College 1 Focus Group Questions

Faculty Institute

1. **How well did the institute prepare you to teach College 1?**

   - For me, not being a faculty, I thought it was fantastic. The foundation helped.

   - Incredibly reassuring for a FY College 1 instructor. Something to assist and support you.

   - Good to hear from teachers that were there and you are able to take from their feedback.

   - Some of the things could be omitted. (Not clear what.)

   - I loved the flexibility. You can adjust your class, what helps them in second year of teaching. The ability to move weeks back and forth.

   a. **What was one thing that you found particularly useful about the training?**

      - They did a really good job about modeling the strategies. Doing what the students would do.

   b. **Was there anything that you thought was not useful or confusing?**

      - Negative- the first day people want to know the nuts and bolts. Sometimes it causes anxiety.

      - Canvas shell, my head exploded. Modules, assignments, etc. Becomes overwhelming. There is so much in the Canvas shell. Even commented on having more Canvas training or more access to assignments in Canvas earlier.

      - Cover Canvas more in the institute. Even when you use Canvas all the time, it's another level. When you have to go in and you're adding an assignment.

2. **What changes would you recommend to make the institute more effective or engaging?**

   - Financial literacy is something I am not confident about. Teachers who are stronger in certain strong points should help each other. We should utilize resources.

   - Create a Facebook group, a place all the teachers can go so they can communicate on a regular basis so that we can see how everyone is doing. Somewhere we can find each other if we need to.

- Building the syllabus, using your own interpretation of the material to remind the students in your own ways.

- For the institute: have veteran instructors say which unit they feel most strongly about and model it

- College 1 website is available to us late. Great resource to have earlier on.

- We prepare students for when shit is going to hit the fan, but not the teachers. Training should incorporate an emotional piece when you are in the thick of it. How do I hold it together? Addressing the skills more head on.

- Get information on requirements of Pathways program. Students kept asking about "passport" requirements and I couldn't answer.

3. **Other than the faculty institute, what has influenced your College 1 teaching practice?**

   - All of my counseling experience came in handy.

Faculty Support
1. **How well were you supported while teaching College 1?**

   - I feel comfortable asking people who I know are teaching the class for feedback, how they are navigating the class.

   - I wish I had known some things earlier -- dates, deadlines, snuck up on me. Getting the information before the semester started would've been helpful.

   - What are all the requirements for the pathway students?

   - Great that Myriam provided just in time info.

a. **Mentor pods**

   - Used it for more specific questions.

   - Not every professor was aware of the mentors. I didn't know. I missed that. Would have been nice.

   - It helped me as a first time professor of College 1. Good to know that the challenges I was facing people have faced before. Great to see teachers that were teaching the course the same time as you. Good to be able to meet other faculty that can help. It was always an infusion of new ideas.

   - I think it's a mutually helpful process.

- Formal vs. informal mentoring – I learned from people who taught the class before. Developed informal connections during the institute.

b. Communications (e.g., email, text)

- I had my wife email Brock when I was running late, but we should have a more formal way of communicating emergencies.

- Didn't know who to go to when the students were kicked out from modules. Didn't know where to go to for technical issues.

- Got information "just in time." I wish had known dates and deadlines earlier.

2. Is there anything that would help make your teaching experience better?

- Getting key information: logistics about what to do if I am going to be tardy.

College 1 Curriculum
1. How useful were the lesson plans?

- I think that all the information is good, it is good to have all these choices. I get to pick and choose, now I use less and less because I have been able to develop my own materials.

- It's not really like part 1 part 2 part 3, there are several different plans you can follow. They should be termed "options."

- Overwhelming – I thought I had to cover everything and then a teacher I know told me I could skip things or do them out of order.

- It's a balance of having lots to choose from, and what to choose when to choose.

- Dense! Some repetition.

a. How often did you refer to them?

- I referred to the lesson plans almost constantly. It was a great tool.

- There were definitely times where I wasn't able to do all the parts.

- I used the time management section a lot.

- The left side is good reference -- the glossary.

- Easier the second time around.

b. What changes would you recommend to make them more useful?

- Totally dictated by the class, the students. Recognizing the chemistry of the classroom.

- I liked that some of the professors shared their syllabus with me.

- Let the class choose some of the topics, the class feels more empowered being able to choose. Have choices for certain topics if we have time.

- Financial literacy, important.

- My class leaned towards scholarship, I had a class full of international students and they liked that more. Unit on scholarships created by instructor and used as a "choice" option for the class.

- Lesson plan -- too many evidence and interpretation logs. One method that needs to be peppered in with other methods.

- Don't take too much out when you are going over these.

2. **What module(s) did you enjoy teaching most? Why?**

- My favorite was mindset and goal setting.

- Unsure if they like the lesson plan itself or the TedTalks that it goes with. Fun TedTalks, but lesson plan can be kind of dry.

- Tito has a great thing for goal setting -- ten year goals, five year goals, cards that they take out. My class really liked sexual behavior and identity.

3. **What module(s) did you find most challenging? Why?**

- Metacognition, Dr. Chu -- yuck

4. **Are there any changes you would recommend to make the curriculum more effective?**

- Consult with the instructors during the summer when they are redoing the College 1 reader. So the articles will be more updated, more relevant, more up to date.

