Focused Excellence: The Student Voice

Leadership Concepts and Contexts
Class Project

December 3, 2002
Origin of Project

- We discussed possible topics for our campus community project, including diversity issues, construction on campus, and the Focused Excellence initiative (FE).

- We chose to explore FE because, as a class, we knew little about the topic, but we also believed that significant changes would result from its implementation.
Our project goals:
- To find out what UA students know about Focused Excellence
- To inform UA students about what Focused Excellence means
- To share our findings with key decision-makers to assure inclusion of the student voice
Survey Construction

- The class brainstormed possible questions that would best capture students’ knowledge regarding FE.
- The resulting survey was brief but got to several of what we believed were core issues.
- The survey was distributed randomly in paper form as well as available online.
The Process

- Each class member took responsibility for distributing a minimum of 50 surveys across campus.
- An educational card with information about FE (and piece of candy) was provided to each respondent to the paper survey.
- An email was sent to various cross-departmental listservs directing them to the online survey.
- 1116 usable surveys were then recorded and analyzed.
Question 1

Quality of the educational experience:

- Generally high -- all averages were above the midpoint.
- PhD student ratings were the highest.
Question 2

Budget Influence on Student Experience
(1 = huge influence, 6 = minor influence)
Question 3: Tuition Increase

Number of student respondents indicating...

- No increase = 282
- $200 increase = 335
- $500 increase = 258
- $1000 increase = 112
- $1200 increase = 15
- $1500 increase = 12
- $2000 increase = 56
- No response = 44
Question 3 (continued)

Average Acceptable Tuition Increase (presented by class affiliation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Affiliation</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 4

Extent of Knowledge of FE
1 = no knowledge, 6 = well informed

Freshmen
Sophomore
Juniors
Seniors
MS
PhD
Non-degree
Other
Themes as framework for students’ interests:

Just over 100 students did not respond to the question concerning where their interests fit among the suggested themes. This was supported by a number of comments in which students declared that there was no fit for them.
The top ranked choices were: (> 200 responses)

* Community outreach through arts and humanities
* Information science, technology, and management
* Biomedical science & biotechnology to advance human health and nutrition
* Cognitive and neurosciences applied to language, learning, health, and behavior
* Indigenous people: culture, policy, economic development, and law
* Cultural and ethnic studies, with emphasis on the southwest
Questions & Comments

- 292 students took the time to offer comments and ask questions.
  - Frequently asked questions were concerned with class availability, diversity, majors that don’t fit themes, ratio of tuition increase to financial aid available, and the cost of construction.
  - The most frequently asked question was, “What is it?”
Questions & Comments (continued)

- Comments collected from the online surveys were generally more detailed than the paper survey comments.
- A number of students pleaded for continued availability of broad choices while others expressed concern primarily for their own area of interest.
- Diversity considerations were plentiful and were often linked to accessibility issues as well as admission standards.
Who responded to our survey?

Respondents by class group

- Freshmen
- Sophomore
- Juniors
- Seniors
- MS
- PhD
- Non-degree
- Non-response
Demographics (continued)

- **Residency**
  702 in-state students, 394 out-of-state students, 20 did not respond to this question

- **Gender**
  618 female respondents, 462 male respondents, 36 chose not to respond to the question

- **Age**
  634 between ages of 18 and 22; 5 were 17; and the oldest was 78.
Demographics (continued)

- **Ethnicity**
  - American Indian = 42
  - Asian = 71
  - Black = 40
  - Caucasian = 651
  - Hispanic = 144
  - Other = 139
  - No Response = 56
Demographics (continued)

- Responses by college affiliation
  - AHSC = 72
  - BPA = 98
  - CALS = 141
  - EDUC = 111
  - ENGR = 111
  - F A = 36
  - HUM = 66
  - IDP = 35
  - SBS = 181
  - SCI = 126
  - Other = 139
Next Steps…

- Meeting scheduled with Mr. Jewett, President of Arizona Board of Regents on Monday, December 16th.
- Posting of website to share findings and help raise awareness among students.
- Share the data with all of you.
- Is there anything else we can do?
Discussion and Reflection

- Overall observations
- Surprising findings
- The learning experience
Thank you!

We appreciate the time you have spent with us tonight … and your interest in the student voice.