

Speech Communication Students Say...

(From students in several Speech Communication classes on February 6 2008 at Pulaski Technical College).



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

1. Fear of public speaking. No make-up work accepted. Clocks need to be synchronized.
2. My Communications Lab – hard to access, use, slow (home).
3. Expectation that SPCH is easy.
4. Lack of phone communication in Financial Aid Office, lack of access to staff.
5. Lack of time to study. Time management. Family demands.
6. Too much content, too little time.
7. Use of slang.
8. Instructor's lack of focus.
9. Lack of instructor clarity about assignments.
10. Lack of student orientation. Instructor does not use textbook.
11. Lack of time between classes.
12. Not enough financial aid.
13. Assignments on computer. Lack of home computer, computer skills and computer access.
14. Learning to communicate.
15. Course scheduling (conflicts). Course availability.
16. Learning disabilities.
17. Poor self-image.
18. Vocabulary learning and understanding.
19. Scholarships manually entered and slow.
20. Transportation.
21. Instructors ignore questions.
22. Cafeteria's food selection.
23. Lack of wireless access in some buildings.
24. Lack of instructor motivation and enthusiasm (evenings).

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

1. Make Speech a requirement for all degrees. Provide speaking opportunities in other classes. One free pass. Offer extra credit. Consider case-by-case review. Have clocks replaced and synchronize.
2. Drop My Communications Lab.
3. Timing of assignments. Require better audience behavior.
4. Call Center. Designate someone to answer phones (work-study). Increase FA staff and divide responsibilities.
5. Teach time management skills. Apply FA to day care.
6. Instructors need to manage time, stay with syllabus, and stay focused on content.
7. Do not allow offensive language.
8. Cover what will be on test. Review day. Provide study guide.
9. Allow time for Q&A.
10. Require orientation. Publicize that text is optional. Loosen return policies.
11. No more TBA in schedule. Provide campus maps.

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

1. Speech is a requirement for most majors. Functions with student speakers. Visiting students speak in some courses. Some instructors are understanding. Study guides. Reviews. Nothing.
2. Faculty and Computing Systems support.
3. Requiring speeches. Syllabus outline.
4. Offer email support.
5. College Seminar. Pathways. Workshops. Day care.
6. Nothing.
7. Syllabus outlines expectations for acceptable language.
8. Some instructors provide study guides and day-by-day outlines.
9. Syllabus with contact information.
10. Online orientation available. Notes.
11. Campus is not too large.

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

12. Loosen guidelines (too tough on middle class).
More grants, scholarships and FA information.
13. Inform, identify students w/o computers and provide alternatives. Lab time in class. Offer computer workshop and advise to take Computer Concepts. Keep some computers accessible when campus is closed. Less use of Eduspace and online testing.
14. Debate team.
15. Start earlier with more sections. Intersession.
More faculty.
16. ?
17. Morale booster, kindness from instructors.
Dress code.
18. Mandatory vocabulary class.
19. Enter in system faster.
20. Involve other cities with transit system. Include transportation in financial aid.
21. Hiring caring instructors and ask if they care on evaluation forms.
22. Get Starbucks. Wider selection.
23. Let students know which buildings do have access.
24. Be honest on evaluations.

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

12. Advisors are knowledgeable.
13. Computers available. Computer Concepts.
14. Class discussions.
15. Nothing.
16. Disabilities counseling.
17. Career Pathways. Student organizations, events.
18. Tutoring. Online study guides.
19. Nothing.
20. Work with Central Arkansas Transit.
21. Instructor evaluation.
22. Nothing.
23. Wireless in most buildings.
24. Nothing.

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 "Speech Communication Focus Group Results" document available on the PTC Achieving the Dream web site.