

Even ONE Semester



Full-Time Enrollment and Student Success



2017
NATIONAL
REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|---|
| Full-Time Student Discussion Guide | 3 |
| Part-Time Student Discussion Guide | 7 |

INTRODUCTION

What follows are discussion guides that can be used to facilitate conversations with full-time and part-time students about their experiences.

To access the full CCCSE Focus Group Toolkit, visit <https://cccse.org/resources/focus-groups>. Featured on this page is the Focus Group Manual, which provides comprehensive guidance around planning and conducting focus groups with students, faculty, and staff. This manual contains several appendix resources, such as templates for invitation emails and consent forms as well as sample intake survey questions and basic focus group opening questions. In addition, the Toolkit includes a variety of discussion guides (including this one) devoted to a diverse array of topics important to community college student engagement and success.

FULL-TIME STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

OUTCOMES #1 AND #2

To better understand students' perspectives about attending community college full time, including participation patterns inside and outside of class and factors influencing their full-time enrollment status; to understand students' academic goals and their perceptions of how long they think it will take to accomplish their academic goals.

1. Thinking about your future, what are your personal goals? Your professional goals?
2. How long do you expect to be attending this college in order to achieve your academic goals (degree, certificate, transfer, etc.)?
 - a. Since you've been attending college, has anyone who works at the college talked with you about how long it would take to accomplish your academic goals? If so, what was the title of this individual?
 - b. Has your understanding about how long it will take to complete changed? If yes, what has led to this change?
 - c. Have you considered the difference in how long it will take to reach your goals if you attend part time or full time?
3. What's going on in your life outside of school (work, children, other family responsibilities, extracurricular activities, etc.)? Before you signed up for classes at this college, did anyone talk with you about balancing these commitments with your college work? If yes, what was the title of this person?
 - a. If someone talked to you about this, did it affect your thinking about how many classes you could take? If yes, in what way? If no, why not?
4. Prior to registering for classes, did you talk with anyone at this college about the process of getting started here? More than one person? If so, did you know what the individuals' jobs were at the college?
 - a. Describe the conversations you had with the person(s), the questions the person(s) asked you, the questions you asked the person(s).
5. How did you learn about the steps you needed to go through to sign up for classes?
 - a. Did someone talk with you about the process for registering?
 - b. Did someone talk with you about how to pick classes?
 - c. Were there any classes you were told you needed to take? Who told you about those classes?
 - i. How did you receive the advice (individual or group setting)? Did you have to do anything prior to picking classes (placement tests)?

6. During the process of getting started here, did you participate in any activity that helped you understand support services available to you? What was it called? How long was it (hours, days, weeks)? Where did it take place? Were you required to participate? Or was it suggested that you do this? Did you earn college credit for participating?
7. Have you taken a class that focuses on the skills you'd need in order to succeed as a college student? If so, what was this class called?
 - a. What was the experience like? What type of skills did they discuss? Have you implemented any of these skills? [Look for student success course.]
8. At any time prior to registering for classes, did anybody talk with you about creating an academic plan for your time in college?
 - a. Did anyone ask about your individual goals, what you wanted to go to college for? If so, how did that discussion take place? In a group setting, one on one?
 - b. Have you created a plan that lays out how many classes you will take each semester to reach your goals?
 - c. In planning your subsequent semesters at the college, how do you know what to take?
 - d. At that time of the initial discussion, were you assigned to work with a particular person? What was the experience like?
 - i. If you were told to work with a particular person, was it a one-time meeting, or were you told that would be your go-to person at the college? If you were assigned to an individual, do you still meet with that person? If yes, how often? What led to those meetings?
 - ii. If you were not assigned to a specific person, have you been back to see the person you originally met with at the college? If not, why not? If you were assigned to work with someone and have not been back to see that person, why not?
9. In any of the experiences you've had so far at the college, has anyone spoken with you about transferring to a university to pursue a bachelor's degree?
 - a. What have those discussions been like?
 - b. What are the factors that go into selecting a university?
 - c. How do you know which courses at this college will transfer to the university?
10. In any of the experiences you've had so far at the college, has there been any discussion about your career plans?
 - a. If so, where did these conversations taking place? Orientation? Meeting with someone? With your instructors in your classes? Other?
 - b. How did that discussion take place?
 - c. What were the results of these conversations?

