

Focus Group Recommendations

And

Minutes

Spring 2009

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Introduction

Based upon recommendations of the Focus Group, the Pearl River Community College Campus Climate Survey was administered to students at the main campus in Poplarville, the Forrest County Center, and the Hancock Center during fall semester 2008. After the survey results were tabulated, the information was disseminated to the Focus Group members who had been appointed by Dr. Adam Breerwood.

This report is a compilation of the recommendations and minutes from the Focus Group and will be shared with the Dean of Student Services who oversaw the administration of the Campus Climate Survey and the Chief Planning Officer who coordinates the administration of all College surveys. Recommendations and actions taken as a result of these discussions are included in this document.

Members of the Focus Group are as follows:

Dr. Adam Breerwood, Chair

Dr. Cecil Burt

Dr. John Grant

Mr. Roger Knight

Dr. Jim Moore

Mr. Doug Rowell

Ms. Brenda Wells

Demographics of Survey Respondents	
Poplarville Campus	1491 responded to survey 81% age 25 or under 12% ages 26-35
Forrest County Center	521 responded to survey 81% age 25 or under 14 % ages 26-35
Hancock Center	66 responded to survey 77% age 25 or under 9% ages 26-35

Minutes
FOCUS GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING

January 20, 2009

Committee Members Present: *Dr. Adam Breerwood, Dr. John Grant, Dr. Jim Moore, Mr. Doug Rowell, Ms. Brenda Wells*

Dr. Breerwood reviewed the Action Timeline from Spring 2008 and asked for updates on any open-ended progress statement. Dr. Breerwood will check on the status of the financial aid workshops with Ms. Donna O'Quinn. Dr. Breerwood will also check with Dr. Burt to get status of progress at the Forrest County Center.

Committee members unanimously agreed to continue administering the survey during the fall semester (October), which gives the committee opportunity to make recommended changes prior to the next school year.

Committee members were asked to review the Summary of Results for the Campus Climate Survey, which reflected any question that received less than a 70% satisfactory rating. Committee members were asked if the 70% satisfactory rating should continue to be the measure for addressing areas of concern. There was unanimous consent that the 70% satisfaction rating should continue to be the measure for addressing areas of concern.

Dr. Breerwood suggested, and members agreed, that we need to revisit the wording of Question 34 before issuing the Campus Climate Survey in the fall semester of 2010

Committee unanimously agreed to continue administering the Campus Climate Survey in Fall semester in order to have enough time to review results, make recommendations, and implement necessary changes prior to the next school year.

Committee members were asked to review their areas of responsibility and have their recommendations and timeline for action completed and returned to Dr. Breerwood and Ms. Wells by February 10.

Dr. Breerwood is to discuss with Dr. Burt the concerns about the Forrest County Center since Dr. Burt did not attend the meeting. Dr. Breerwood asked Ms. Wells to deliver all information to Ms. Smith and Mr. Knight since they were unable to attend due to conflicts in scheduling.

Dr. Breerwood plans to present the Focus Group Recommendations and proposed action timeline to the Board at the March meeting.

Meeting was adjourned.

Observations, Concerns, and Recommendations

Instructional Effectiveness:

Areas which received less than a 70% satisfaction rating have been reviewed and addressed. In some cases, items have been addressed collectively since the items are interconnected and the recommendations would impact each of them. There are currently three (3) questions which fall within the sphere of instructional effectiveness which need to be addressed. These are questions 19, 21, and 34 as enumerated below.

The first two questions involve student perception of faculty.

- **Q19 – I have been advised of the proper channels for expressing student complaints.**

and

- **Q21 – If I thought an instructor was unfair, I would feel comfortable requesting a conference to discuss the situation.**

Much improvement has occurred as a result of actions taken with reference to the advisement of proper channels for student complaints. Fifty percent of students on the Poplarville campus agreed or strongly agreed that they had been advised of proper channels, reflecting an increase of 8.5 points from 41.5% to 50%; Forrest County Center has increased 21.2 points from 45.8% to 67%; Hancock Center is up 9.5 point from 57.5 to 67%.

