

Guided Pathways Leadership Team
Guided Pathways Student Focus Groups Review of Findings
Spring 2019

The Guided Pathways Student Focus Groups were conducted by the Dean of Guided Pathways. The questions for the focus groups were drawn from EAB’s “Student Focus Group Guide” and Career Ladders Project’s “Bringing Student Voices to Guided Pathways Inquiry and Design.” All students volunteered to participate and responses were recorded anonymously. Four (4) focus groups were held on two (2) Lake Land College campuses: Mattoon Main Campus and Effingham Kluthe Center. Fifty-five (55) students participated in the focus groups. Of these students, 44% were female and 56% were male. 97.6% of students were full-time and 5.4% were part-time. Moreover, 1.8% were Asian, 5.5% were Hispanic, 7.3% were African American, and 85.4% were White.

Students were asked questions about choice of college, attendance barriers, choosing classes, schedule availability, modality preferences, registration bottlenecks, major selection and change, and stop-outs. Out of the focus groups, the following themes were identified.

Topic	Themes
Choice of College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable • Close to home • Small class sizes and one-on-one interaction with instructors • Familiarity with institution through various events • Returned for re-training
Attendance Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early morning classes are most difficult to attend • Transportation typically is not a barrier, but gas money can be a challenge (2x) • Work schedule sometimes interferes • Preference for every other day schedule • Preference for 9-3 classes • More options at Kluthe
Choosing Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what is required for major and transfer institution • Complete research on your own • Take General Education courses first • Online degree audit • Check with advisor • Still trying to “figure it out” • Enjoyed two day a week schedule to have time to work
Obstacles in Choosing Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes advisor wants students to take classes that do not match • Advisor wants students to follow catalog but catalog is written for one specific transfer partner • Some classes offered only in Spring • Classes not available at Kluthe

Schedule Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule available at least one (1) semester ahead • Spring schedule available when registering for fall to plan out entire year • More time for students to find courses when a class is canceled • Preference for speaking to faculty adviser sooner
Modality Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer traditional classes • Appreciate variety of modalities for flexibility of schedule • Register for online because no other course available • Interest in a block schedule <i>if</i> it would provide greater structure and eliminate gaps in schedule • Preference for 50 minute classes; some concerned about attention spans
Registration Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not know how to use Degree Audit • Not sure how to sign up for Mod classes • Reminders/information on mod classes before they start (especially online) • Signed up for classes that did not count as general education • Appreciative of 10-day drop rule • “No problems” with registration process
Choosing a Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoke to advisor • Used stats/career data to determine major • Determined based upon completed classes (i.e. did not enjoy a class and changed or vice versa) • Utilized Bureau of Labor Statistics • Over half had changed their majors at least once • One (1) student changed major eight (8) times
Stop-Outs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn’t want to “do the work” • Too hard, didn’t enjoy it • Distractions with girlfriend • Needed to “mature” • Desire to go straight to work
Additional Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request instructors regularly place grades in Canvas in both traditional and online courses (repeated in each focus group) • Place syllabi/schedule/dates in Canvas so can plan ahead (repeated in each focus group) • Preference for traditional books vs. online. Concerns over online textbooks. (repeated in two (2) focus groups) • Great instructors - Matt Landrus, Andrea Bright, Jodi Birdwell, Ben Cohan, and Scott Rhine

