

Focus Group - Goal 2: Create a student-centered environment to facilitate students' intellectual growth and success.

March 17 & 18 - Students

Areas Represented: *Year* – freshmen (2), sophomore (1), junior (1), senior (1), graduate (1 in first year, 2 in second year). *Majors* – Undecided (1), Exercise Science (1), Criminal Justice (1), Secondary Education – English (1), Spanish Education (1), Mental Health Counseling (1), Organizational Development & Leadership (2). *Activates/Organizations* – Graduate Assistants (3), GSAB (2), ROTC (2), Reflector (1), Tutor at learning center (1), Swim Team (1), Spanish Club (1).

What are we doing well, what is the deficit, what do we need to capitalize on and what are threats of not completing this goal?

Strengths:

- Campus
 - Small centralized campus, 10-minute walk from end-to-end
 - All building together, not spread throughout town
 - Small class sizes, easy to recognize classmates/friends out of classroom
 - Continuous development- reconstruction/remodeling, new technology, new buildings (Rec Center and PAC)
 - The Performing Arts Center draws in a lot of attention for the university – we get big names/shows, people travel to see.
- Faculty
 - Welcoming, encouraging, engaged. Genuinely want students to well.
 - Approachable and available during office hours and class time. Quality one-to-one time when necessary.
 - Most have attained terminal degrees and from big name schools – knowledgeable and capable at what they do.
 - Use of “hands-on” applications in class – real world examples to bring it all together.
 - Flexible/understanding with student athletes that have to miss class.
- Learning Center – welcoming and “walk-in friendly”
- Career Development Center – great resource for students
- Library – looks really good now, Starbucks is awesome, open late
- Accessibility of buildings – MCT open 24/7 – Rec Center & Library hours are great
- Multiple computer labs available to students.
- There is always some kind of student activity/event on campus, and if there isn't- they are easy to get started.
- Graduate Assistantship positions
- Free resources to students – Help desk in MCT

- Well established Education Program
- A variety of sports camps held here over the summer for High School students.
- Raider-Trojan Partnership – Dr. Rimby – tutoring program in education department, provides opportunity for Education majors to get in classrooms/involved before pro-sem and student teaching.
- Open houses – professors actually seem enthused at them – and potential students notice that.
- The ROTC program
- The fact that the university wants the student’s perspective in how to progress forward.

Weaknesses:

- Parking issues, hard to find spots. “Going Green” – loss of parking on campus
- Traditional Lecturing styles and Power Points – boring, not engaging to students
- General Education courses/profs that require more than a major course. Profs should not expect/require so much at the 101 level. Wind up bringing down GPA/QPA
- Harder classes/profs that know it and do not make self available to students for assistance/questions.
- Profs that do not teach – “self-taught” courses – students do not feel as though they take away anything from the course.
- Some Profs quick to accuse students of cheating without “proof” and/or talking to the students first.
- Lack of computers in Library, Library not always conducive to learning – “constant chatter”
- Poor advising – does not seem to be taking seriously be profs, not willing to help/talk with students about options.
- Learning Center – not matching student needs with capable tutor.
- Career Development Center – not approachable/ “walk-in friendly”
- Same food, day in and day out – all over campus; not many “healthy options” at CUB.
- Housing lottery not good- cannot make deposit payment on-line and no contingency option if cannot get to Old Main to pay by date (snow day on day payment was due and almost lost spot).
- E-Billing – supposed to be a convenient and green way to students to pay, but why charge student a 10% convenience fee?
- Graduate students cannot use Rec center without having to pay a fee.
- Lack of flexibility to solve Graduate student problems – scheduling, graduating on time
- Poor Communication – throughout campus (between departments, from administration to departments/students). Especially a problem for students double majoring and Secondary Education students that are under Education and specialization department.
- Experiential learning options are fragments/departmentalized and limited – because students often do not know about all of their options.
- No “First Year Experience” offered to freshman – essentially a “home room” for students to adjust, provides a smaller “cohort”, would be a way to lay expectations for them.
- Lack of accessibility to some building/resources

- CUB open until 2AM – Why? Does not provide anything to student that late – at least Library would provide more for student.
- Old Videos in Counseling Department – need to be updated.
- Equipment in Chemistry and Biology needs to be updated.
- Too many flat screen TVs throughout campus that serve no purpose – at least make them worth the money.

Opportunities:

- Reconstruction plans for dorms- appealing to prospective students.
- Bring in some more food options/varieties – especially to the CUB.
- Technology – especially in the classroom; i-clickers and other interactive technology to make learning “more fun” for students
- Take advantage of advertising – make commercials
- Local businesses love Ship students – foster that avenue to build better relations between University community and local community.
- Work on relations with permanent residents of Shippensburg and students – no “safe place” for students in town.
 - Go to town hall meetings – ask residents what they would like to see from the University (besides money).
 - Get students involved in town – could increase internship & experiential learning opportunities.
 - Ship students could provide free opportunities to residents – reciprocate to the town
- Raider Transit – exploit and expand drop-offs/pick-ups.
- Another coffee shop
- Going Green – continue to work on this goal – should find way to replace/re-use old parking lots
- For Graduate Students
 - Could make use of Scotland School in Chambersburg that was shut down.
 - Could make Graduate school separate from UG
 - Would create jobs by staffing new location, possibly increase enrollment by proving another location/external classes from the main University.
- Start a “First Year Experience” for freshman - essentially a “home room” for students to adjust, provides a smaller “cohort”, would be a way to lay expectations for them.
- University/students can reach out to local middle and high school to increase student involvement in classes – tutoring/teaching.

