

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE

FINAL DOCUMENT

Submitted by Jane Schleusner

SURVEY QUESTIONS TO STUDENTS

QUESTION NUMER ONE: Is online education equal to the classroom experience? * = Additional agreement by other students.

1. I think a classroom is better because you have the opportunity to ask questions, benefit from conversation, etc. Online is fine, but in-class is a better experience. * *
2. Being out of high school and right into college, it is very different. I would have liked more in-class time rather than online.
3. Yes. Online education provides the opportunity to think and work independently. **
4. Yes, if the student is willing to put in the time and effort. It takes more discipline to get work done online. ***
5. I think class is more motivating. It's sometimes hard to talk myself into discussions.
6. Online education is slightly less informative than the classroom experience. I felt that there was a component missing.
7. It depends on the teacher. ***
8. College administration could be better at getting back to you and helping out about credits.

QUESTIONS NUMBER TWO: How does your actual experience at college compare to what you expected? * = Additional agreement by other students.

1. It meets what I expected. *****
2. It is a lot different than I expected. I can compare it to high school with a lot more work involved. *
3. My experience exceeds my expectations. *****
4. Similar to what I expected in level of difficulty.
5. Being in the classroom feels like I'm back in high school, which is not a bad thing.
6. It is rigorous and engaging.
7. The experience at this technical college is what I would expect, and was expecting from a smaller college. I like the atmosphere and the diversity of the people.
8. Very close to what I expected. Academically less challenging than what I expected, but more "practical" learning than I anticipated.
9. Best teachers ever! More personable and hands-on than I expected.

QUESTION NUMBER THREE: What can the college do to make your college experience better? * = Additional agreement by other students.

1. More scholarship programs.
2. I would like to be able to park closer.
3. Make sure all people in the main office have the same info and that it is correct. ***
4. Have the cafeteria open in the summer. Better plowing of the parking lots. Fix the heat in the classroom.
5. In general, have programs specific to needs, instead of generalized to all students.
6. Administrative staff could be more helpful when calling or coming in with problems or questions. * ***

7. I wish we had a nice financial aid staff and help and want to help. Most of the people in the financial aid office and registration are not nice and they are not very helpful.
8. Nothing. Everything is good!

I MET PERSONALLY WITH FOUR JUDGES. THREE AT ONE SITTING AND ONE PERSONALLY ALONE.

The three judges were in agreement with their comments. A summary of which follows:

They didn't realize that Anoka Tech and Anoka Ramsey were merging. They thought of Anoka Tech as a "Tech" college. By that they meant that at ATC plumbers are trained, electricians are trained, etc. They were not aware that there was a full Gen Ed Department. They were aware that the JRBC Program was at Anoka Tech, because that's where their court reporters in this state are coming from.

The judges felt that Anoka Ramsey was a place for youngsters who hadn't made up their minds about what they wanted to do in their lives, where could go to school. They indicated that it was a good place to help college-bound students to begin their "generals" and mature a bit before they went on their way to college. They also indicated that if the students could stay at home while attending community college, it would save them a lot of money.

Basically, the three judges were not very interested in the tech school. None of them had any experience with a tech school. They were aware that a tech school got their graduates work-ready, while a community college got the students ready for college. That was the basic tone of their conversations with me.

The remaining judge was more interesting. That judge actually had a child who attended ATC for a brief period of time, who then transferred to Anoka Ramsey. That judge indicated that Anoka Ramsey had a much more academic curriculum for training, such as in nursing. That judge felt that Anoka Ramsey had more curriculum, period, for nursing. That judge felt that the ATC nursing program had a wide variety of curriculum opinions between the different faculty. That judge felt that there was a great difference between the nursing teaching faculty at ATC, as to their styles and expectations of their students.

This judge was also very familiar with the welding program at ATC. This judge had another family member who went through that program in the recent past. This judge indicated that her family member found the welding program at ATC to be the best in the state and was one of the best programs that ATC had to offer.

Again, this judge felt that the tech school was great for “technical training,” but lacking for “college-bound” training.

I MET PERSONALLY WITH TWO LOCAL BANKERS WHO HELD POSITIONS OF HIRING AUTHORITY IN THE COMMUNITY. A summary of those conversations are as follows:

Banker 1 works for a very large bank that has a branch office in the community. He was unaware that ATC had any kind of accounting or business programs. He was also unaware that ATC had an IT Program. He had never hired anyone from Anoka Tech. He doesn't believe anyone from ATC ever applied to his bank.

Banker 1 indicated that he was very aware of Anoka Ramsey. He has hired graduates from Anoka Ramsey. He felt that Anoka Ramsey would provide a more well-rounded graduate than Anoka Tech. He felt that Anoka Tech was basically a “blue-collar” school that trained people for “The Trades.”

Banker 1 said that people go to Anoka Ramsey to save money and to get their gen eds. He was unaware that Anoka Tech had any gen eds to offer.

Banker 2 works for a more local bank and was aware of both colleges. She indicated that she felt that Anoka Tech was a “blue collar” school; that it basically trained folks for “The Trades.” She has also hired people from Anoka Ramsey but has never hired a grad from Anoka Tech. I asked her about the IT Program at Anoka Tech and if she would hire from that program. She indicated that she was totally unaware that Anoka Tech had an IT Program. She would be very willing to hire someone from the IT Program at Anoka Tech if that person was qualified for the job.

Basically, both of these employers indicated they had little or no knowledge about Anoka Tech and how it trains people for the positions they have open in the banks in this area. Both recommended that much more community education should be done to let the employers in the community know what ATC has to offer to the local banks.

I MET PERSONALLY WITH TWO LAW ENFORCEMENT MEMBERS.

Both of these gentlemen had college degrees and also had to complete work at a Community College.

Both of those men were of the perception that Anoka Tech was for “blue collar” people and had very little to do with a traditional college education.

Both felt that if Anoka Tech was “smart,” they would start up a law enforcement program. They both felt that there is a huge need for law enforcement training in our area.

I MET PERSONALLY WITH DISTRICT COURT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF. A summary of my discussions are as follows:

The younger administrator indicated that she felt that Anoka Tech, or any tech school, is not a “real college.” She is a grad from a university. She felt that people “who can’t get into real college,” go to tech schools. She felt that a tech school had “lower standards” than a “real college.” She stated she wouldn’t go to a tech college and would be hesitant to hire someone from a tech college.

Both administrators felt that the non-tech colleges had instructors who didn’t care about their students. They both felt that because a tech college is smaller and more intimate, that the instructors had more hands-on involvement with their students and helped them get jobs. Both felt that the tech colleges were far different than a “regular” college because of the faculty. They felt that the faculty at the tech colleges really wanted to be there and cared about their profession and their students.

Both felt that at a tech school, SPECIFIC programs draw specific kinds of students. There are some programs at tech schools that draw very highly-regarded faculty and students. Both felt that there is a definite difference in “caliber” of students between a community college and a tech school, except when a specific program pulls certain students into their program.

They felt that going to a regular college or university did not guarantee success. That when they were done with the degree, they were sent out on their own without any help. They both indicated that it was their perception that students who graduated from a technical college in a specific program would be JOB-READY and not have to “start at the bottom,” like a regular college grad.

This was a very interesting assignment. Having come from “the field,” I had no preconceptions about how this would turn out.

Respectfully submitted,

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