11. When you started at this college, did you start as a full-time student or a part-time student?
 - a. If you started as a part-time student and then became a full-time student, what factors caused you to switch to full-time?
 - b. Why are you a full-time student?
 - c. If you have ever been a part-time student, does it feel different to be a part-time student than a full-time student? In what ways? Which do you like better—being a full-time or a part-time student? Why?

12. Tell us what it's like when you visit the campus.
 - a. What time of day are you typically on campus? In addition to your classes, where do you go on campus?
 - b. Is anything closed when you are on campus that you wish was open—offices, services, other?

13. How does the college help/support you as a full-time student?

OUTCOMES #3 AND #4

To understand how and when students communicate with instructors outside of class, and whether these interactions are influenced by the instructors' part-time/full-time status and/or by students' full-time status; to understand the experience of full-time students at the college, their perspectives regarding the challenges they face, and how effectively they believe the college supports them.

14. As a student at this college, what are the greatest challenges you face?
 - a. [If they don't mention attending full time as a challenge, prompt by asking something like the following] Are there things that you think would be less challenging for you if you attended part time?

15. Thinking about all your instructors, when you want to get in contact with one, is it easy or difficult to reach them?
 - a. Describe how easy or difficult it is to get in contact with an instructor. Use a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being easy and 5 being difficult. Explain your answer. What makes it easy? What makes it difficult? Can you give an example?
 - b. How do you typically try to reach/communicate with an instructor?

16. [Ask the following only if not already answered in response to the questions above.] Have you visited with your instructors outside of class?
 - a. Did you meet during office hours? If no, why not?
 - i. If you have met with your instructors outside of class, were you able to arrange a time and place to meet that was convenient for you? Explain your answer.

17. Do you know which of your instructors work at the college full time or part time?
- If yes, among the classes you are currently enrolled in, do you know how many of your instructors work at the college full time? Part time?
 - In general, do you know if there is any difference in your experience with those instructors who work at the college full time vs. part time? If yes, explain the differences you experience.
18. Do you know if some or all of your instructors know that you are a full-time student? If so, how do you know this?
19. In your experience at this college, do instructors take steps to meet needs of full-time students? If yes, in what ways?
20. Think of a time when the college (a college program or office) took steps that were particularly helpful for full-time students? Describe what happened that benefited full-time students.

SUMMARY AND CLOSE

21. Right now, what is the single most important factor that is keeping you as a full-time student?
22. How confident are you that you can stay in college and complete your academic goals, 1 being *not very* and 5 being *extremely confident*? Explain your answer.
23. If you were giving advice to the college on how the college can better support full-time students, what advice would you give? Now answer that question in regard to all students, both full-time and part-time.

PART-TIME STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

OUTCOMES #1 AND #2

To better understand students' perspectives about attending community college part time, including participation patterns inside and outside of class and factors influencing their part-time status; to understand students' academic goals and their perceptions of how long they think it will take to accomplish their academic goals.

1. Thinking about your future, what are your personal goals? Your professional goals?
2. How long do you expect to be attending this college in order to achieve your academic goals (degree, certificate, transfer, etc.)?
 - a. Since you've been attending college, has anyone who works at the college talked with you about how long it would take to accomplish your academic goals? If so, what was the title of this individual?
 - b. Has your understanding about how long it will take to complete changed? If yes, what has led to this change?
 - c. Have you considered the difference in how long it will take to reach your goals if you attend part time or full time?
3. What's going on in your life outside of school (work, children, other family responsibilities, extracurricular activities, etc.)? Before you signed up for classes at this college, did anyone talk with you about balancing those commitments with your college work? If yes, what was the title of this person?
 - a. If someone talked to you about this, did it affect your thinking about how many classes you could take? If yes, in what way? If no, why not?
4. Prior to registering for classes, did you talk with anyone at this college about the process of getting started here? More than one person? If so, did you know what the individuals' jobs were at the college?
 - a. Describe the conversations you had with the person(s), the questions the person(s) asked you, the questions you asked the person(s).
5. How did you learn about the steps you needed to go through to sign up for classes?
 - a. Did someone talk with you about the process for registering?
 - b. Did someone talk with you about how to pick classes?
 - c. Were there any classes you were told you needed to take? Who told you about those classes?
 - i. How did you receive the advice (individual or group setting)? Did you have to do anything prior to picking classes (placement tests)?