Threats:

- Black Board & on-line based instruction/classes – lose the interaction and face time – should strive to keep a balanced
- Profs stuck in “old” teaching methods – should have technology tutorials for profs so they are not hesitant to branch out.

- Inconsistencies within and between departments – requirements, teaching methods, etc. –have regular meetings to ensure all are on same page.
- Lack of uniformity and communication between departments – can cause students to fall behind (especially double and secondary education majors).
- Lack of advertising outside of Shippensburg for the University. – The locals/students already know, branch out and increase interest elsewhere.
- Permanent residents attitude towards Ship students
- How do we compete with increasing on-line schools? How do we make traditional university just as/more appealing? – especially to full-time working non-trad prospective students
- Some without the authority to do so, trying to change the rules/requirements for graduations because that how it was done where they went to school – maintain our “Ship” standards
- Lack of standardization in terms of what is expected of students
 - If syllabi, grading procedures were consistent it would be easier for students to adapt
- Lack of scholarship opportunities
 - Lack of forgiveness if students slip on requirements
 - Lack of advising/support to keep students on track
- Lack of adequate advertising/advance notice for campus activities.
 - If advertised, often critical information is missing (time, place)
 - Notices sent out day before/day of, and even after the event is over
- Always seems to be crowded and uncomfortable in dining halls/coffee shops.

March 17 - ASP

Strengths:

- The Learning Center
 - There are a lot of students who are available to help you succeed
 - The LC has advertised themselves by reaching out to students in classes
 - Learning specialists help you to understand what is holding you back from learning more.
- ASP
 - Became more familiar with the campus life and setting
 - Felt more prepared for future classes
 - Book loans help with finances
 - Counselors provide support academically and personally
- Residence Life
 - Creates opportunities to build personal leadership skills
- Ship Rec. Center

- APB
 - Offer field trips and provide things for students to do on campus
- MSA
 - Provides a piece of diversity that Shippensburg is lacking
 - Foster sense of community
 - Create opportunities to meet new people and learn about other cultures
- Shippensburg is not a large school so people are able to get to classes on time and can meet people without losing sight of their other friends.

Weaknesses

- Majority of communication is email.
 - “It is hard to check my email every morning before I go to class.”
 - Can be difficult to check my email twice in one day.
 - Create a campus wide text messaging system that isn’t used just for emergencies
- Majority of professors have a Blackboard link for their classes
 - Students felt that it was unproductive because professors rarely post the grades so it is harder for students to understand their scores.
- More advertisement of the majors offered on campus
 - Many students did not remember Academic Day, and those who did, did not find it was helpful or productive
 - More variety of majors that are based solely in Shippensburg (ex. Nursing program with Thomas Jefferson Uni)
- Safety on Campus
 - Open campus- anyone can come onto the property
 - Lack of security in Stoneridge because there are no electronic locks
- Lack of Diversity
 - Minority students felt this especially because it is not unusual for there to only be one minority student in a class
- Lack of awareness about services on campus
 - Students were not aware of that the career development center and the counseling center have to offer.
 - If they were aware, then they were not sure how to schedule a meeting or what to do when they got there

Opportunities:

- Residence Life
 - Helps to build leadership

- Opportunities for professional relationships
- Field Trips
 - Offered by APB
 - Nice to be able to travel without personal transportation
- Job Fairs
 - Helps to understand what employers are looking for
- MSA
 - Nice because it creates cultural diversity and awareness
- Intramural Sports
 - Experience athletics without the pressures of the athlete's schedule
 - Meet new people
 - Engage in healthy activities

Threats

- Residence Halls
 - Outdated for the 21st century
 - Feels like cinderblock is confining
 - Would prefer a small computer lab in the dorms
 - Laundry facilities that are less expensive and not always broken equipment
 - Would like to have more space to socialize in the dorms
- More time to choose a major
 - Students said they didn't feel supported to choose a major that suited them, instead they felt that they were forced into something to meet the deadline
 - Unaware of services that the CDC offered
 - A "job fair" that advertises the majors available on campus
 - Have speakers present to discuss how this major helped them in their current career
 - Explain the options that each major will provide you
 - More advertisements like posters and flyers outlining different programs of study
- More scenery on campus
 - The chairs are a great fit
 - Have more for groups to meet outside
 - Add more flowers to campus greenery
- Better food/ meal plan options
 - More variety in meal plan options
 - Offer more flex spending options
 - Longer meal time hours to reduce the need to spend flex money
 - Rollover unused meals to the following semester
 - Better food provider

- Majority of the students expressed a distaste in the food choices on campus
- Cost of books in the bookstore
 - They are too expensive to purchase, brand new and used
 - More money for buyback at the end of the semester
- Pay for part-time jobs
 - Needs to be a higher rate
 - Hard to afford books and other campus materials and amenities at minimum wage