

International Student Pathway Focus Group Summary

Spring 2017

Focus Group

- There were a total of 10 students who participated in the focus group on Friday, May 26th, 2017.
 - o 8 Female students and 2 male students
 - o 4 SYP students and 6 FYP students
- Focus group lasted for approximately 45 minutes.
- All students consented to having the focus group audio recorded – audio was transcribed and any references made to names or any other identifying information were removed.
- Facilitator: Patty Quiñones
- Note Taker: Davis Vo

RESULTS

Jam

1. What do you think was the purpose of iJam?

According to students the purpose of iJam was: Adjust to being a college student in general, become familiar with PCC campus, resources and centers, and to interact and make friends.

2. Did you feel more confident about starting college after completing iJam? (Why or why not?)

All students noted that they felt more confident starting college after attending iJam because it provided them with the information needed, such as where to find various resources on campus (e.g., health center) and how to navigate the registration process (e.g., LancerPoint).

3. What is one thing that you liked about iJam?

What students liked most about iJam: 1) coaches - they were easier to talk to than counselors or instructors, 2) Field trip - provided the opportunity for students to make new friends, and 3) orientation to the college – knowing how to navigate the registration process and where to find various resources and services and buildings on campus.

4. What is one thing you would change?

Length – students indicated that they spend between 5 – 7 days doing iJam and then a couple days of testing, 2) Time – two students indicated that they had to come to the U.S. a month earlier for iJam and the downtime between the end of iJam and the beginning of the semester was problematic with regards to housing and parking, 3) Reading/Group sharing time – most students said the group sharing time allotted during the morning hours was not entirely useful, some students indicated that the readings were repetitive with College 001 material, 4) Transportation – students said they did not know they needed parking permits during the summer and did not know where to buy a bus pass, and 5) More assistance in finding housing – some students said they use an Art Center website to look for housing.

5. How would you feel about going through Jam with resident students?

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All students said they would prefer to have Jam with resident students because it would provide the opportunity to get to know more people.

6. What can Pathways do to make the transition to college easier for international students?

Overall, students indicated that Pathways does a good job at helping first year students transition into college, but some indicated that it would be nice to have continuity with the coaches, rather than have to adjust to having a new coach each semester.

Coaches

7. What is the job of the coach?

When asked, students began listing all the things the coaches have done for them including: comprehensive education plan, inform students on resources available to them on campus, registration reminders, social event reminders, and help with a variety of different problems.

8. How did your coach help you this year?

When asked how coaches helped them this year they reiterated the same list of activities as above: completing educational plan, helping with various requirements, and reaching out for help with various issues such as switching majors and finding volunteer opportunities.

9. What can Pathways do to make the coaching program better?

Students reiterated that having some continuity with their coaches would be nice, they indicated that currently, their coaches change every semester and having to reacquaint themselves with a new coach every semester is time consuming.

College 1

10. What is the purpose of College 1?

As one student indicated, the purpose of College 1 was to learn 'the psychology part of being a student'. Examples provided by the students were, learning time management and study habits.

11. After College 1, were you more confident about succeeding in college? (If yes, how? If no, why?)

Students generally indicated that College 1 didn't make them more confident because: 1) they already knew about study skills and time management and that it was a matter of them applying what they knew, and 2) the class like an English class, loaded with reading and writing.

12. What is one thing you liked about College 1?

Students liked the following: 1) instructor because s/he was helpful, 2) the poster assignment – dreaded it at first but then saw the value of participating after the fact, 3) made new friends.

13. What is one thing you would change?

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Students would change the reading response journals, they indicated that they did so much journaling that it became busy work. In some instances, students they would find summaries of their readings online and write their reflections on those summaries, others would turn in the same journal entrees.

NOTE: *Students who took College 10 indicated that it was repetitive – many of the activities they did in class they had already done during iJam (such as create an educational plan). They seemed less enthusiastic about their course than those students who took College 1.*

Pathways Center

14. Where is the best place to go at PCC to ask questions and get support?

Students identified the following locations: International Student Office, LAC, ESL Center.

15. Did you visit the Pathways Center (in V102)? (Why or why not?)

About half of students said they used the Pathways center, and identified it as a good resource center where they used the printing and computers, however too loud to be used as study space. Second year pathway students indicated that they use the R-Building – 4th floor lab for printing services, however they said the lab is not necessarily accessible because it is far away. When they have attempted to use the Pathways center V102, they are generally turned away and told to go to the R-Building.

Second Year Pathways Students

16. For first year students, are you going to join the second year of Pathways? (Why or why not?)

All first years indicated they were planning on joining the second year for pathways because they want to continue to receive priority registration, help from coaches, printing services, and study space.

17. For second year students, what is one thing you like about the second year of Pathways?

What students liked most were resources like priority registration, free printing, and counselor passes.

18. What is one thing you would change?

Students said the one thing they would change is volunteering component. Students indicated that 1) they didn't understand why they had to volunteer and 2) the volunteer work they did was not meaningful (ex: students having to staff various events on campus such as career fair – swiping in students or having to pass out food). They found this type of volunteer work very boring. Students said they would like volunteering more if there were more community focused options for volunteering – something more meaningful. Students also indicated that volunteering in 4 hour time blocks is problematic – hard for them to block out 4 hours of time in between classes.

NOTE: *The overall feeling from second year students was that while the resources they had access to were good, second year pathways didn't seem as coherent as the first year pathway.*