The 57.85 percentage of students on the Poplarville campus who agreed or strongly agreed that they would be comfortable requesting a conference to discuss instructors perceived as being unfair was up 5.15 percentage points as compared to the 52.7% result from the Campus Climate Survey administered during spring, 2008. The Forrest County Center results reflected a difference of one point from 66% to 65%. The Hancock Center results increased to 82.5%.

Recommendations: Remind instructors and instructional department heads to inform students who have a complaint or problem that they are to discuss the issue first with the instructor. If the issue is not resolved, students should be advised of the next in the chain of command with whom to discuss the issue.

- **Q34 – I was provided adequate notice concerning standard entrance requirements and exams oftentimes required to transfer to a four-year institution.**

The Poplarville campus survey results revealed a slight drop from 58% to 55.92% for students who agreed or strongly agreed that they were provided adequate notice concerning transfer requirements to a four-year institution. The FCC results decreased from 62.3% to 53%, a 9.3 point difference. The Hancock Center results were slightly increased from 65% to 66.7%.

Recommendation: Communicate with faculty, who are assigned to advise students, that they check university bulletins and catalogs of those institutions to which students are most likely to transfer for programs that have specific entrance requirements.

Counseling, Advisement and Placement:

The results of the survey indicate that 66.68% of students on the Poplarville campus agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the services provided by the Counseling, Advisement and Placement Center. Both the Forrest County Center and the Hancock Center received satisfactory ratings of above 70%.

- **Q37 - I am satisfied with the services provided by the personnel in the Counseling, Advisement and Placement Center.**

Recommendation: The Vice President of Instruction will meet with the Director of the Counseling, Advisement and Placement Center to discuss how personnel services in that center can be improved.

Safety and Security:

After reviewing the campus climate survey results and student comments, the following responses/actions are being suggested and implemented to increase safety and security on all campuses. Results of the survey indicate that the satisfaction rating of students on the Poplarville campus was 59.56%, a decline of 8.34 points from the previous survey; however, 79% of the students at the Forrest County Center who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that the campus was secure for all students. Survey results for students at the Hancock Center reflected a 90.9% satisfaction rating.

- **Q18 - Campus is secure for all students**

Recommendation: The implementation of Campus Crime Watch (CCW) is in place, which will provide students with an opportunity to interact with law enforcement on a proactive basis. The CCW will benefit the students in that they have the opportunity to have a voice as related to their safety and the opportunity to be more involved campus wide in safety plans and actions.

The Director of Public Safety will meet with each individual dorm population on a regular basis to answer questions and explain procedures and actions to the students. Grants to be used for the purchase of emergency lighting, emergency call stations, and camera systems are currently being sought.

- **Q28 - Satisfaction with police department personnel in the office.**

According to the results of the survey conducted on the Poplarville campus, 63% of students were satisfied with the police department personnel. Survey results from the Forrest County Center indicate that 61.8% of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with services provided by the personnel in the Police Office. At the Hancock Center, 88% of the students who responded to the survey were satisfied with services.

Recommendation: A FEMA instructed course on personal relations is being mandated as required training for all officers. The level of professionalism has been raised and is being required through written directive.

Admission and Financial Aid:

After reviewing the campus climate survey results and student comments, the following responses/actions are being suggested and implemented:

- **Q25 - I am satisfied with services provided by the personnel in the Financial Aid office.**

Survey results reflect that 68.16% of students at the Poplarville campus are satisfied with services provided by the Financial Aid office personnel, and 68% of students at the Forrest County Center are satisfied with Financial Aid Office

services. The results indicate that 70% of the Hancock Center students are satisfied with services rendered by the Financial Aid office.

Recommendations: Cross- training will be implemented in all areas of student services which will give additional personnel who will know the policies from each department.

Implement a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) brochure for all departments in student services.

Registration Effectiveness:

In response to the students' comments and the campus climate survey results which indicate that 66% of students are satisfied with the registration process, the following actions are being suggested and implemented.

