The emerging idea

- To be successful, Valencia students not only need an educational plan, but they also need clear and specific directions for navigating the demands of college.

As a result of your discussions, what changes would your group suggest to the wording of the emerging big idea?

**East:** “To be successful, Valencia students not only need an educational plan, but they also need to gain the desire and ability to explore all options, resulting in setting meaningful goals.

**Osceola:** Our group feels it is simplistic and meaningful which is excellent. The messages given are specific enough to give direction but not so specific as to dominate the direction we might be heading. It allows freedom to explore and create.

**West:** “To be successful, Valencia students not only need an educational plan, but they also need clear and specific directions for navigating the processes towards successful graduation.”

**11/16/12:**

- To have an opportunity to be successful, students need clear and specific direction for navigating the demands of the college and an educational plan.
- To be successful, Valencia students need an educational plan, specific goals, and clear and specific directions for navigating the culture of college.
- To be successful, Valencia students need an educational plan and clear and specific directions for navigating the demands of college.
- To be successful, Valencia students need an educational plan that includes clear and specific directions and expectations from first point of contact to the last.

**What role might technology play in helping students navigate the demands of college?**

**East:**

- Technology would augment application requirements
Osceola:

- Technology is the navigation tool. It is not the future but the present. Students need to learn the technology, how to work Blackboard, Atlas etc. in order to move forward. Some of the technology needs to be fixed so it is easier to access. Searching for each tidbit of information is overwhelming. It needs to be simplified. Too much information clogs the system and the student will walk away.

11/16/12

- Reminders to register and tell students which courses to choose
- Intuitive placement of resources
- OnLine chat support
- Atlas needs to be more user-friendly for students
- Explore other communication forms – audio, videos, GoTo meeting options

What impact might limited resources have on a student’s ability to navigate the demands of college?

East:

- Limited student resources does impact their ability to attend campus, purchase needed hardware/software, etc.
- Accessibility issues for students with disabilities.

11/16/12

- Students have financial limitations – can’t pay for class materials, can’t pay for gas/bus,
- Students are not always aware of their learning styles, so it makes it difficult for them to navigate the system.
- Students often lack support from family, so they don’t have a frame of reference or support.
- Limited time due to work, family, etc. impacts their ability to do assignments and/or finish school
- Many students are underprepared for college life

What would need be different about the student experience at Valencia for students to get the navigation help they need?

East:

- Make admissions easier including a more intuitive college application – make it a learning experience and include an understanding of degrees and connection to career development opportunities. (The “Turbo Tax” of admissions.)
- Set standards regarding what Valencia expects and what is expected of students.
- During orientation, include more dynamic activities – rather than lecture
- Reduced orientation time, add freshman seminars with more details (financial aid, etc.) in a classroom setting and include TVCA
- Guide students to be more self-driven and invested in their education
- Include a pre-welcome packet directed to specific to types of students (AA, AS, transfer, etc.)
Osceola:
- LIFEMAP: This is an awesome tool but the education plan does not work correctly. Many people from advisors, counselors etc. have tried to make it work but it does not calculate the student’s classes correctly.
- ATLAS: Too much information to sift through! Once again, incredible tool but the search tab pulls up confusing or extraneous information. When the student or faculty member cannot find something easily, they give up and ask someone. Often times, this is incorrect information given.
- FINANCIAL AID: At times it seems to be easier to buy your first house then get through this process. Then, the students and staff spend inordinate amount of time fixing issues that should have occurred initially.
- DEMANDS OF STUDENTS: Within student navigation, we need to look at the diversity of the student, not just ethnicity and gender, but stages in life, life issues, and the level of preparation they have when they arrive. We have to stop the blame game and pointing of fingers at the failures of the past and take them “as is” and move forward.

West:
- Improving the My Educational Planning (MEP) tool, which will help students create valid educational plans. Currently, the tool has some programming errors. Since this tool is a forced requirement is areas, such as financial aid and the Student Success class, this software needs to be a tool that works. Also, connecting students to Valencia faculty/staff that oversees the MEP and connects students to the person who can review for validity. Creating connections for students early.
- Improving the Atlas portal experience. The current Atlas portal is hard to navigate and has too many pages…it would be best to combine pages and simplify. A suggestion is to create “To Do Lists” in Atlas. Have lists pop-up in the portal pages that list what is necessary and mandatory to do in order to navigate through the system, which students can check off when complete. Create better searching tools within Atlas to make the searching a more intuitive experience. Using consistent terminology throughout all Valencia documents.
- Also, creating “To Do Lists” that are aligned to mileposts, where students should be in their academic process….mileposts or milestones that are attached to credit hours completed. For instance, the appropriate times to: declare academic majors, create educational plans, meet with advisors, join academic related student groups, visit career center, internship office, apply to transferring university, etc.
- During first term have students registered before they leave orientation to ensure students are in correct classes their first term. Break orientation up into modules throughout the first year experience….these modules will give small doses of Valencia procedures and information at the time the information is most relevant and not bombard in one orientation session.

Recurring Themes

1. Required, structured 1st year experience for all FTICs. Make the 1st year experience less of a “one size fits all” approach. Provide specific and guided tracks for students.
2. Expand orientation to multiple days with multiple topics.
3. Provide students easier access to MyEducation Plan
4. Simply and make the Valencia site intuitive to students – make it look and feel like a university site
5. Touch points throughout the first year to check on students’ progress