Student Centered

How we define and measure student centeredness

Andrea Dowhower, Student Affairs
“I truly believe students must be our top priority, and this is why Penn State must be a model of a student-centered university. As a learning community, we must put our students and their development at the heart of all we do.”

President Spanier, 2002
Student Centered

Learning Centered
- Engagement and individual effort
- Accessibility and services
- Community
- Inclusivity
- Feedback and assessment

(Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; ACPA & NASPA, 2004; Kellogg Commission, 2001)
Learning is a complex, holistic, multi-centric activity that occurs throughout and across the college experience. Student development, and the adaptation of learning to students’ lives and needs, are fundamental parts of engaged learning and liberal education. The critical point…is that learning, development and identity formation can no longer be considered as separate from each other; they are interactive and shape each other as they evolve.”

ACPA & NASPA, 2004
Learning Centered

- Put learning first—educational and developmental outcomes
- Redefine goals in terms of students and what they learn rather than content-centered education
- Focus on learning as a holistic activity both in and out of the classroom
- Design programs and services to foster growth and development
- Committed to excellence in teaching

Engagement

“The greatest impact appears to stem from students’ total level of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, extracurricular involvements are mutually reinforcing, and relevant to a particular educational outcome.”

Pascarella & Terezini, 2005
Engagement

- Student involvement in and out of the classroom
- Time and effort students expend increases learning
- Institution’s allocations and efforts to encourage students’ participation in and benefit from such activities

(Kuh et al., 2005)
Accessibility and Service

- Meeting the legitimate needs of learners, wherever they are, whatever they need, whenever they need it
- Assist students in achieving their educational goals
- “Make time for students”
- Use of and satisfaction with campus support services

(Kellogg Commission, 2001; Kuh et al., 2005)
Community

- Students identify with each other, the institution, and their place of residence, and know members of the faculty.
- Students feel a sense of belonging and connectedness and are not allowed to get lost or experience anonymity.
- “Caring is the key” to creating an environment in which students feel they matter.
- A shared purpose, a sense of civility, a sense of personal responsibility.

(Boyer, 1990; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002)
Inclusivity

- Reaching all students
- Attentive to varying needs of students especially under-represented groups
- A community that acknowledges and celebrates similarities and differences

(Boyer, 1990; Kuh et al., 2005)
Feedback and Assessment

- Define educational objectives and learning outcomes more clearly
- Systematic and consistent assessment of student learning in all domains
- Use information about students, their learning, and other elements of institutional effectiveness for accountability and improvement

(ACPA & NASPA, 2004; Kellogg Commission, 2001; Kuh et al., 2005)
What does “student centered” mean to you?

- …providing opportunities for involvement and making students feel welcome and promote their pursuit of learning
- …despite having 40,000 students, you don't feel like a number….having professors that care about you learning the information instead of memorizing it and giving tricky tests.
- …being more interested in student development than in running the university like a business, and focused on all students’ needs not just on academics – concentrated on students as people not just students

(Pulse: Student Engagement 2006)
...the ability of the university to make the student feel like they are essential to the campus. This could be done by involving the student in clubs, organizations, or simply getting the student to athletic events. All of these activities make the student feel like they are part of the large university and belong to something.

...having opportunities for students to grow both academically and socially. To learn skills inside and outside of the classroom in ways that we find most intriguing.

(Pulse: Student Engagement, 2006)
Student Quotes

- gathering feedback from students to better meet their needs and interest within reasonable demands and expectations...involving students in major decisions about the university and taking the extra step to inform us about what is going on...

- focusing on the various needs of everyone at Penn State, not just the popular needs or most common needs.

- caring about every individual group of students and catering the university to everyone's needs, regardless of how much of a minority any group or organization might be.

(Pulse: Student Engagement, 2006)
Measuring Student Centeredness

- Graduation and retention rates (by gender and race)
- Time to degree (by gender and race)
- FYE student outcomes
- General Education learning outcomes
- Cocurricular learning
- Post graduation activities
- *Level of Academic Challenge – NSSE*
Indicators of Student Centeredness

Possible measures to determine our progress
Engagement Measures

- Active and Collaborative Learning - NSSE
- Enriching Educational Experiences – NSSE
- Participation in study abroad
- Working on a research project outside of class
- Hours spent studying
Engagement Measures

- Hours spent participating in cocurricular activities
- Active involvement/leadership in clubs and organizations
- On-campus student employment
- Civic engagement (service, political activities, community organizations)
Accessibility and Services

- Satisfaction with overall experience, academic advising, academics, cocurricular experiences, etc.
- Satisfaction with New Student Orientation
Accessibility

- Percent of students who can identify a faculty/staff member to use as a reference
- *Student-Faculty Interaction – NSSE*
- Satisfaction with opportunities to meet with faculty outside of class
Accessibility and Services

- Number of “smart” classrooms
- Wireless access
- Accessibility of facilities
- Facility usage/gathering spaces
- Other environment measures
Community and Inclusivity

- Supportive Campus Environment – NSSE
- Comparisons on NSSE by race and gender
- Perceptions of community of Penn State
- Inclusive Community measures
Feedback and Assessment

- Defined outcomes for courses and cocurricular and curricular programs
- Incorporation of regular assessment
- Use of data for improvement
- Use of ePortfolio