

Interviews of Current PSEO Students and Parents of Current PSEO Students

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List of Questions and Themes from responses to questions:

Students:

Question 1: How does your actual experience at college compare to what you expected?

Common Themes:

There was a great variety in responses to this question.

Some found their experience at Anoka-Ramsey to be easier than expected.

The ability and flexibility to choose their own classes is appealing to students.

Classes seemed smaller and less scary to some students compared to what they originally expected. For some it is the same or even better than they expected.

Course work and homework are time consuming.

Many mentioned that in a college environment you are more independent.

Responsibility is very important.

So is being an adult because it's a grown up environment.

Question 2: What would you like to see changed at the college?

Common Themes:

Parking on campus is a problem.

There is concern about the location of smoking areas being too close to campus walkways.

There is a desire for more diversity and options for classes on the Cambridge Campus compared to the Coon Rapids Campus (specifically, art, fine art classes, and sciences such as chemistry/biology).

There is a desire for more assistance when registering for classes, specifically, more orientation and academic advising support.

More choices in the cafeteria and cheaper food are requested.

As well as more computer space in the computer labs.

Students want to make sure they have information on and accessibility to courses that will help them reach long term educational goals.

A few very advanced students would like access to upper division courses in their major.

Desire for increased accessibility to activities and services (Cambridge testing center) by extending or improving hours.

Question 3: We are looking for ways to improve. What question(s) should we be asking?

Common Themes:

It is important to ask students about their experience:

Were they challenged?

Did they feel safe?

Did they find certain courses to be useful?

What did they enjoy or not enjoy?

How did they feel about their instructors, grading methods, class content, and homework?

What are the easiest and hardest parts of college?

Why did you choose to do PSEO here?

What are your academic goals?

For some students the transition from high school to college is overwhelming.

Ask them what can be done to improve their experience.

Some students want to know how the Cambridge campus compares to the Coon Rapids campus.

Parents:

Question 1: What would you like to see changed at the college?

Common Themes:

Transportation is an issue; there needs to be more strategically timed public transportation. Create a PSEO student lounge with a ride board to arrange car pools and meet other students.

It is desirable to have PSEO classes available on a single campus (for example: welding and college algebra).

Instructors need to know which students are PSEO so that they know when it is appropriate to respond to parents' inquiries.

Homeschool parents of minors would like automatic access to the student's transcripts.

Homeschool parents would like to have information about events, important dates, etc. sent to them as they are acting as high school counselors to their students.

The need for degree completion/course selection software as well as assigned advising (as well as more accessibility to advising).

More guidance on which courses are high-school level appropriate.

Improve quality of services so students can get questions answered and find things more easily.

Need for more college prep tests (ACT, SAT) as well as alternative ways to earn college credit (CLEP and DSST).

Instructors need to know the level of computer access available to the student.

The challenges with using an institutionally managed email address versus a personal email address.

Many PSEO students are underprepared for college level coursework. It was suggested that there needs to be a way to recognize those problems early. For example, teach classroom etiquette and not to be afraid to raise a hand.

Question 2: How should we judge the college's success?

Common Themes:

We should measure the college's success based on:

- Program/degree completion

- The achievement of class objectives

- Passing rate of classes

- Student accomplishments

Another important factor is the transferability of credits to another institution.

Instructor evaluations are another way to measure success.

Tracking students who drop out versus those who keep going.

Tracking students who jump around from one institution to another (may be a sign of lack of commitment).

Question 3: We are looking for ways to improve. What question(s) should we be asking?

Common Themes:

Some of the most important questions we should be asking PSEO students are:

What is your completion goal?

Are you meeting your goal?

Are course times appropriate with your schedule?

Do you participate in activities outside of the classroom?

How does PSEO at ARCC compare to PSEO at other colleges?

A question we should ask ourselves is:

Does our faculty exhibit professionalism and competence in their work?