

# Notes from Session One

## BLUE TEAM

Date: 2/25/09

### How Have our Lives Shaped our Ideas of a Good College Education?

- Parental Pressures associated with college education
- College life caused stress
- Participating in University activities/associations helps the student to succeed
- Outside influences, esp. if negative can contribute to the students downfall
- University needs to do more to assure transfer students and freshmen are welcomed
- Advising staff should be organized, trained and the department overall should try to personalize the relationships with the students they assist

### Action Ideas

- Develop relationship w/ local High Schools in order to prep high school students
- Actions groups needed for seniors in High school in an effort to prepare the student for college
- Affordable daycare for students
- Training need for advisors
- Overall the community, high schools and University should be committed to encourage college enrollment and success

### Opinions on Viewpoints

- Good writing skills are needed in order to succeed in college, esp. for first year college students
- Some individuals lack appreciation for a college education
- Improved public school system
- First year college students lack the experience req. to make a smooth transition from High School to college
- Increase liberal Arts within core curriculum

### **Things that we are already doing:**

- Open Admission University
- Counseling both academically and for mental health purposes
- Student Work Study Program

### **Where do we Agree?**

- Improvement of public school system needed
- The support of the student's family is essential for the student's progress

### **Where Do We Disagree?**

- Importance of developmental courses
- Open admission University policy

### **Catarina Session 1 Recorder Notes – Green team.**

#### **How have our Lives Shaped our Ideas of a Good College Education?**

- I consider myself a nontraditional student. College “is a little bit more challenging” since I came back. Staying focused is important even though it is difficult because of all the other obstacles I face. I stay determined. I am able to handle things differently now that I’m older. Motivations for coming back were both economic and a desire to learn more.
- Student at UH central. Medical bills have caused obstacles with my loans. I am no longer able to use the loans to continue my education. I hear people telling me I’m not trying hard enough. Scholarships are not an option for me. I am trying to work full time to continue my education. People around me giving “bad advice.” I totally I should just “try harder” I didn’t initially know I had more options. Medical conditions held me back from concentrating. “I felt like a failure” I was told to stay in class. Later I found I should have dropped some of them. Bills began to accumulate. Medical problems were what stood in my way. I love to learn, I love going to class so being held back by my med problems was devastating to me. Private vs. Public universities.
- Many variables (i.e. family, support systems, transportation) can affect the college experience.
- My college experience was a long time ago. Currently as a community member I try to encourage others to continue their educations. The feedback I gather: they don’t have a type of outreach support that they need. More outreach people (i.e. social workers) would help them further their education. With what I am hearing I question why I should recommend this university to others.

- Advisors weren't personal enough to advise me enough to be successful. I had to advise myself. I was advised into 3coarses. I had all 3finals in one day. I bombed my last final. 9hrs of finals that day. I was unable to prepare. Every time was a diff advisor. They considered only the academic. Not personal enough. Did not consider: work hrs, personal life etc. If I had one advisor I feel that would help. A personal file. Updated often. Taylor courses to individuals considering things like work, family and other contributing factors. Failing can lead to loosing fin aid. Open admission was a plus for me. The faculty was helpful and encouraging. They helped through reinforcement. I didn't find that at other universities. This university's faculty went out of their way to help pulling up the slack from advising. The faculty is very committed.
- I have enjoyed the relationships I have been able to build within my degree's dept. I look forward to the exchange here at the university. The professors keep you going here.
- Getting an education changes your mind on what you want your children to do. Prior to college I didn't think education was very important. UHD has changed at the way I look at education.
- I've been here a month. I struggle feeling on my own. I have to manage my own time. I don't have someone behind me pushing me but I enjoy the freedom.
- First generation: I didn't have someone here telling me how it is. Sam Houston High didn't have a support system (fin aid). In HS as an honor student I didn't take SAT's making things like math difficult for me. My first professors were either you know it or you don't. With this being such a difficult subject for me I needed more support from my prof's. As a four year student here I enjoyed my experience but finding an advisor as a declared major was very diff. They were not often available. Conflicting information from advisors made things very difficult. Having faculty as advisors was problematic because they had other things on their plates.
- Surprise classes!! Last moment being told that I had to have a particular class.
- I changed majors because my advisors gave me bad information. Looked for a major that would accept the classes I would have lost.
- My older sister went to college. I learned from her mistakes. What I liked about college was the education, networking. I also had problems with advising even in community college. Once I declared my major the faculty new the student. My senior year I had to take 21hrs, work 35hrs plan wedding. Personal responsibility was a big issue for me. Now sister is facing graduation. I was able to advise her from my experiences even though we learn differently.
- In my experience as a community member why would I recommend that students go to UHD with what I am hearing? If they need help what I am to do. This happens at other universities also. SHSU, community colleges. Students have to have responsibility as well to a certain extent. The resources are available. "Misadvising" is common issue. Advisors are now required to take an advising class at UHD. As an advisor in Aug I saw 1000 students after seeing only 500 in Nov