Recommendation: Meet with various stakeholders to brainstorm ways in which to make registration more effective.

Miscellaneous

Student comments and survey results reflect that 65% of students are satisfied with opportunities for student activities resulted in the following recommendation.

Recommendation: Communicate to faculty the guidelines for student organizations and ask faculty members who might be interested in sponsoring a student organization.

Forrest County Center

Instructional:

There are currently two (2) questions which fall within the sphere of instructional effectiveness that need to be addressed. These are questions 19 and 21, which involve student perception of faculty at the Forrest County Center.

- **Q19 – I have been advised of the proper channels for expressing student complaints.**

and

- **Q21 – If I thought an instructor was unfair, I would feel comfortable requesting a conference to discuss the situation.**

Survey results indicate that approximately 50% of students responding to the survey indicated that they had been advised of proper channels for expressing complaints; and 64.9% of students surveyed indicated that they would feel comfortable requesting a conference.

Recommendation: Faculty members will be encouraged to print information from the Cat Country Guide concerning channels for expressing student complaints and cover this information when they cover their course syllabus.

Recommendation: Faculty members will be instructed to encourage students to request a conference when needed.

Registration Effectiveness:

Survey results from the Forrest County Center indicate that 63.3% of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the registration process, resulting in the following recommendation.

- **Q 23 - I am satisfied with services provided during the registration process.**

Recommendation: Administration will ask faculty and student government representatives to suggest improvements.

Admission and Financial Aid:

According to survey results from Forrest County students responding to the survey, 68.3% were satisfied with services provided by the Financial Aid Office.

- **Q25 - I am satisfied with services provided by personnel in the Financial Aid Office.**

Recommendation: The financial aid advisement is currently done primarily by one person the Forrest County Campus. Additional personnel and/or work study would be helpful.

Survey results indicate that 66% of students agreed that registration and course selection information is clear and well-publicized.

Recommendation: Public Relations takes care of publicity.

Safety and Security:

According to survey results, 61.8% of students at the Forrest County Center are satisfied with services provided by the personnel in the Police Office.

- **Q28 - I am satisfied with services provided by the personnel in the Police office.**

Recommendation: The Chief of Police on the Forrest County Campus will be instructed to attempt to be more service oriented.

Miscellaneous:

Survey results from the Forrest County Center reflect that only 47.6% of students think that there is sufficient opportunity for student activities.

- **Q29 - There is sufficient opportunity for involvement in student activities on campus.**

Recommendation: Although there have been many new opportunities for involvement added in recent years, student government will be asked for suggestions.

According to the results of the survey, 52.6% of students at the Forrest County Center indicated that they had been provided adequate notice of transfer requirements and exams required for transfer to four-year institutions.

- **Q34 - I was provided adequate notice concerning standard entrance requirements and exams oftentimes required to transfer to a four-year institution.**

Recommendation: Advisors will be asked to spend more time clarifying entrance requirements at four-year institutions.

Hancock Center

Instructional Effectiveness:

The percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed that they had been advised of the proper channels and procedures for expressing complaints rose by 9.5 percentage points, an increase from 57.5% last year to 67% this year. Although this is a substantial improvement in the satisfaction level, administration and faculty continue to provide information emphasizing what students need to do in order to register a complaint.

- **Q19 - I have been advised of the proper channels for expressing student complaints.**

Recommendation: Remind instructors to inform students who have a complaint or problem that they are to discuss the issue first with the instructor. If the issue is not resolved, students should be advised of the next in the chain of command with whom to discuss the issue.

According to responses from students at the Hancock Center, approximately 66.7% agreed or strongly agreed that they had received adequate notice concerning transfer requirements and/or exams required by four-year institutions. Although this reflects an increase of 1.7 percentage points from last year's responses, administration and faculty are continuing to address this issue in order to provide students with necessary information for transferring to four-year institutions.

- **Q34 – I was provided adequate notice concerning standard entrance requirements and exams required to transfer to a four-year institution.**

Recommendation: Communicate with faculty, who are assigned to advise students, that they check university bulletins and catalogs of those institutions to which students are most likely to transfer for programs that have specific entrance requirements.

