Plan. It tells you what classes you need to take to get your associates.”
- “I saw the notification on my Canvas that the Ed plan was available for students and now you don’t have to go through a counselor.”

Campus Climate

Students described COC’s climate as a positive environment where staff and faculty are friendly and faculty seem to enjoy their work and are fair in their expectations and grading. Comparisons were made between COC and the community colleges in the surrounding areas.

- “Well everyone is really friendly, surprisingly because in college I thought everyone would be too cool for me or I’d be intimidated but everyone, financial aid, admissions, everyone is super nice.”

- “Everyone is helpful in every office. Counseling as well, everyone has an open mind. And I like the way they are, they’re approachable, they’re sweet, you’re not intimidated by anyone.”
- I like the atmosphere and how it feels like an actual university and its good people”.
- “It’s no party on the first day of class but there are nice teachers, most of them and as long as we do our work and come to class they usually will try to pass us and I don’t think they have a mindset that I want to fail these kids, I think they want to get us As but it’s up to us do to put in the work.”
- “I like the environment COC gives, the professors, all my professors are female and I feel like they’re into what they’re teaching and I understand everything they say. I’m in Lancaster and I didn’t want to go to AVC due to how many bad reports there are for the teachers. There, professors cancel classes often”
- “My mom is a Spanish professor at PCC so she knows all the rankings and she knows that this is an amazing community college and I’m in an amazing program and I take advantage of the resources and I’m very happy here.”

Campus Engagement

Participants were asked about their experiences with regard to being engaged on campus. Responses were mostly about the methods through which they were engaged i.e. through faculty, the COC website, Canvas and social media sites for COC.

- “I like how they do all the updates and emails, and I follow COC on twitter and every time there’s an event, like that drill a couple weeks ago so I was able to see it and they like to keep us updated and I like that. I get it from social media, like twitter, they post what’s going on or what’s happening that day like presentations and stuff. Also, I go on the website a lot, there’s an event box so I go to that but it’s always a time I can’t go.
- “The website is very helpful, very simple and, they’re always up to date with everything and whoever runs the website runs it very well”
- “MyCanyons is great! You can do a lot on it: register for classes, drop classes, it’s very well organized.”
- “My sociology and English professors are both tied in, they give out information. Recently I went to this domestic violence speech in the UCEN and my sociology teacher thought it was important for us to see it because at that time we were in that chapter and she said if

you go I'll give you extra credit points. And with my psychology teacher she sends us videos of clips that have something to do with our chapters. And with my English teacher, she just lets us know when there's presentations in the PAC. I went to go see a presentation of the guy that made Kinkos."

Social Involvement

Students also alluded to their social roles on campus with regard to clubs/organization participation and their general social experiences on campus.

Clubs and Organizations

One student indicated being part of the Honors English society, Sigma Delta Kappa and another had plans to join the COMS club as part of their major. While some students discussed their involvement, others discussed barriers to becoming involved e.g. distance from campus, navigating dates and process of getting involved and not finding the right fit.

- "And living in Lancaster is hard to come all the time. I tried looking into the computer science club but it was more video games than what I wanted. I wanted more aerospace, more interacting with it, but not video game making, I'm not into the video game part of it. So that's why I didn't join that club and really there's no other clubs that interested me."
- "No, I haven't gotten around the time to enroll in clubs and I haven't heard of any that catch my attention."
- "I was actually thinking about playing soccer because I played soccer during my high school career and growing up but it was kind of complicated figuring out when try outs were and how to get into it so I was just like never mind."

"Making Friends"

- "Yes, it was easy to make friends. I've made friends in all my classes. Everyone is really friendly here. You'd think everybody would be about themselves, like don't bug me, but yea everyone is really friendly."
- In referring to her PAL English course the student said, "I'm definitely not ready to part with them, so everyone was like whoa time is going fast. But everyone pretty much became closer, it felt like we all became a family."

- “I actually reconnected with a lot of people from where I used to live, some people from elementary that I haven’t seen in years. There’s a few friends that I’ve also made here and there in the classroom, you always need someone in class just in case you miss an assignment.”
- “I really like to make group chats in case someone is gone we all help each other out. I believe in teamwork. I usually text someone in the group chat at least once a day.”
- One student indicated that their social involvement was mainly at the TLC, “I made friends here with the tutors. I spend most of my time there.”