and 600 in Dec. Plenty of students wait until the last minute. Advisors also have full schedules. Some students are not taking enough initiative.

### **Opinions on Viewpoints**

- Viewpoints do not address the responsibility of people involved in education (other than the students). Students are aware of their responsibility. Educators bring preconceived ideas to the classroom. Problems are not always because of the student. This is an urban university. I feel the way one is spoken to is coming across condescending.
- Students are no longer being taught the same way. They are not being taught not to plagiarize. Not being taught, just being prepped for tests. Teachers are forced to teach tests. Tests cannot be applied to real life. Application not being taught. That is a community/world wide/national problem.
- Should add: we want our graduates to become leaders in community. They should be capable to change/adaptation not just taught to fit in. We should encourage leaders/change/improvement. Make better educators. Teach mentality to give back. Teach to pay it forward.
- View #2 use to be how it was before but in today's economy not so much. Graduation used to come w/a good job. Not anymore. Economy vs. ability to pay back loans
- #3-4 The individual's priorities must be in line. (i.e. choosing "Spinners" vs. education.) Before school meant better jobs. I saw friends who prioritized differently than I did.
- #4 is important: Teach life skills and academics. Students don't understand professor's anger when they are late. Real life does not come w/someone day to day guiding you.
- I feel 3&6 go hand in hand (skills to be responsible people/good citizens)
- Volunteer work is no longer valued. This is changing our society.
- As I think of diff views, support system comes to mind. As you become older you are your own support system. Community service can only go so far.
- Considered community service not only when they get in trouble by the law vs. those who attempt to put it in on their own

### **Things We Are Already Doing**

- Project Grad: involved with HS students. Student funding
- One student mentioned she and others are starting a student organization intended to address issues like advising, interacting w/prof, strategy to overcome issues at the university. Study buddies, teams of people to help etc to help the nontraditional students.

### **Where Do We Agree?**

- student responsibility is important
- #3-4 seemed to be favored (3: College graduates must be responsible people 4:College graduates must have skills for everyday life)
- Responsibility (3) and Everyday skills (4) lead to good citizens (6).
- View 2 (College graduates should be able to forge a good career) has become important in today's society.

### **Where Do We Disagree?**

- Importance of Community service: CS should be required because it changes an individual's outlook. You can help the community and learn at the same time.
- CS should not be required because this type of work should be individual choice.
- If CS were not required to graduate a class concentrated on CS would not succeed.
- What is considered volunteer work? Should be spelled out. Tutoring vs. punishment. Helping female prisoners get GED etc vs. mopping floors
- I love volunteer work. Makes the individual feel good. There are rewards.

### **Action Ideas**

- We need to reach out to the parents of the students

Students should be required to do community service to graduate. Changes perspectives.

- Better communication, foster entrepreneur., innovation,
- Make community service a course.
- Rename community service
- Apply community work to degree

February 25, 2009

Facilitator: Yolanda Turner

Session Recorder: Ben Gomez

## Notes from Session One

### RED TEAM

#### How Have Our Lives Shaped Our Ideas of a Good College Education?

- Started at UHD in 87. Had to get out and work. Getting a degree wasn't important then. She's back at UHD to finish her degree.
- Graduated from Xavier University in Louisiana. Wonderful experience, only child, did not have to work. Parents made provisions for school, partial scholarship. Very blessed and fortunate. She feels most UHD students have to work, have families, social issues must be addressed if students are to be successful. Every semester in college she took 18 hours to get out in 4 yrs. Child Care would benefit students who have children.
- Open admission at UHD. It's considered UHD's strength and a weakness. He went to Jeff Davis High School and they have child care to accommodate students. His mom encouraged him to go to college.
- First generation with college degree. From Lake Charles, Louisiana. He went back to college at 23. He is still paying for it. He didn't work, wanted to focus on his studies. Had to get loans. He is an Artist – He's over Art Studio here. Went to Graduate school. Become engaged with school through teaching. Best part was being engaged in community through activity. As a faculty member at UHD, he tries to engage students through activity. Has 2 art degrees. He's a visual art major, what do they do? Most people think they build stuff and he paints it. He loves to teach, but he's never had a problem getting a job. He worked at Main

Campus, because he went to graduate school, which allowed him to think critically and able to do research.

