

PTC Student Focus Groups Say...

(From a September 21-22, 2007 focus group training session at Pulaski Technical College by Dr. Ken Gonzalez, an Achieving the Dream Data Coach from the University of San Diego.)

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

1. Lifestyle changes including balancing family, work and school (time management, study habits, stress management).
2. Financial concerns (budgeting, understanding financial aid, scholarship awareness).
3. Registration (long lines, paperwork ((proper documentation))), don't understand jargon, admission steps, lack of guidance).
4. Campus logistics (maps not helpful).
5. Daycare (need longer hours, cost, long waits, on-campus care, bigger daycare).
6. Advising (course transfer issues, taking classes too advanced, taking classes not needed).
7. Lack of home computer (lack of computer skills).
8. Classroom distractions (lack of focus, not open-minded, not used to being responsible/accountable).
9. Bookstore (not enough texts).
10. Transportation.



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

1. More activities (sports, social clubs, frats).
2. Time management class in orientation.
3. A budgeting class.
4. A student newsletter.
5. Scheduled campus tours and advertised orientations.
6. A meet and greet with students and faculty/staff.
7. More staff for registration; provide checklists; make sure staff people are on the same page.
8. A more reliable computer network and a Channel One-type television network.
9. Better communication about scholarships.
10. More financial aid staff and workshops.
11. More advisors, advisement day, required advising, more knowledgeable advisors.
12. Support groups and a center for help and support.
13. More speakers, alumni speakers, student speakers.
14. On-campus daycare with extended hours.
15. Student housing.
16. Better communications with bookstore so textbooks are available and increased buy-back funds.

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

1. College Seminar
2. Orientation
3. Friendly atmosphere
4. Student Ambassadors
5. Tutoring
6. Online classes
7. TRIO
8. Career Pathways
9. Arkansas College Transfer System
10. Public transportation
11. Online loan information
12. Low tuition
13. Food coupons
14. Added more computers



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 "Results of PTC Student Focus Groups" document available on the PTC Achieving the Dream web site.