Classroom Climate

Participants were asked about their experiences in the classroom. Responses ranged from topics on the role of politics, workload, professors, and the role of Canvas in the classroom.

Politics in the Classroom

With recent political changes, students discussed the different approaches instructors employed in either discussing or avoiding the topic.

- “Yes, definitely. In my sociology class we’re learning about race and we talked about the election and the teachers are open minded and they love hearing their student’s opinions. Recently with this election my sociology teacher asked if anyone wanted to say something respectful about the election and everybody voiced their opinion on why certain people went for Trump or for Hillary and she made it clear that you can’t jump on their views because that’s not ok.”
- “In my English class, during the election, every time [the professor] heard someone say Trump, [the professor] would get crazy so we would have to hold it in and said ‘I’m not going to talk about it, politics’ but kept bringing it up. I mean, I respect his views but [the professor] did it in a negative way and I had different views but it wasn’t like I was being mean or saying anything mean, but I don’t get why, I wasn’t allowed to say anything. It was kind of a bad environment.”
- “I think professors should keep their political, personal political preferences to themselves. I had a professor that wasn’t saying it directly but he used an example of a political figure that just talked about how stupid they are. And [the professor] was using it as an English reference and how to tie it into English but he could’ve used a different example because

he was pissing off the students. It's usually a split [politically with left and right] and you're pissing off half the class just use a better example. I just hate how professors use being a teacher as a platform to push their political views, I hate that"

- "I also had a professor that made it clear that was his stance and you can't change his mind or say let's talk about this conversation it was clearly just what he thought and what he is and it wasn't very comforting to be like this is my opinion or because I'm a certain race I can't say this so it was quite conflicting in the class but he cut it off pretty quick."
- "You know with the Trump election, the whole Hispanic thing and what not, so there was a couple people that were just like "well you're not entitled to anything because you're Hispanic" so it's like you know just because you believe a certain way does not mean you should push it onto someone else or make anyone else feel any less because everyone is entitled to their opinion so I felt like when the teacher brought up that topic I felt like well he shouldn't have because there's certain people that don't know how to keep stuff to themselves. Sometimes it's better to just not touch the topic."

Workload

- "Professors make the homework clear. Some don't give as much homework which is less stressful and appreciated but they also teach throughout class and every time I go I learn something new it's never pointless, so that's what I like."
- "I don't speak about what I don't know sometimes and it's really bad but I just think that oh it's my fault from not learning this thing. But nobody really speaks out about it, so it's like, am I alone?"
- "Being a full time student is really hard, trying to keep up with everything, but it's worth it. I love coming here, I love the environment."
- "I have the exact same thing with my psych lab but it's a little bit more easier to keep up with since [the professor] doesn't really give us homework in class and just gives out daily reminders."

Instructor

- "The only teacher I don't like is my English professor. The professors doesn't really teach English, says his opinion and then just makes us do Ethos, Pathos and Logos for random movies that's not even related to English. But aren't we here to learn to write essays and

learn about grammar because it is English 096 so it's the basics of everything and he's assigning essays and he's not really explaining how to make it flow or how to do this. Sometimes I'm late because I do live like an hour away so I come in kind of late but one of my friends said, because she was in before I was and he said "well if you're late you're just stupid and ignorant" and I can't control the traffic so I'm sorry. That's what the professor said to people that are late and he doesn't know the outside factors and how can he just say that. I wasn't happy with him. So, sometimes I want to skip English just because I don't want to deal with the teacher and deal with what he's showing us."

- "I took the PAL English 096-101, and I expected the professors at COC to be like high school teachers where they get annoyed if you ask questions after class but thankfully that wasn't the case. I thought that taking the PAL class was way easier and I wanted to get out of COC as soon as possible and so one semester one class is 16 weeks so might as well make it 8 weeks and 8 weeks and yea it was a good teacher. Anyway, with taking that PAL class, we became like a family and she was really open minded from the beginning."
- "I think it's the professors that are the big part of college and they're enthusiasm to be here, what they teach, they're attitudes, it's what makes people come to class, it's what makes me come to class, the fact that I learn new things the way they explain it to me. With my psych class, I love the professor, she's the greatest person ever, the way she explains things, and she's not, not that any of my teachers are sexist, but she makes you feel equal, it's like she sees no color or no gender or, you're just her kid and she's going to teach you what she can. And I love going to that class! It's a lecture hall. All my teachers are, they make me want to go to class, the way they're enthusiasm is."
- "My English class is good but that teacher expected us to know everything, like body parts. He said 'you don't need to know this, everyone probably already knows this.' And then I would ask him and he would say he's going to cover it next time, but he can't cover it next time, because our test is next time. But, I don't blame him, he's a good teacher. That's not his fault I guess."
- "There is one professor that I think, goes above and beyond, when she teaches she just has a genuine love for what she's doing and it makes everything so much better and makes you want to pay attention a lot more."
- "She's been here a very long time and is very well known by a lot of the faculty, she's amazing. It's all about the mindset [the professor's]. If they have a positive mindset and

they're happy then it makes the students happier and more intrigued and want to pay attention more.”

