

Student Activities Office invited a number of students to attend, but only two (2) attended

Virginia Western Community College

Student Focus Group Meeting

**Natural Science Center
Monday, April 16, 2007
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Participants:

Wendy Armes
Scott May

Other Attendees:

Moderator – Erik W. Williams, VWCC Educational Foundation
Recorder, Maggie Boyes, VWCC
Recorder, Katherine F. Strickland, VWCC Educational Foundation

Question 1

Why did you choose Virginia Western?

Response

- Work full-time; VWCC convenient to schedule classes; affordability
- Good Curriculum offered
- Transfer opportunities; community college transfer grant a plus; articulation agreements with additional schools
- VWCC great stepping stone for women with children; get associates degree without leaving home
- Program here in region – get a good career in nursing in two years
- Like size of VWCC – small and not intimidating
- Campus is friendly and it is like a “family” here

Question 2

A. Now that you are attending Virginia Western what has the College done to help you be successful?

Response

- Financial aid and people helped a lot in work-study program; went from full-time worker to full-time student with work study
- Professors good – faculty great
- Can become more involved with clubs and activities here; changed life to where person was able to stay on campus; work VWCC work study to be on campus
- Phi Theta Cappa – being members and meeting people; go to conferences; SGA meets people in the community
- Unfortunately, most students do not get involved or try to put time into figuring out how to be involved; school could try to get more word out about activity available to students
- College helped student to grow and take advantage of other opportunities, but students need to take the initiative
- Help inside classroom and outside with life skills and networking
- Educational Foundation scholarships are good; helped a student tremendously
- Word out that good students attend community colleges not because they cannot make it at a 4-year school; excellent students attend VWCC and help the region’s economy

- Career Center is an asset as well; helps with resumes and finding a job; it is a great tool to provide; we need to make students more aware of it and what they have to offer

B. What could the College do better to help you reach your goal?

Response

- Students under the misconception they can work full-time and attend school full-time; they become frustrated and overwhelmed and drop out; younger students may not have the necessary maturity and drop out
- Maybe find out number of hours students need to work to gage their success – intrusive advising – entrance counseling to what students want to do
- Some students put into classes that are not academically ready for it; this leads to frustration and to low-self esteem for the student; try to gage student's academic level and maturity to take volume of classes
- Need to offer more specific classes, i.e., pharmacology course is not combined with other class; offer classes as stand alone as opposed to mixed in with other itinerary
- For the student who may not want to transfer plan a course schedule that better suits a program of study as opposed to the prep classes for transfer; example, taking some business law and other appropriate classes of the program of study as opposed to biology which the student will never use in his specific course of study

Question 3

Please tell us your thoughts on what resources have been the most helpful and how the College could better assist you in your efforts.

Response

- Need updated library with technology; not enough computers; updated materials for research needed too; more study room
- Tutoring rooms are inconvenienced by the need of the existing tutoring room for a class; better place for tutoring
- Financial aid and counseling folks helpful to steer students in the right direction; students need to tell them what he/she needs; students need to take the initiative on this; students won't pick up information to read about this
- Have a student activities center with pool tables and other things for students to do; somewhere to hang out and relax that takes mind away from school /academics; this may help students get more involved in school

Question 4

Describe the level of customer service you have received from faculty and staff. What do you consider our strengths and in what areas can we improve?

Response

- Faculty is good; more than qualified to teach the classes they do; example, professor came in on her day off to help student who needed it
- Younger students may be too intimidated by a professor to ask for help
- Good experiences with staff and work closely with them in planning for students
- Some teaching styles do not encourage great learning – administration should examine professor's teaching style if the students are not succeeding in that class
- Parking is an issue for some students; need more parking on the Anderson side of campus; need better lighting in business sciences area; getting across from one side of campus to the other

What are your thoughts to help implement and develop our strategic plan?

Response

- Phi Theta Cappa – students need to pay \$60.00 to join; this is expensive for students and many cannot join because of this; see if Educational Foundation can assist in some way to help off-set the costs for potential members
- SGA – needs a president with drive and ambition; current one has a lot of motivation and drive, cares about students, and wants to get them involved
- Make extra curricula stuff more open to students; difficult to gauge if its because students are not aware of it or the students don't have the initiative; try advertising on Blackboard link that students have access to; MySpace or Facebook – unsure if this will work; d-list to students have helped attendance at activities
- Do a good job here as far as providing services to students – no major shortcoming to the school
- Faculty and administration do a great job
- VWCC is the greatest deal out there financially and for the quality of education
- Get more students to step up and tell us what they need