Admission and Financial Aid:

Students responding to the survey indicated a 57.5% satisfaction level with services provided by the Financial Aid Office, which is a decrease of 12.2% percentage points in student satisfaction levels.

- **Q25 – I am satisfied with services provided by the personnel in the Financial Aid Office.**

Recommendation: Admission/Financial Aid workshop to be offered in the spring for local seniors to provide training and proper procedures for applying for financial aid.

Miscellaneous:

Survey results indicate a slight increase in the student satisfaction level concerning services provided by the bookstore. (69% - an increase from last year's 68.15%). This campus currently does not have a bookstore and representatives from the main campus bookstore are present for registration only.

- **Q 24 – I am satisfied with the services provided by the personnel in the bookstore.**

Recommendation: Seek suggestions from students on how to make bookstore transactions more efficient.

Survey results reveal that 55% of students responding to the survey would like to see more student activities on campus.

- **Q 29 – There is sufficient opportunity for involvement in student activities on campus.**

Recommendation: Seek suggestions from students for having student activities at the Hancock Center.

Action Timeline

POPLARVILLE CAMPUS			
<i>Area Focus</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Progress Made and/or Date Completed</i>
<i>Instructional</i>	Remind instructors and instructional department heads to inform students who have a complaint or problem that they are to discuss the issue first with the instructor. If the issue is not resolved, students should be advised of the next in the chain of command with whom to discuss the issue.	<i>The Vice President for Instruction will address this during the Faculty/Staff Orientation meeting in August and follow-up with an email reminder.</i>	<i>August 2009</i>
	Communicate with faculty who are assigned to advise students that they check University bulletins and catalogs of those institutions to which students are most likely to transfer for programs that have specific entrance requirements.	<i>The Vice President for Instruction will address this during the Faculty/Staff Orientation meeting in August and follow-up with an email reminder.</i>	<i>August 2009</i>
	The Vice President of Instruction will meet with the Director of the Counseling, Advisement and Placement Center to discuss how personnel services in that center can be improved.	<i>A meeting will be scheduled for Spring 2009.</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>

<i>Safety & Security</i>	The implementation of Campus Crime Watch (CCW) is in place, which will provide students with an opportunity interact with law enforcement on a proactive basis. The CCW will benefit the students in that they have the opportunity to have a voice as related to their safety and the opportunity to be more involved campus wide in safety plans and actions.	<i>CCW is currently in place. The Director of Public Safety will being recruitment measures for student participation by the end of March, 2009.</i>	<i>March 31 and ongoing</i>
	The Director of Public Safety will meet with each individual dorm population on a regular basis to answer questions and explain procedures and actions to the students.	<i>The Director of Public Safety will be present and available to answer questions at the March 5th dorm meeting and subsequent meetings.</i>	<i>March 5, 2009</i>
			<i>Ongoing</i>

<i>Safety & Security - continued</i>	Grants to be used for the purchase of emergency lighting, emergency call stations, and camera systems are currently being sought.	<i>The Director of Public Safety is pursuing grants with the assistance of ROCIC (Regional Organization of Criminal Information Center) and various state agencies.</i>	<i>Ongoing search through 2009</i>
	A FEMA instructed course on personal relations is being mandated as required training for all officers. The level of professionalism has been raised and is being required through written directive.	<i>Some officers began training during Fall Semester 2008. Current officers have until the end of Spring Semester 2009 to complete training. New incoming officers are required to complete training within 90 days.</i>	<i>Fall 2008 and ongoing</i>
<i>Admission and Financial Aid</i>	Cross- training will be implemented in all areas of student services which will give additional personnel who will know the policies from each department.	<i>The Dean of Student Services will direct departments to participate in cross-training procedures.</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i> <i>Ongoing</i>
	Implement a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) brochure for all departments in student services.	<i>The Dean of Student Services will work with departmental directors to develop brochure and publish in print and</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i> <i>ongoing</i>