- “A lot of the teachers are very, you can just tell they enjoy coming to work every day and that makes it a much better learning environment to sit through.”
- “I wish I would've known about ratemyprofessor! When I came here I just picked whatever fit my schedule and so my English professor actually is such a bore and I personally love English and I love reading books so I thought coming into this class I'm going to enjoy it, it's college level, something I can keep up with because I always felt in high school like this is easy give me something more, I've always felt like I needed to be challenged and so this teacher I feel like she doesn't communicate with her students very well and then after I saw that website it said she talks like she's scared of the students and when I read that, it's completely true! And I was like wow she really doesn't know how to communicate with her students and I'll talk to her and she has like this, oh my god I don't know what I'm doing so a lot of the students don't pay attention and were just like what. So I really wish I knew about that website but now I know so next semester I can actually check.”
- “My experience with my English class hasn't been the greatest. I would go to the teacher for an explanation or ask for more help and the professor would say like ‘Oh well we can talk about this after’. So it's kind of complicated and I'm not doing so well in the class right now because I would ask for help and then the professor would flip everything all over the place and I never understood any of the assignments, the prompts were never as clear, so everyone in the class is just completely confused half of the time. Now I know how to use [ratemyprofessor] when I looked it up, everything is so true and accurate about this professor.”

Canvas

All of the participants expressed liking Canvas for courses and particularly found the grade trackers helpful in informing them of their progress. They expressed discontent with the fact that not all of their courses were linked to Canvas shell and it made it difficult to know their standing in the course.

- “At first it was really tricky because I've never used a portal like that but I got the hang of it over time. I like how they have the Canvas app. I can check my grade instantly.”

- “I think the only thing I don’t like is that some classes, they don’t have the permit to get Canvas, so you don’t really know your grades. That’s annoying because I don’t know how well I should be doing, or how much time I should be spending in the class or outside the class. So I’m in the dark basically for that.”
- “In high school you’re able to view everything but now like, only my Eng. and online class is viewable on Canvas. But my other professor told us that they asked for help in setting it up, but the professor wasn’t able to make a Canvas account or something like that.”

English

Courses

Participants discussed their improvement in English, some confusion they faced with regard to the course numbering and discussed some of the content and grading in their English courses.

- “I’ve just learned a lot about English structure, how to do certain things that I never knew before and this has been a huge growth period for me, this semester was huge, I learned a lot.”
- “I thought 091 was higher than 096. I think how it is 096, 094, 091 but either way all those classes transfer to 101, and 101 is what you need to transfer and then I think the requirement to finish is 103.”
- “Somebody was telling me they were in a higher classes than me because they’re in 096 and I’m in 091.”
- “Because we do sometimes get punctuation work sheets so the professor will go over it at the end, and I’ll look at it and think I get it but it’s something different. And then we did the hamburger style, the meat, the buns and lettuce and tomato, and it kind of helped, but the professor didn’t explain it in depth. So it was like, I’ve seen this before in high school but can you explain it more in depth?”
- “Professors expect you to know things before you even get to class but we’re in 096, that’s kind of the reason why we’re here. Because we forgot that or didn’t realize.”
- “I had helped my boyfriend throughout high school like with his essays and stuff and then, even when I was still in high school and when he was doing English here, I would help him with his essays and he would always get As on them and now I’m doing my essays and I’m getting Cs and Ds on them. And the topics, are just, like why would I want to, it’s not even interesting topics, it’s about food. I mean it is, but to the extent he’s going, I don’t

want to do those essays and usually, the professor asks us, like what would you want to do essays about? I suggested like maybe different topics. He was like, ‘Ok yea I’ll think about it for next semester’, next semester?!’

