RESPONSE ANALYSIS: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR THE FACULTY

Introduction

Thirteen Leesburg campus faculty members attended this focus group. They were selected across teaching disciplines and years of service, and they were representative of the faculty by race and gender. Their responses and the discussion summaries are found at the end of each question.

A. If LSCC offers a four year degree, for you as a faculty member what should be the most important purpose for the degree?

   1) The graduate secures new employment in Lake and Sumter counties.
   2) The graduate goes on to further schooling.
   3) The graduate acquires a higher income level in Lake and Sumter counties.
   4) The graduate receives personal satisfaction in achieving the degree

Responses

One respondent arrived too late to answer #A

#1 – 3
#2 – 3
#3 – 2
#4 – 4

Discussion Summary: The responses and the discussion concerning #2 versus #1 or #3 reflect the differences in faculty members who teach courses in A.A. versus A.S. degrees. #2 is aimed at transferability, the primary purpose of an A.A. degree. #1 and #3 reflect the skill training for employment emphasis. All agreed that #4 is very important. Their distinctions were because of the word “most” in the question.

B. As a faculty member, what is your primary concern about LSCC offering one or more four-year degrees?

   1) Affording cost of qualified faculty, equipment, space, library, and instructional materials
   2) Reducing other programs to afford a new one.
   3) Sustaining enrollment in the degree program
   4) Lessening the quality of an LSCC education
   5) It changes the mission
Responses
#1- 9
#2- 1
#3- 0
#4- 0
#5- 3

Discussion Summary
The emphasis upon #1 is to be expected, given the tight budgets and necessary fiscal restraint already present at LSCC under the current conditions. The emphasis on #5 is a reflection of the dedication to traditional community college students by the respondents, a value they do not wish to lose.

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C. As a faculty member, what do you see as the primary advantage of LSCC offering four-year degrees?
   1) Students can stay at home and still access all four years of the degree.
   2) Fully utilize faculty expertise by teaching upper division classes.
   3) Enhanced prestige and quality of an LSCC education
   4) Be more attractive to students and increase funding.
   5) It changes the mission

Responses
#1-8
#2-1
#3-1
#4-1
#5-2

Discussion Summary
Community college faculties have traditionally understood the importance of educating those students who do not or cannot leave home. The overwhelming support of #1 is a reflection of that understanding. The remaining responses possibly reflect another traditional belief that many community college faculty often have expressed – as “second class citizens” to the universities.

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D. If the college administration recommends a degree program for what they consider are good sound educational reasons, but the general faculty opposes it, which best describes your position?

   1) As a faculty leader, I would have to oppose it for obvious reasons.
   2) As someone who has the college’s best interest at heart, I would support it despite my colleagues’ position.
   3) I would support any recommendation that came through the New Vision Council.
   4) I would encourage the administration to not bring this to the board if the faculty opposes it.
Discussion Summary
A significant message is delivered here. There is an expressed desire to not have a confrontation with the administration over the issue. What motivated the respondents is their belief in their excellent working relations with the administration, and they do not want that relationship altered by an open conflict.

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E. If UCF takes a different position on four–year degrees than the college administration, which best describes your position?

1) The presence of UCF is critically important for many LSCC students, and I would not to jeopardize their future. I would oppose it if UCF opposed, and if they were in support of it, so would I be in support.
2) I would support the college recommendation nonetheless.
3) I would follow any recommendation that came through the New Vision Council.
4) I would encourage the administration to not bring this to the board in that circumstance.

Responses
#1-2
#2-10
#3-0
#4-1

Discussion Summary
The respondents again expressed their overwhelming trust and faith in the college administration, despite knowing the importance of UCF to their students.

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F. LSCC is a community-oriented institution by practice, tradition, and mission. If the college administration opposes a four year degree program, but the community generally favors it, what would be your position?

1) I would support it because the community does.
2) I would oppose it as a faculty member and employee of the college.
3) I would follow any recommendation that came through the New Vision Council.
4) I would encourage the administration to not bring this to the board in this circumstance.
**Responses**

#1-3
#2-8
#3-2
#4-0

**Discussion Summary**

A number of respondents felt this was a “bad” question. The reason is the conflict they experienced between supporting the college (#2) and their understanding that the word “community” also is a part of the college (#1). That also accounts for the “middle” ground in response #3. “Bad” here is not bad, but perhaps tough to decide. I accepted responsibility for the question.

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G. With the creation of the Florida College System which best describes your thinking about four year degrees at LSCC?

1) If the great majority of schools go to it, it must be alright here.
2) We have to join in offering four year degrees to remain an effective and competitive institution.
3) We make the best decision here without worrying what other colleges are doing.
4) We have to offer or risk losing enrollment.
5) Four Year degrees may be ok, but not here.

**Responses**

#1-0
#2-2
#3-10
#4-0
#5-1

**Discussion Summary**

Respondents expressed their clear desire to have LSCC make the best decision it can without regard to “risk” or competition factors. They expressed their belief that LSCC’s administration has made good decisions in the past for the welfare of all, and that should not change here.

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H) Which best describes how state funding for these degrees would affect your thinking?

1) Should the state funding increase, then I support offering four –year degrees
2) If there is no change in state funding, then I oppose offering the degrees. There is not enough instructional money for faculty now.
3) If there is no change in funding, we have to do this anyway.
4) It would depend on the size of the state funding increase.
5) I I would oppose or support without regard to state funding. The only thing I want to judge is the educational value.
Responses
#1-1
#2-6
#3-0
#4-3
#5-3

Discussion Summary
Respondents, regardless of choice, understand the importance of funding to their work in classrooms. The distinctions in the responses of #2 and #4, however, reflect a concern about how much impact it should have on a decision to offer a degree now as opposed to later if revenues increase. Those who marked #5, however, were expressing a different thought: funding is an administrative responsibility, and faculty is responsible for delivery of educational value.

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