- An actual syllabus with due dates, so we can plan ahead. Due dates for reflections, journals, etc. More systematic, where I don't feel like I have to piece things together. Logistics calendar not detailed. Too difficult to piece things together.

- One Book website came too late. It would be good to use as a resource earlier.

Open-ended Responses:

☐ **library visit/information literacy**

- Suggestion- the library should teach them how to research and work on their projects at the same time. So they can double dip.

- Schedule the library visit earlier, students would benefit from how to research earlier. But week 4 too early.

- In an ideal world, 2 visits. One for information, then another to be able to use the information they learned.

- Information literacy modules "finicky." Students would submit but nothing there. Where to go for technical issues.

☐ **reading journals**

- Collectively as a class, the students hated them.

- The assignment doesn't reflect their progression. As their reading gets better, as they get more into the book. Later in the semester, the questions should be more reflective of their progress.

- I hated it at first, came off very "Englishly" but I saw it helping them out in the long run as they got more critical with their writing/reading skills.

- It is a very time consuming assignment. Maybe bubbles they can check off. Having to write it all out is maybe not so important.

- I did a lot of group RJs, they weren't turning them in; they were pretty long.

- Maybe allow them to have more freedom on what they would like to discuss about the book.

☐ **book choice**

- They liked it. However, some students wanted it to read something other than race. "We get it we learn about that all the time."

- Maybe another topic.

☐ **conference**

- Not enough judges to go around and evaluate everyone's poster

- Students all wanted to be seen, felt like they had to pull judges in. Judges will see one, then skip 3 or 4. Get skipped, it is discouraging.

- Students have to sell it.

- Faculty maybe can pick the best in class, just so that every class gets some recognition. Best poster in class? And top poster overall?

☐ **ePortfolio**

- Everyone hates Portfolium. The ePortfolio tutor came way too early. Doesn't allow for expression. Not a great visual medium.

- Assignments are difficult to grade in Portfolium. Would have been easier to grade if submitted in Microsoft Word.

- Weebly lets them put a personal stamp on it. Lets them make it more personal, they can express themselves in multiple ways. Weebly, is like creating their own website.

- Portfolium is dry, maybe allows them to use weekly for a reflection at the end of the semester.

- I got sick of grading them, so boring, no frame. Limited access.

- The fun element is the thing. "Portfolium is where fun goes to die."

- The way College 1 is set up, all these things that keep it interesting and vibrant but Portfolium doesn't help it.

- Don't think that an assignment students passed and failed are good to post. Should be more meaningful, Maybe what is something you are passionate about that you worked on this year that is transferable to their career or major. That you can carry forward to your professional goals.

- Take out the word "failure" and change to <u>challenge</u>

- We're just lying to them about other people looking at their professional portfolio (because nobody does)

- ePortfolio= good idea (Weebly, Wiblex)

- Portfolium platform= bad idea

☐ **success coaches**

- Last year they were more proactive. Students were very well informed about everything happening. Got an email before it happened. A lot more proactive

and involved. Here is the student, here is the feedback, we worked together as a team.

- This year, I am finding that they are not as informed. Everything is new, coaches have no idea. I find myself constantly writing to my coach about a student. My retention with the coaches have been the worse this year. It wasn't a team this year. When I asked the coaches about the students because they weren't doing well, the students said they didn't talk to them. My College 1 retention data will not be good this year.

- Maybe we need more coaches. Maybe add a different way to make appointments besides emailing.

- From a previous coach, now a College 1 teacher -- I think the more the program is growing, you increase the caseload of students. Do I focus more on the instructor/class or caseload?

- Include the coaches in the institute so you can know who the coach is. Maybe hire earlier, so that the professors know so they can tag team on what they can do and how they can support you.

- Giving faculty members the information that if your coach can't see you, someone will! Getting that information to instructors because most didn't know.

  ☐ **faculty mentors**

- Last year when I went to the institute I felt really informed. Maybe find a way to inform teachers that aren't able to make it to help them out. Maybe there is a way to do a rolling mentor program. If we know there is that standing appointment every month that a mentor will be available every month. So if we need access we can seek help. Mentor on call.

Final Questions
1. **What do you think are the essential components of College 1?**

- Research project, finish a book, teaching them to be an adult, coping, navigating the community college

2. **Has teaching College 1 affected the way you teach other classes? If so, how?**

- In my other classes I do not struggle with immaturity. Classroom management isn't something I need to worry about, but I do in College 1. I can see the difference with my College 1 and other classes. Maybe just the class, some professors didn't' experience same problem.

- 3 weeks into my interpersonal communication class, I didn't feel like it was working but because it coincided with College 1 I found a way to work. Some of the skills that we were teaching of how to understand yourself, helped me. I incorporated that into ePortfolio, look back at the semester as a journey.

- I see the classroom in another light and they see their own growth and are able to reflect on it.

3. **Is there anything else you would like to discuss that you believe would help to improve the College 1 experience for students and/or instructors?**

- I had a student in crisis, I found out at night, and in the morning I called. Everyone got involved (coaches, counselors). The student came back and she was transformed. There was not a hesitation to get back on track.