Placement

All but one of the participants expressed that they placed lower than they expected in English and conveyed that the experience was the same for other students they knew. Two students completed AP English in high school and expected to place in ENGL-101 and did not. One student felt that their English placement was “spot-on”.

- “Really long. I feel like I tried my best, but I was also hungry, so I was like this looks right, just clicked on it. I expected [placement into] 101, because the test I thought it was really easy and I was surprised I got placed into 096.”
- “For someone that was in Honors and AP program for four years I was really surprised I scored English 096” and “I think I placed off because I did take AP English classes in high school.”
- “Now that we mention it, I thought I was the only one surprised that I got English 096 but all of my friends that I associate with here they say that they’re really shocked that they got English 096. A lot of people.”
- “With English they didn’t understand why they scored so low and some are thinking about retaking the assessment test. That’s why they didn’t take English this semester.”
- “With me for English I was a little disappointed, I was going for 101 because I’ve been a solid English student but I got 091 and it was ok because I knew I’d do well and it’d help my GPA and I have a 96%. So I’m doing very well in that.”
- “Because my friend, her weakest subject is English, I had to help her during high school, like tutor her and stuff and she got 101. And her grammar was all wrong, because they ask a couple questions about grammar and punctuation, maybe I did a good job tutoring her or something, but she got 101! I don’t regret it though because I wanted the best for her but I don’t know, I thought it was rigged.”
- “My personal experience is that honestly it was pretty spot on. I thought it couldn’t be any more accurate. I thought at first the English was off and I could’ve been higher in English but now that I’m looking back at the whole semester, there’s a lot of things I didn’t know that I learned and I think, I just had to trust the process.”

Math

Courses

- “Less math! I just wish it wasn’t a requirement for students that don’t need it. It really holds people back.”
- “It should depend on your major, if your major does not require it you should be able to go straight through it, maybe take one and that’s it. You don’t need all these steps. For me I know it’s going to take a lot longer because I’m so low. It’s taking more of my time when I could just go on, and by the time I finish my math courses I’ll be done with everything else that I need and then I’ll just be taking math.”
- “Math is really holding everyone back here. That’s why students spend 4 years here.”
- “I took PAL 058-060 but it was too fast. But I didn’t know the difference either, well it was my fault because I wasn’t clear what PAL was or accelerated and I think that’s where I should’ve got information about that. But I passed it! I did get a lot of help at the TLC. Right after the class I would come over here [TLC] and on Saturdays as well.”

Placement

Some participants expressed that they had not done well in the Math placement because they forgot the material from high-school and others were surprised to have received a higher placement than they expected. From the discussion, it was revealed that some students had access to a packet to prepare for the placement test and others had not had heard of the material or the availability of preparation packets. Still those who used the packet felt that it did not prepare them adequately for the assessment test.

- “In high school I failed one semester of trig/pre-calc, so I had to make it up. So the beginning of the year I took Math, it was CT, contemporary theories of math and then when I came here to take the placement I had forgot a lot of stuff and I thought I did a little bit better than I did, but apparently not.”
- “You got a packet? I didn’t get a packet.”
- “Because we got a packet saying study this before, I looked at it and it was nothing like the test. A representative came to Valencia to talk about COC and it was really nice she helped us set up our MyCanyons account and that’s when I got the paper and I actually studied it. I expected to place higher but I don’t regret it now because I like the teacher. But we had

to take both and I was placed on the right side where I could take intermediate algebra, statistics so I was thinking of just taking statistics which is way higher than I thought I would get. My major is Fire Technology [is my major].”

- “I got really lucky because throughout high school, even now, very bad math student, really bad, so I came into the placement test thinking I was placing into the lowest one. I can barely even remember all the math I’ve learned. So luckily the night before, my friend who is good at math, he just tutored me in everything of the placement test and I ended up placing in a higher math than I thought, the second highest, which I didn’t pass. But I was really surprised because I thought I was going to place in a lower one. I’m in Math 075 but I thought I was going to place into 058 or 60, the lower ones. I was very happy with that [placement into 075] I tried really hard this semester, I was close but now in order for me to pass with a C, I need to get an A on the final and I know that’s not realistic. I finished geometry in high school, once I did I thought I was done with math that it was pointless and I’d never use it in my life.”
- “I didn’t pass geometry, I just took finances over summer break. The highest math I completed in high school was Algebra 1 and it took me like 3 ½ years. I’m in math 060, I have a high D right now, I need a C or higher on the final to pass.”
- “I’m not going to use these equations in my life especially what I want to go into, so instead of retaking 075 again and then 140, I just want to get it over with, next semester I’m taking PAL 075-140, I just want to get it over with. I hate math! It’s just a requirement.”
- “I totally agree, my major has nothing to do with math. I don’t need it and I’m so horrible at it. And just like you I need to get a C because I have a high D too. And it’s not like I haven’t tried, I’ve always taken classes for math but it’s just something that doesn’t stick with me, I understand it but when it comes to tests its completely gone and I don’t know what I’m doing. So I had that problem that I got into geometry in high school and that’s about it.”

