

University College and Exploratory Students Recommendations

There are approximately 100 students in Westville with between 0 and 30 credits who are in the university college and coded as exploratory students. One Advisor is assigned to this group and one Lecturer/Career Advisor is assigned to this group. It is not clear if there are peer mentors assigned to this group.

Sub-Committee Recommendations

This group of faculty and coaches agreed that we would provide recommendations about students who process of applying to PNW through their 30th credit hour. We understand that it is critical for students to CODO into a major. However, we recommend that in the first year there is more investment by the university in this group finding community than finding a major. We recognize that finding a community and finding a major are not mutually exclusive pursuits but we believe that students becoming rooted in the university, learning what it means to be part of the academe, and understanding how to navigate the university are of greater importance in the first 30 credits.

Recommendation 1. Student Goals and Learning Objectives for students from application to 30 credits. We have developed a draft set of Student Learning Objectives for students in this group. It should be the shared responsibility of faculty, advisors, staff, and peer mentors to support our students in achieving these SLOs. However, it is critical that faculty, advisors, staff, and peer mentors who have the responsibility of working with students have clear expectations and that those expectations are part of their annual review process. We are concerned that if everyone is responsible for supporting our students no one will be responsible.

Goal 1: Students will become members of the academic community at PNW

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will identify and participate in student organizations
2. Students will participate in co-curricular activities that fit their interests and goals
3. Students will establish strong and positive working relationships with faculty, advisors, staff, and peer mentors
4. Students will reflect on their University-wide experience
5. Students will feel accepted on the campus
6. Students will demonstrate collegiality with other students and faculty
7. Students will learn how to ask questions of faculty, advisors, and staff from university offices

Recommendation 2. Identify Key Personnel for University College Students.

A **peer mentoring system** should be developed that is appropriate to the needs of students on the Westville campus. The challenge of the Peer Mentoring Programs already in place in some mentees do not see the value of this type of program. In addition, being a Peer Mentor isn't a job that is for all of our students. Therefore, the Mentees should have incentives to take part in the program. These incentives should be developed in consultation with Key Personnel and evaluated on an annual basis. The roles and responsibilities of Peer Mentors need to be clearly stated. Peer mentors should have training to ensure

that they are able to fulfill those expectations. Students from the Westville campus should be involved in the development of the Peer Mentoring Program on the Westville campus. The Peer Mentors should have supervision that allows the Peer Mentors to grow in these positions. Finally, these Peer Mentor positions should be promoted to the university and community as positions that are important and valued by the university. If we expect strong and qualified students to help us develop the most vulnerable group of students at the university we must be willing to invest resources in those students.

Connect students with a faculty or staff. It is clear to the sub-committee that students want things from the university that are already available but they don't know where they can go to get them. It is also clear that the students don't always know who to go to with these kinds of questions and that students are very frustrated when they are passed from office to office for an answer to a question. The sub-committee recommends that a program is developed that connects students to a faculty or staff person. Vice Chancellor Mosely referred to being "their person" for a student. Dr. Quinn and Coach Cole have described a Coaching Model. Other faculty have described a faculty or staff mentor. All of these are founded in the idea that students will benefit from a relationship with an employee of the university (faculty or staff) who the student can turn to with questions about navigating the university. This relationship should begin when the student is applying to the university and continue through graduation.

As described above, these positions are not for everyone at the university. Faculty and staff who take part in this program should have appropriate training and clear responsibilities and expectations. These responsibilities should be part of the annual review for faculty and staff taking part in this program. The faculty and staff should be promoted in the university and the community as valuable and important members of the university who are making a significant contribution to the institution. It should be clear that taking part in this program is at least a 4-year commitment.

Communication to new students and their supporters

We are in an industry that has specific vocabulary, policies, and procedures. Although we do provide information in the student handbook it is unlikely that our student read and understand the handbook until they are in a time of difficulty. It should be our goal to ensure that our students are aware of their rights and responsibilities before they are in crisis. Communications to potential students should be written in language that they understand. When a theme of misunderstanding about the application process becomes clear the communication from the university should be re-evaluated. While it is our goal to develop students who understand the academy, higher education, and their discipline it is unwise to imagine that students in the application process are ready to begin that journey.

Staff from the offices below are doing an excellent job bringing students into the university. We recommend that these offices provide examples of challenges students are having with application including completing the FAFSA and finding and delivering transcripts to the university. Understanding these challenges can help faculty and staff mentors (described above).

It is clear to the sub-committee that students aren't reading their emails. Text blasts to new students about deadlines (registration, scholarship, tuition) in addition to announcements that are meaningful and understandable.

Building fellowship and community. Students benefit from finding a place where they belong. Below are ideas to incentivize students to find space and community on campus. The sub-committee also recommends that students be involved in the development and implementation of these and other ideas.

- Paw Print Pass – A student swipes their ID when they use a university services (tutoring center, advising drop in, SI, etc.) or go to a university event (athletics, lecture series, student club meetings). This puts the student in a drawing for free stuff – t-shirts etc.
- Student spaces – The sub-committee strongly recommends that the university identify spaces for students to gather. These spaces should be highly visible to the campus community rather than tucked away in the basement. These spaces should be inviting. Stark, white spaces with furniture that isn't comfortable, clean, or inviting should be re-imagined using student input. These spaces should also have technology that students are using to relax such as television screens and computer stations. Some of these spaces should be available to all students. The purpose of different spaces should be made clear. Is the space for studying? Are there quiet hours for the space? Can students eat and drink in these spaces? Can students reserve a space for groups of meetings?
- Dedicated student spaces – Student spaces that are dedicated to specific groups of students should be maintained by those units. These dedicated spaces should be evaluated for their use to ensure that the resources dedicated to that space are being used appropriately. Decorations, cleanliness, and technology must be maintained by the unit in an appropriate way.

New Student Orientation. New student orientation is the time that we make our first impression on the student. The sub-committee would like to see activities and programming that is interactive and uses pedagogical techniques such as active learning, flipped classrooms, case studies, role playing, and small group discussions.

We need to understand what the students want to know about PNW. This is a difficult question to answer when a student has never been to college. Therefore, students should be interviewed about their NSO experiences after their first semester. Student recommendations about strategies to improve NSO should be taken seriously.

The sub-committee recommends a University College induction day where students are welcomed into the university, meet their Peer Mentor, and spend time with "Their Person". The student should leave the workshop with a finished product that will help them be successful during the semester.

Welcome back week. The sub-committee recommends that Welcome Back Week activities should be developed for the University College students. For instance, an event for the University College students that brings them together (as is done in other departments) would help them feel more part of the university. Biology used to have a picnic on the Friday of the first week of classes at the pond. Similar activities can be developed for University College students.

GS191. There has been a significant change to GS191. The sub-committee had several questions about the course as none of us have involvement in the course at this time. How are the learning objectives being measured? Has there been an increase in retention, student satisfaction, and other items based on these changes? How has GS191 been adapted to the students at Westville?

Conversations with our exploratory students will be critical to ensure that this course are meeting their needs. The sub-committee feels that it is critical that students in the University College are supported to become important and critical parts of the university. We should not be viewing these students as commodities that can bring tuition dollars into a program. We strongly believe that when community is built first the choice of major may be better informed.

Faculty and staff involved in this Sub-Committee and the conversations

- Raven Chant
- Kevin Cole
- Lori Feldman
- Angela Schooley
- Ceren Turedi