Summary of Student Discussion Groups – Osceola Fall 2012

The common challenge that students reported about their experience as a new student was that they were not clear on what classes they needed to take or how many.

- Signing up for classes. It was not entirely clear what classes I was supposed to sign up for during my first semester; I ended up taking too many classes and did not do well in any of them and then found out that I didn’t really need some of them.
- There wasn’t a clear path of what classes to take or how many.
- Honors courses are not on one campus and it makes it difficult to take the courses I need.
- It would also be helpful if there was a list of honors courses that made it clear when and where they were offered.
- Would like a better understanding of the honors program.
- Dual-enrollment elective courses were not clear and I wasn’t sure what to take. My high school counselor told me to take high school level courses when I could have been taking college-level courses.
- When I first started Valencia I thought I wanted to go into the medical field and had it in my mind that was going to be my major; but when I saw the required courses to be a pre-med students, I quickly realized that I didn’t want to go that route. I didn’t know what to do and didn’t know where to go to get help.
  - It would be helpful to have a chance to look at programs/majors while in high school to see requirements.
  - Offer workshops featuring majors and which campuses the majority of the courses are offered.

Students felt that the SLS course helped them better understand themselves as students and they appreciated the support and guidance of the advisors.

- SLS course – loved the course because I learned a lot about myself and it helped me better understand my life as it applies to college-life.
- Advisors were very helpful.

Students were able to locate many campus resources to enhance their experience. For example, one student appreciated the quiet study area in the library. Two students talked about having an established education plan and a clear career focus that they learned about in the SLS course.

- Library – focus time with no distractions, quiet study area.
- Tutoring center.
- MyEd plan and Career Plan – I took an assessment and it helped me figure out what career I was best suited for.
  - “How did you hear about MyEd plan?” SLS course and Academic Advisor
- Answer Center – great resource, but sometimes the lines were too long.
  - “What information did you get at the Answer Center?” Registration help, financial aid, Direct Connect
• Math Depot – went a lot but stopped because it got too crowded. There need to be more tutors.
• Writing Center
• Learning Center – upper level math
• Map of campus. Even though the campus is small, it was very helpful.

**In addition to having a clearer understanding of the course path a student should take, students wish they had one assigned advisor to help them throughout their entire time at Valencia.**

• Orientation – need more direction on what classes to take to obtain degree
• Set advisor – would be great to have one person to go to help guide path through college and purpose. Would also be helpful to have major advisors.
• Study Abroad – wish I had known more about the offerings.

Students love Valencia and the students felt that it was great to meet people who didn’t just think Valencia was an extension of high school.

• Not really. It would have been great to have student leaders welcome new students and introduce them to college life during the first week of class.
• Homecoming experience.
• Need to meet folks and it was hard as a new student because I was overwhelmed with adjusting to college. I didn’t really have time to socialize.
• I got involved as soon as I got to Valencia because I wanted to get a college experience.
• Suggestion – send Valencia reps to high schools to invite and show positive image of Valencia.
• Student leaders should partner with freshman during the first week or so of classes.
• Offer sports – maybe three major sports. Could set up tournaments/competitions for trophies. Campus to campus competitions.
• Bring campuses together so students feel connected to the larger college

**The Osceola campus has a lot of resources to support students, but many of the students present didn’t know about them until their third or fourth semester.**

• Learning Center and tutoring services
• Math Depot
• Agendas – helps students to become organized. Would be great to have a Skillshop to teach students to be organized and adjust to college life.
  o Dedicate a page to the services available at Osceola in the paper agenda that all students get.
• There are a lot of resources that I didn’t know about during the first year I was here. It would have been great to know about them.
• Need to promote student sources better and offer at more convenient times. Tie Skillshops to classes and have professors promote them.
• Health issues. I would like to know how sleep, eating, and illness affects my success as a student; lack of sleep hinders them from learning, etc.
• Study Skills. In high school most of us just got by without having to do much work. College is much different. New students need to learn how to study very early in their college life.
• Use teachers as resources. Would like to know that the professors support us and are willing to help.
• Would have liked to know about the field trips that the college offered. Would have helped build relationships.
• Better food options!
• A gym.

Ten of the thirteen students present had taken SLS and all felt that the information in the course was helpful. They also would have liked to learn how to pick their professors so they could take classes with a professor who taught their learning styles.

• How to pick professors. I rely on Ratemyprofessor but don’t think it gives an honest picture of the professors sometimes.
• Focus on learning styles – help us learn what our styles are and then teach us how to learn.
• Basic life skills