Resources

When students were asked about the resources they use on campus, TLC was the most often used and most liked for its services. Counselors and Canyons Peer Advisers (CPAs) were also mentioned as being helpful resources to students.

- “The tutors review our essays and give very good input. For history too, they’ll review history essays and they’ll make you look at the prompt and make sure you have all the guidelines. So really the TLC, honestly is the best resource here, the students really need to take advantage of it because it’s just excellent. I had tutors in math in high school because I was terrible at it and it costs \$60/hour, here I can get it free. It’s not one on one but it’s free and excellent. I love the TLC.”
- “I come for GLAs and essay revisions. They’re really helpful. They tell you what you need to improve on and for me it was putting the essay in order but they’re really helpful.”
- “Yea I should probably do the GLAs and workshops. My teacher didn’t require anything, any workshops or GLAs and says just email me but what am I supposed to ask him, so it’s, I don’t know.”
- “I think with the tutors, you have to find the person you can understand and then go to that person every time. What happened to me was I would go from one tutor to another and it would confuse me more.”

ASG and the TLC were particularly mentioned for the convenience of printing, however students expressed not liking the system where they have to carry exact change to pay for printing on campus.

- “The printing can be improved; you have to go through a process and put a dollar in and most of us don’t even carry change anymore and I didn’t want to take out money just for that.”
- “That’s what happened to me today, I had to print an essay and I didn’t have a dollar and I have to do that again after this and I probably have to ask for one.”

The DSPS student found the services to be helpful and the EOPS student, although had not started using the services seemed to be grateful for being able to see a special counselor.

- “The DSPS program is amazing and it accommodates me for a lot of things so I’m very grateful to be in that program and I like to take advantage of the resources here at COC.”
- “My understanding of EOPS is they help with books or with school stuff, if you need extra money. They keep you on top of things, you have to keep a 2.0. Yea so I’m not going to see these counselors, and I’m going to see the EOPS counselor.”

Suggestions

The suggestions made by the students in the focus group included the topics of the benefits of having Canvas shells for courses, extending tutoring duration in the TLC to longer than 30-minute sessions per student, campus services like Fast-Fridays and CPAs to help guide new students and extending visitor parking to be longer than 30-minutes.

- “I think the only thing I don’t like is that some classes, they don’t have the permit to get Canvas, so you don’t really know your grades.”
- “Being able to spend more time with tutors, not just 30 minutes.”
- “Fast Fridays was very helpful.”
- “I remember in the summer they did have someone standing there and guiding you if you were lost and helping you find your classes. That was really helpful.”
- “They had people park your cars and they don’t have that anymore. It was really helpful. I was on time to my classes.”
- “Is it possible, because you know how by the A&R and student store there 30 minute visitor is parking? Is it possible to make it an hour? Because you can’t do anything in 30 minutes. Walking itself takes time, thankfully I didn’t get a ticket. Because I realized my reading was an hour and that was 30 minutes and I came back and thankfully I didn’t get it.”

Recommendations

The participants in the focus groups provided valuable information with regard to experiences of first-time students. These findings are limited to students who were in their first-semester and placed into an English course that was lower than 101.

Upon review of the focus group comments, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Continue providing ‘Fast Fridays’ and support around campus to guide students prior to the start of, and in the first few weeks, of a semester.
- Consider notifying students about their first-time student priority registration expiring once they enroll, particularly if it is in the summer prior to their first fall term.
- Consider increasing the parking time-limit in visitor spaces.
- Consider providing tutoring sessions in the TLC for longer than 30-minute intervals to make the experience more beneficial to students.
- Consider promoting the use of Canvas in more courses to help students track their progress.
- Consider providing printing services that do not require exact change.
- Consider providing professional development for faculty on approaching political topics.
- Explore ways to promote student engagement on campus through webcasts of events/clubs and organization meetings.