6. During the process of getting started here, did you participate in any activity that helped you understand support services available to you? What was it called? How long was it (hours, days, weeks)? Where did it take place? Were you required to participate? Or was it suggested that you do this? Did you earn college credit for participating?
7. Have you taken a class that focuses on the skills you'd need in order to succeed as a college student? If so, what was this class called?
 - a. What was the experience like? What type of skills did they discuss? Have you implemented any of these skills? [Look for student success course.]
8. At any time prior to registering for classes, did anybody talk with you about creating an academic plan for your time in college?
 - a. Did anyone ask about your individual goals, what you wanted to go to college for? If so, how did that discussion take place? In a group setting, one on one?
 - b. Have you created a plan that lays out how many classes you will take each semester to reach your goals?
 - c. In planning your subsequent semesters at the college, how do you know what to take?
 - d. At that time of the initial discussion, were you assigned to work with a particular person? What was the experience like?
 - i. If you were told to work with a particular person, was it a one-time meeting, or were you told that would be your go to person at the college? If you were assigned to an individual, do you still meet with that person? If yes, how often? What led to those meetings?
 - ii. If you were not assigned to a specific person, have you been back to see the person you originally met with at the college? If not, why not? If you were assigned to work with someone and have not been back to see that person, why not?
9. In any of the experiences you've had so far at the college, has anyone spoken with you about transferring to a university to pursue a bachelor's degree?
 - a. What have those discussions been like?
 - b. What are the factors that go into selecting a university?
 - c. How do you know which courses at this college will transfer to the university?
10. In any of the experiences you've had so far at the college, has there been any discussion about your career plans?
 - a. If so, where did these conversations taking place? Orientation? Meeting with someone? With your instructors in your classes? Other?
 - b. How did that discussion take place?
 - c. What were the results of these conversations?

11. When you started at this college, did you start as a full-time student or a part-time student?
 - a. If you started as a full-time student and then became a part-time student, what factors caused you to switch to part-time?
 - b. Why are you a part-time student?
 - c. If you have ever been a full-time student, does it feel different to be a full-time student than a part-time student? In what ways? Which do you like better—being a full-time or a part-time student? Why?

12. Tell us what it's like when you visit the campus.
 - a. What time of day are you typically on campus? In addition to your classes, where do you go on campus?
 - b. Is anything closed when you are on campus that you wish was open—offices, services, other?

13. How does the college help/support you as a part-time student?

OUTCOMES #3 AND #4

To understand how and when students communicate with instructors outside of class, and whether these interactions are influenced by the instructors' part-time/full-time status and/or by students' part-time status; to understand the experience of part-time students at the college, their perspectives regarding the challenges they face, and how effectively they believe the college supports them.

14. As a student at this college, what are the greatest challenges you face?
 - a. [If they don't mention attending part time as a challenge, prompt by asking something like the following] Are there things that you think would be less challenging for you if you attended full time?

15. Thinking about all your instructors, when you want to get in contact with one, is it easy or difficult to reach them?
 - a. Describe how easy or difficult it is to get in contact with an instructor. Use a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being easy and 5 being difficult. Explain your answer. What makes it easy? What makes it difficult? Can you give an example?
 - b. How do you typically try to reach/communicate with an instructor?

16. [Ask the following only if not already answered in response to the questions above.] Have you visited with your instructors outside of class?
 - a. Did you meet during office hours? If no, why not?
 - i. If you have met with your instructors outside of class, were you able to arrange a time and place to meet that was convenient for you? Explain your answer.

17. Do you know which of your instructors work at the college full time or part time?
 - a. If yes, among the classes you are currently enrolled in, do you know how many of your instructors work at the college full time? Part time?
 - b. In general, do you know if there is any difference in your experience with those instructors who work at the college full time vs. part time? If yes, explain the differences you experience.
18. Do you know if some or all of your instructors know that you are a part-time student? If so, how do you know this?
19. In your experience at this college, do instructors take steps to meet needs of part-time students? If yes, in what ways?
20. Think of a time when the college (a college program or office) took steps that were particularly helpful for part-time students? Describe what happened that benefited part-time students.

SUMMARY AND CLOSE

21. Right now, what is the single most important factor that is keeping you as a part-time student?
 - a. If you could change this factor (e.g. not have to work to pay for your classes, get childcare for your child, etc.), would you still attend part time? If yes, why? If not, why not?
22. How confident are you that you can stay in college and complete your academic goals, 1 being *not very* and 5 being *extremely confident*? Explain your answer.
23. If you were giving advice to the college on how the college can better support part-time students, what advice would you give? Now answer that question in regard to all students, both full-time and part-time.