		<i>online.</i>	
<i>Registration Effectiveness</i>	Meet with various stakeholders to brainstorm ways in which to make registration more effective.	<i>The Dean of Student Services will schedule meetings with various stakeholders for discussion/brainstorming sessions.</i>	<i>Spring 2009 ongoing</i>
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	Communicate to faculty the guidelines for student organizations and ask faculty members who might be interested in sponsoring a student organization.	<i>The Dean of Student Services will send an email to faculty with guidelines attached and request faculty response.</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>
FORREST COUNTY CENTER			
<i>Area Focus</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Progress Made and/or Date Completed</i>
<i>FFC -Instructional</i>	Faculty members will be encouraged to print information from the <i>Cat Country Guide</i> concerning channels for expressing student complaints and cover this information when they cover their course syllabus.	<i>The Vice President for Instruction will address this during the Faculty/Staff Orientation meeting in August and follow-up with an email reminder.</i> <i>Additionally, the Dean of the Forrest County Center will remind his instructors to cover this information with students as recommended.</i>	<i>August 2009</i>

	Faculty members will be instructed to encourage students to request a conference when needed.	<i>The Vice President for Instruction, will address this during the Faculty/Staff Orientation meeting in August and follow-up with an email reminder. Additionally, the Dean of the Forrest County Center will encourage his instructors to cover information with students.</i>	August 2009
<i>FCC-Registration Effectiveness</i>	Administration will ask faculty and student government representatives to suggest improvements.	<i>The Dean of the Forrest County Center will request suggestions from faculty and student government representatives.</i>	<i>Spring 2009 and ongoing</i>
<i>FCC - Financial Aid</i>	The financial aid advisement is done primarily by one person the Forrest County Campus. Additional personnel and/or work study would be helpful.	<i>The Dean of the Forrest County Center will request additional personnel</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>
<i>FCC- Registration</i>	Public Relations takes care of publicity.	<i>The Dean of the Forrest County Center will meet with Director of Public Relations to discuss improvement of publicity</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>
<i>FCC -Safety & Security</i>	The Chief of Police on the Forrest County Campus will be instructed to attempt to be more service oriented.	<i>The Dean of the Forrest County Center will instruct the Chief of Police regarding this matter.</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>
<i>FCC -Student Activities</i>	There have been many new opportunities for involvement added in recent years. Student government will be asked for suggestions.	<i>The Dean of the Forrest County Center will solicit suggestions.</i>	<i>Spring 2009</i>
HANCOCK CENTER			
<i>Area Focus</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Progress Made and/or Date</i>

			Completed
HC – <i>Instructional Effectiveness</i>	Remind instructors to inform students who have a complaint or problem that they are to discuss the issue first with the instructor. If the issue is not resolved, students should be advised of the next in the chain of command with whom to discuss the issue.	<i>The Vice President for Instruction will address this during the Faculty/Staff Orientation meeting in August and follow-up with an email reminder. The Director of the HC will also communicate to instructors that this information should be related to students.</i>	August 2009
	Communicate with faculty who are assigned to advise students that they check university bulletins and catalogs of those institutions to which students are most likely to transfer for programs that have specific entrance requirements	<i>The Vice President for Instruction will address this during the Faculty/Staff Orientation meeting in August and follow-up with an email reminder. Additionally, the Director of the Hancock Center will communicate with faculty.</i>	August 2009
HC – Admission & Financial Aid	Admission/Financial Aid workshop to be offered in the spring for local seniors to provide training and proper procedures for applying for financial aid.	<i>The Director of the HC will work again with the Director(s) of Admission, Financial Aid, and Recruitment and Orientation to make this a reality.</i>	Spring 2009
HC – Student Services	Seek suggestions from students for having student activities at the Hancock Center.	<i>Director of the HC will work with the Director of Student Services on this.</i>	Spring 2009 ongoing
HC - <i>Miscellaneous</i>	Seek suggestions from students on how to make bookstore transactions more efficient.	<i>Director of the HC will seek suggestions and work with representatives from the bookstore to make transactions easier and more efficient.</i>	Spring 2009 ongoing