

# Valencia College

## NSE Student Facilitated Conversations

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**\*\*Note:** This guide is only for facilitators and recorders (not for participants)

A print version of this document will be provided at the facilitator training and it contains:

1. This overview
2. The Discussion Guide
3. The Participant Details Handout to be handed out at the end (copies will be provided)
4. A Notes template for the write up of the report and for note-taking

**Facilitator – Primary Role:** Introduce the purpose (i.e. program improvement – document aspects of the student experience), set the ground rules (i.e. comments will not be linked to student names), guide the conversation to cover the topic areas – delve deeper as appropriate (using questions like: “Tell me more about ....” “What might be an example of that...” “If another student were to ask you about x, what would you tell them...?”) Take notes as possible, but maintain eye contact as clearly as possible. See related notes and reminders later in The Discussion Guide.

**Recorder – Primary Role:** Listen. Take notes to include non-verbals and changes in tone – like sarcasm or humor – facilitators may not be able to capture that level of detail. At the very end ask any unanswered questions or questions regarding unexplored ideas at the invitation of the facilitator (we will not have time to break, confer, and reconvene the students.) If the activity results in a product (like a map or writing on the board) take a cell phone photo.

**Afterwards:** If time permits discuss / debrief after the session. Capture any additional notes from the session and send all notes to the Assistant Director, Learning Assessment by email.

**Background of Participants and Purpose of the Student Conversations:** The New Student Experience (NSE) at Valencia College provides a coordinated experience for all new students with fewer than 15 college-level credits. The vision is that the NSE will result in improved curricular and co-curricular student engagement. The purpose of these conversations is to: 1) describe what a new student experiences, 2) document the student perceptions of learning in the NSE course, 3) evaluate the impact of the NSE Co-Curricular activities, 4) find meaningful ways to measure student engagement, and 5) improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the NSE

### **Research Questions:**

- 1) Which elements work best?
- 2) What differences are evident between activities that are focused on tasks and those that are focused on establishing personal connections with the students?
- 3) What are students learning or gaining from the co-curricular activities?
- 4) What are the aspects of the course that make this part of a coordinated experience?

## Discussion Guide

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### Introduction:

- We're here to find out about your experiences in The New Student Experience.
  - Begin on time and thank participants in advance for their time.
  - Introduce yourself, your role as a student, and how long you have been a Valencia student.
  - Discuss your role as the interviewer explaining the need for frank and honest feedback and that the information is confidential.
  - Explain aspects of the process telling why are we interviewing and what will happen with the information.
  - Stress that this is not an evaluation of faculty or advisors.
  - Remind those who have not signed in to sign in.

### Establishing Context:

#### ▪ **Their Story**

Respondent Introduction (first name)

1. As a new student, what excites you about taking a course that was designed to introduce you to Valencia?
2. Thinking about the skills associated with success in college, what were your initial expectations about what you would learn in the NSE course?

### Objectives:

#### ▪ **Document what students learned (see the notes template for probes)**

3. What are some connections you have made between your values, goals, interests, and/or strengths and your academic plans?
4. What are some connections you have made between your values, goals, interests, and/or strengths and your career plans?
5. What do you know now, that you didn't before, about degree programs and planning for your education?

### Objectives:

#### ▪ **Reflect on the impact (see the notes template for probes)**

6. Thinking about the course, what might you do differently in college as a result of this experience?
7. Thinking about advising, in what ways have your interactions led to a change?
8. Thinking about the co-curricular activities you have completed, how did the experiences impact your ability to state your purpose?
9. Thinking about the co-curricular activities you have completed, how did the experiences impact your ability to communicate with diverse groups?
10. Thinking about the resources for the course (specifically the Student Handbook and *Start Something that Matters*), how important were they and what information did you use?

Any follow-up questions raised by recorder...

If there is time—Did you use the GoBe schedule that inserts into your Student Handbook?

Did you use Check Appointments to register in advance for the GoBes?

#### ▪ **Wrap Up**

- Ask if there is anything else they would like to add?
- Give them "Participant Details Handout" (with pencils).
- Let them know they can leave after completing it and thank them for their time.

## Participant Details Handout

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### NSE Student Facilitated Conversations

Please take a few minutes to share additional information about yourself that will be helpful in understanding the types of students impacted by the New Student Experience.

- What is your first name?
  
- How long have you been a student at Valencia?
  
- What is your program of study and desired major?
  
- What are your career/academic goals?
  
- Please check here if you are willing to have us contact you in the future: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- If so, please include the best e-mail account to reach you.

Please include any other comments that you wish to share, here...

Thank you for your time today.

## Notes Template (in Word)

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### Document Their Responses

1. As a new student, what excites you about taking a course that was designed to introduce you to Valencia?
2. Thinking about the skills associated with success in college, what were your initial expectations about what you would learn in the NSE course?
  - Did they arrive with goals or a plan?
3. What are some connections you have made between your values, goals, interests, and/or strengths and your academic plans?
  - Do they refer to pathways? (The degree or major requires...)
4. What are some connections you have made between your values, goals, interests, and/or strengths and your career plans?
  - What terms do they use?
5. What do you know now, that you didn't before, about degree programs and planning for your education?
  - Any concrete? (We can create a degree checklist in MEP...)
  - Any abstract? (My purpose...)
  - Anything regarding financial literacy or a financial plan?
6. Thinking about the course, what might you do differently in college as a result of this experience?
  - Do they state their purpose? Do they indicate they now have goals/plans?
  - What kinds of skills do they mention?
7. Thinking about advising, in what ways have your interactions led to a change?
  - Do they report changes?
  - What kind of changes? (The benefit is...)
8. Thinking about the co-curricular activities you have completed, how did the experiences impact your ability to state your purpose?
  - What impact do they report that this had?
9. Thinking about the co-curricular activities you have completed, how did the experiences impact your ability to communicate with diverse groups?
  - Any barriers reported or changes needed?
10. Thinking about the resources for the course (specifically the Student Handbook and *Start Something that Matters* —also called the TOMS book), how important were they and what information did you use?
  - Do they talk about how it does or does not fit the goals of the course?
  - Do they name specific content that was useful? Anything not useful?

If there is time—Did you use the GoBe schedule that inserts into your Student Handbook?

Did you use Check Appointments to register in advance for the GoBes?

### Any overall themes and conclusions? Suggestions if we use these questions again?

*Research questions to keep in mind:*

1. Which elements work best?
2. What differences are evident between activities that are focused on tasks and those that are focused on establishing personal connections with the students?
3. What are students learning or gaining from the co-curricular activities?
4. What are the aspects of the course that make this part of a coordinated experience?