

PTC Composition I Student Focus Groups Say...

(From Composition I classes on February 12, 2008 at Pulaski Technical College.)



Pulaski Tech can improve student persistence and success by offering (in rank order):

1. More flexible staff – if sick, etc..
2. Orientation includes financial aid office location and resources.
3. Professional development especially in math so that instructors learn about different learning styles, etc..
4. Professional development.
5. Tutors and extra time with instructors.
6. Add more sections.
7. Advising and orientation. Allow students to evaluate earlier in the semester.
8. More flexible staff [faculty].
9. Extra credit for voluntary reading.
10. Have instructors accept documentation.
11. Inform students about all pre-requisites (better advising). Advisor should give alternatives to COMPASS scores for first-year students.
12. Expand tutoring hours. Writing lab for Composition I.
13. Expand locations. Open Little Rock South.
14. None.
15. Instructors take students to the labs. More instruction on student portal.

The focus groups' opinions of the knowledge students need to have and the action strategies students can implement to improve success are listed in the "Composition I Focus Group Results" document available on the PTC Achieving the Dream web site.

The barriers to student persistence and success are (in rank order):

1. Family, work and time for study.
2. Finances.
3. Instructors cover material too quickly and don't make sure students understand.
4. Instructors don't relate to students and have poor communication skills. They expect students to "get it" immediately.
5. Thesis statements.
6. Need more sections of classes (already full when registering).
7. Don't know which classes transfer for a 4-year degree.
8. Class schedules don't work with work schedules.
9. Not knowing how to extend and expand [the mind].
10. Restrictive attendance policies and instructor attendance restrictions.
11. Knowing how to write.
12. Understanding grammar.
13. Inconvenient location.
14. Knowing a topic to write about.
15. Knowing how to email.

Pulaski Tech provides effective support to students by providing (in rank order):

1. Day care. Single Parent Scholarship. Career Pathways. College Seminar.
2. A financial aid office.
3. Instructor evaluations.
4. Instructor evaluations.
5. Tutors are available and instructor is available outside of class time.
6. Expanding locations.
7. More advising.
8. Evening, summer and online classes.
9. Library. Tutors.
10. Some instructors will accept documentation or will give a few days. Some instructors recognize [the importance of] extracurricular activities.
11. None.
12. Library. Tutors.
13. Online classes. Little Rock West.
14. Reference book with text. Instructors share ideas.
15. Labs.