- UHD has great Math Lab and writing lab. Participants of the math class have gone on tour nationwide. To engage students you must give them the tools. UHD is considered a commuter campus.
- In order to engage students, they need to be able to be engaged socially. Open admissions at University of St Thomas, younger kids don't have a college atmosphere. She met other students thru their campus social activities, older. Committee planned fund raisers.
- UHD doesn't have much to offer in athletics. Where people can get together and root for something. What is the alternative to it? UHD does have a Basketball intermediate team. Family can get involved. One of our circle members is in power weight lifting here at UHD.
- Another Faculty member approached him about a project here. More politics involved, what is important for students when they graduate? Awareness, be a good citizen. He wanted to get involved with this center because he felt he didn't have a voice.
- Name change debate. Some people are passionate about it. Marketing wise, UHD is not perceived positively, as last resort rather than choice. Students think they are attending UH Main. UHD has a lot of great programs but people don't know about them. Open admissions looked at as a stigma. At times she wants to be proud, other times, she gets mad, feels students shouldn't be babied. UHD should have tougher standards. Xavier historically black college. Staff not as friendly. Here everything is computerized. She feels a lot of students don't want to put forth the effort.
- Obtained a Bachelors degree in 72. Some students want to attend college and work it around their personal lives. Petrified he would not get into college. He wrote to colleges early to get in. Insecure and shaky student. Feels a real connection with UHD. 2000 lands at UHD. He feels some students don't understand. Are we speaking gibberish?
- Students are disconnected. What can UHD do? Age, mentality, some students feel like they have to come to college because their parents are making them do it, otherwise they might not attend.
- Went to college right after HS. Started college when in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Rebelled a little bit. She didn't want to go to college, wanted to party. When she rebelled, her

grades dropped. She came back and now really wants to attend. Some students are here because their parents are paying their tuition.

- Some have to work, challenge the mindset that people have to work. Intrinsic, should come from within. Expectations at her house from parents were high. Her parents paid her college.
- People, professors, students have to go through things themselves. She now recommends to students not to miss classes.
- Open admission exist for everyone to have an opportunity. Mentality of younger kids, she admits she didn't know what credit hour meant. She asked about classes. She didn't know what 12 hours meant. She asked. Educating students would help. She took it upon herself to ask for help with what she didn't understand. If students are made to feel like they should already know something. They might be embarrassed to admit they don't and won't ask for help.
- Strengths – She's a freshman, first in family to go to college. She did research, attended mock classes. They teach you about scholarships, how to study, they get you college ready. They provide guidelines about what to do. College readiness program. She felt this helped her a lot.
- UHD stigma, Cougar high or the 13<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Very proud of UHD. People write checks to UH. Not happy with name they picked. He still has school pride. He set up a scholarship program. Community service hours picked in order to graduate. Regardless of name, he will be committed to this school. Final 2 years, a friend of his had his own insurance company and he worked with him regarding time to attend classes.
- UHD is visually a very active campus. Its location downtown is wedged between interstates, buildings. In the main building as a faculty member he sees his students all the time.
- Faculty is UHD's biggest strength. He went to UT. Lives in Woodlands, felt this campus was closer. Dr Workman was his professor and he was very impressed with his teaching ability. He gets involved with as many things as he can. UHD has small classes. At UT, they have 700 people in one class; they don't know who you are. UHD has very accomplished professors. They have very different backgrounds which is an asset to the University.
- The strength of any university is the students.



- The new name for UHD has been put on hold.

