

COLLEGE OF CHOICE TASK FORCE
Thursday, October 7, 2004
2:10 p.m., BU118

MINUTES

Attending: K.Smith, Rhiannon, M.Regalado, R.Perez, J.Chargin, F.Lozano, J.Juarez, B.Donovan, J.Stewart, J.Rodriguez, S.Muszala, B.Vandal, F.Gonzalez, J.Sandow, K.King, T.Willett, M.Quiroz, R.Lee, A. Johnson, L.Navarro, A.Becerra, M.Castaneda, L.Castaneda, C.Alonzo

Members not attending: C.Scattini, M.Bumgarner, C.Marquez, L.Tenney

After introductions, Fran distributed and reviewed Steve Kinsella's message regarding the concern about student free flow to other colleges. Fran also reported that what is decided in this task force will be implemented. Fran distributed and reviewed Russell Lee's comments to the Rambler regarding Gavilan as the college of choice, satellite campuses, and Gavilan district students choosing to attend other colleges.

A focus group practicum followed: Terrence Willett reviewed the focus group format and techniques. He reviewed the factors important to students when they choose a school, such as influence from friends, family, and counselors; college reputation; and cost. He then directed the meeting as a focus group to obtain information useful to Gavilan becoming the college of choice. Questions and answers are as follows:

Why did you choose to go to college?

- To improve self esteem
- To better self
- To get a higher paying job
- To learn more about self
- Personal satisfaction
- Improve family situation

Why did you choose Gavilan College?

- Familiar with only this college
- Close to home
- Visited campus and fell in love with its park-like setting
- Didn't want to go to big college with asphalt and concrete
- Like the faculty

Was Gavilan your first choice?

- Was only choice – Gavilan has good rapport with high school
- Scholarship – sports
- One-on-one attitude
- Didn't have grades to go to other colleges
- Financial reasons
- It was either drop out of high school or come here
- Wanted to develop here before going to a 4-year school

What are the three most important factors when choosing college?

- Reputation of school
- College life
- What others say about school
- What programs are available
- Want 4-year experience
- Want to get away from home
- Like location of other schools better (i.e., close to beach)
- Close to home
- Location
- Reputation of college
- Want to move to another town
- Adults with families want to be close to home
- Programs available, i.e. auto mechanics
- Where you want to be
 - Can you have fun there?
 - Will you do well there?
- Want to go somewhere familiar
- Economics
- To be with friends
- Get away from small town
- Reputation of college programs
- Decisions based on personalities of students
- Worldliness – to get away from town they grew up in
- Field trips to other schools
- Visiting writers and scholars
- Want sorority experience
- Want dormitory experience
- Many who go away to school after high school come back
- Why take CSIS here when they can go to San Jose
- When the engineering program was cancelled, students went to other colleges
- Some people want to stay with the familiar

Terrence then asked for success stories about Gavilan.

- Lucia said that 57 of the 137 people who came to the Gavilan booth at Taste of Morgan Hill were Gavilan alumni. She said they loved Gavilan and are walking advertisement for us. It was suggested that we need an alumni association.
- Nursing department is outstanding
- Cosmetology that a 98% first-time board pass rate is 98%
- It is great going to a small campus. Likes the small close community.

Gavilan had stigma of being a “high school with ashtrays”. After attending Gavilan for a year, there was a difference in the thought process.

Other comments included:

- Image of college is important
- Not same people they went to high school with
- Need image that we're different, exciting
- Those who don't know what major they want should come here
- One student commented that he was concern about mixing with younger students—after getting involved with ASB, doesn't want to leave
- Another student said safe environment made her feel comfortable, built her confidence, made her a stronger person. Though she is an older, single parent she still felt she fit in.
- Likes having personal friendships with faculty, administration, and staff

A question to consider was, "Do low income students feel welcome? Are they just another number?" A response was that they feel welcome at first, then just like another number.

We need to get students involved in our community. How can we make more people feel welcome?

Terrence summed up the comments and group interaction. This was an example of an unstructured approach and free flow of information. He then had the group break into smaller groups to work on two questions:

- What are the three best things about Gavilan College?
- What are the three areas that most need improvement at Gavilan College?

The groups were to consider and share common and unique ideas. A facilitator was picked for each group and flip charts were used to record ideas.

The results of this exercise follow. Those items marked with asterisks show the additional number of times this idea was recommended.

Three Best Things About Gavilan:

- Campus is small, tranquil and pretty***
- CDS and nursing, Cosmo programs, service people***
- Faculty/Students/Staff interactions****
- Support Programs**
- Excellent facility for potential expansion
- Close community, camaraderie—both students and staff**
- Ease of parking**
- Openness to input from all groups
- Big fish, small pond
- There's always Gavilan—dependable

Improvements suggested:

- Rules dominating spirit eliminated or revised - demoralization***
- Not enough staff**
- Perception that we are not academically rigorous
- No alumni association
- Dirty***
- Lack of surrounding community pride
- Website services**
- Parking
- Promoting student involvement
- More communications to students about opportunities
- Customer service in Admission/Records
- Expand and develop vocational/variety career ladder programs**
- Cafeteria prices/variety/cleanliness/acoustics**
- Make Student Center more collegial—where academics and social merge—i.e. Mesa Program atmosphere
- College Atmosphere**
- Add Cross Country Track – Invitational for high schools—use facilities to increase exposure
- Add more, different sports—soccer team, water polo
- Information**
- Need web-based services
- Institutional support for social events like dances
- Need more resources delivered – money, equipment, posting policy eased
- Adjunct faculty integration – support for adjunct faculty—help them feel connected
- College-like setting—more color, flowers, newness

In wrapping up the exercise, Terrence emphasized that the focus group cannot be manipulative and must be specific.

Our next meeting will be October 21. It was suggested that two people are needed for note taking. The writing center may be a good place to meet. We have institutional support. We need to make sure we are not duplicating efforts of students. Ask them if they have been in a focus group.

We need to tap into the perception of staff and high schools – go outside of the college for input. Lucia suggested the Rambler, Puente, etc., as sources of gaining input. Other sources suggested were through Kim and Jan, Fabio, Counselors, ASB, Pizza and Math group (Abigail and Russell).

- Research:
- Focus Groups
- Survey
- Data Base Research

All input should be in Word documents.

Meeting adjourned 4:35 pm.

Submitted by Barbara Vandal and Angie Oropeza