

Developing an Undergraduate Major Committee Meeting 1 November 2017

Karen Falkenberg was our guest today and has agreed to assist us with the focus groups exploring a major for our department. She presented an overview of the process she led with the English Department (see discussion guide document provided via email, which Karen developed)

Important points Karen made

Having someone run the focus groups who is not part of the department is a good idea to avoid bias by the facilitator and for the process to be viewed as objective by the participants.

Steps in the process

- Ask ourselves, “What are the fundamental aspects we want to get at?”
- Develop questions
- Work with strategic partners to hone the questions (topics)
- Develop discussion guide (Karen developed). Help maintain correct pace to cover all questions completely.
 - Karen uses Appreciative Inquiry approach
 - Asks, “What is successful?” in the mind of the participants
 - Structured yet informal
 - Seeks to **uncover motivations**
- English Department wanted to know about how to improve freshman experience, middle years, senior experience

Karen described purpose of focus group and how they will be run

Focus group characteristics

- 1 hour long,
- convenient times.
- More than 4, but no more than 8 people
- Name tents, introductions, warm-up question to start off with a positive statement from each participant
- Record – let participants know it will be recorded, responses are confidential

More information and university initiatives to help us in our efforts

Karen described a couple university initiatives that have taught us a lot about CSU students

- *2006-16 Student Success Initiative 1*
 - Goals to increase enrollment, help students stay here once they come
- *Student Success Initiative 2 – starting now*
 - We are not going to increase retention by limiting enrollment
 - Big dropoff when students choose a major. They don't find a place that feels like home to them
 - Look at SOURCE about SSI, 2 articles. Paul Thayer.

Need approximately three big questions.

What we are interested in...

Student motivations:

- students on campus who could come to us
- Students outside of campus (high school)

Different questions for different groups, but same 3 big buckets

How to entice students to choose this major?

- We need to market it...
- Want them to say, "That looks cool!"
- Could pitch it as a non-human biology major
- Outreach to educate possible majors about our program and all it has to offer.
- Naming and description of courses is important!

NEXT STEPS

Focus groups-

- Who will the focus group participants be (names), dates, etc. ? (Cini will work on this for our next meeting)
 - Franck suggested undergrads who work in department and stay as grad students etc. as an important group
- Incentives:
 - Food
 - we need your help, we care about what you think

Identify **method for recording** the focus groups (Cini will work on this)

Start to working on **course work/program**- Just a rough outline for now

- Freshman, sophomore, junior and senior experiences
- Other core courses
- 27 credits

Maybe time to start working on identifying how we will **market the major**

Next meeting will be