## **Opinions on Viewpoints**

- View 5 - How to keep learning. He agrees with it.
- View 2 - Upper level comm. It's a breeze. Utilize Diploma to get a job. He will come back for Graduate school. #2. Reads like a technical career.
- #5 - Applies to life on learning how to learn. Open admission colleges, try to satisfy all the viewpoints. His step mom attended college to get a good job. For him it wasn't about getting a good job, he wanted to learn. Some students have all these views about college.
- Internship aspect – explore what kind of job one wants to do.
- #1 and 4 - You have to be able to reason, perform, She uses #4 to understand #1. What is important? It's relative to each person. Learn critical skills, you learn to get to class on time and this teaches you to be able to get to work on time.
- #4. A lot of these skills should be taught in High School. We see the consequences at Jeff Davis High School with Child care. They should be addressed earlier.
- #6. These things should be learned before you get to college, these should be learned at home.
- #4. Learning critical thinking skills is important.
- These viewpoints are icing on the cake.
- Some come to college to get a better job. Some disagree. #6 Education is about access. Taught Education psych. If you're getting a degree only to work, make it real.
- A lot of students don't read or click on website. Stop hand holding, Students should be responsible themselves. You have to be an active participant.
- Students are responsible for their own destinies.
- Some students need the assistance. That's what counselors are paid for. Counselors need to guide students.

- Attitude, wants help, when someone honestly needs the help, they love working with them. When students are here for the 4<sup>th</sup> semester, they should be able to navigate themselves. At times you must learn how to conform, listen to people you don't like. As a student, you also have a job. A student had not logged into UHD email after their 4<sup>th</sup> semester.

### **Where Do We Agree?**

- Everyone agrees with viewpoints 1 and 5.
- Learning critical skills is important.
- Group agrees to disagree with 6.
- Students should take more accountability for themselves.
- Open admission at UHD. It's considered UHD's strength and a weakness.

### **Where Do We Disagree?**

- Disagree with 6. Students should already be there.

### **Action Ideas**

- Students need to be more proactive with their education.

### **Questions**

Are there a lot of opportunities for internships through this University?

# YELLOW TEAM Notes from DTA 2/25/09

## How Have our Lives Shaped our Ideas of a Good College Education?

- Experienced as a 31 year old college- got evolved in activities. Experienced college fully.
- Like that she got to choose her College since she didn't get to pick her high school. Choose Prairie View because she didn't feel that she was getting a good cultural history. Was a complete culture shock within her culture. Graduated and had a great experience. Disliked the way her high school was split up- was predominantly Anglo. Middle class neighborhood. Feels like she got a great education because her experience in High School was so diverse.
- Grew up in small town– despite that I still got a great educational background. Biggest Challenge– Not much guidance. Forced me to flounder around. Challenge– adjusting to an unstructured time schedule. “Every level of education you go up you must make an adjustment.” Went to a traditional college, unlike UHD. Lived in Dorm. WAS VERY INTIMIDATED BY PROFESSORS. If he had to do it over again, he would get to know the professors better.
- Born and Raised in Houston– Grew up in Magnet Schools after elementary school. Had LOTS of guidance throughout high school. Knew exactly what she wanted to do when she got to college. High School was like college for her. Once she got to college it was much easier for her since she was so prepared for College. Left for college and soon came back from Ohio State and went to the only available University, UHD. Grown from both experiences, which were both different. The smallness of UHD has helped shaped her academically. Has not been board. Has been pushed at UHD. Take what you learn and make it into a learning experience = success as a college student. Your mindset is very important to your success as a college student.

## Things that we are already doing at UHD/Advantages:

- One thing I do like about this school is that it is very accessible. Opportunity to attract all different types of people. Noticing that students today are much different. They have so much going on. Different that it use to be. School costs much more than it use to.
- Strengths- Resources on Campus. Mentor Program, Learning Centers.

- College of public service does some great things-
- Campus is commuter based.
- Students with disabilities –our office does a great job.

### **Disadvantages to UHD:**

- Problem facing UHD- not enough person know enough about our University. We could do a much better job marketing the University. We have excellent instructors. We need to establish our own identity. Certain programs within the school are not publicized.
- Do people give the impression that they go here since they cannot go anywhere else? Yes- because we have open enrollment.
- Students Perspective- Image and visibility is the biggest problem with our University.
- “I’m just going here so I can transfer to UofH.” No Pride in our University. Some students don’t know the difference. If you don’t know what's offered how are you suppose to know?
- Reputation is the most important to give us our backing. Our reputation most times comes from those who have no affiliation with our University.

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### **Where Do We Disagree?**

- On Viewpoint #2. Your job is not everything. Don't realized what we can get out of our education.

### **Action Ideas**

- Instill holding our students to higher standards. Some students are not comfortable in their environment yet. Not everyone gets it right away.
- Better Marketing of our University.
- "Reputation Management"
- Instill a sense of pride within the Academic Body.
- Historical Archive!!