

Achieve the Dream Dialogue to Action Forum
Session Three Notes
Blue Team

What Signs of Hope do we see at UHD?

- The University of Houston-Downtown is in a great location, and we can continue to build on this geographic resource.

What Strengths Can Our Community Build On?

- The strength of the University is in its name. The fact that it is the University of Houston-Downtown should create a business appeal.
- The UHD open enrollment policy helps a lot of students from disadvantage backgrounds succeed. We can continue to build on this.
- The University has great facilities such as the new Shea street building.
- UHD is in a great location.

Action Ideas

- Students should be encouraged to bring family members to lectures.
- UHD needs to create ties for students with the downtown business community
- We need a more in-depth advising system.
- Student interaction with instructors should be encouraged.
- We should bring dorms back to the university so that there will be a better atmosphere for students to get more involved with campus activities
- We could use social networking programs such as Facebook and Youtube to market UHD and make it more appealing for students to stay enrolled.
- There should be higher standards for students that take developmental courses.
- We could make tutoring available on Vista Blackboard.

Opinions on Viewpoints

- Students and institution should change the way they are seeing themselves because the institution can be legendary.
- Open enrollment has given students who wouldn't normally be given a chance at other institution a chance to attend a university
- The open enrollment system has allowed low performance students into the institution does this hurt the university mission?
- A mentoring program to help first generation students and students with cultural barriers

Where Do We Agree?

- UHD has created a culture that supports and values helping students succeed.

- Student attendance and responsibility is important.
- UHD has a responsibility to help students reach goals.
- Open enrollment does not affect the quality of an education.

Where Do We Disagree?

- If we're going to continue to have open admissions, we need to increase those resources that help struggling students succeed.
- Mandatory attendance should not be created.

Things We Are Already Doing

- UHD already provides tutoring programs that help low performing students.
- We already have developmental courses.
- We already have a freshmen seminar.



Green Team DTA Circles Notes from March 11, 2009

What Signs of Hope do We See?

- Open admissions university offers an education to a variety of students who may not have gotten it otherwise
- These Deliberations: I felt heard/I felt like someone was trying to help/Like something would happen
- UHD faculty have a real concern for student success

What strengths can our community build on?

- Open admissions gives the community a greater chance at education

Things We Are Already Doing

- Student orientation is now required for all freshman.

- These deliberations

Ideas from outside of UHD

- Student Initiated student mentoring program
- Buddy System: pairing students/study partners
- Pathways to Algebra: Aleks

Where Do We Disagree

- Though we seemed to agree that teaching all cultures is not feasible, we discussed the experience of a member of our group who's experience taught her that a more positive result is obtained when the teacher gets to the students' level of learning.
- Though we seemed to agree that In intro/lower level classes students should take classes from professors who teach the way the student learns but the student should be able to adapt to the Professors teaching methods in upper level classes, others mentioned that in his experience if a professor did not teach the way he learned, he simply had to work harder. He stated that this is the way college should be to prepare you for the real world. Others went on to mention that a degree should be reflective of a student's ability to learn, not only different material but from different teachers

Where Do We Agree?

- Different levels/types of learning may work this way (view 2) but not all. We discussed Math vs Science and Social science classes
- Students should learn what type of student they are in CSP type classes
- Views one and four mix
- We agreed that providing professor information to students was good idea

Action Ideas

- Students should be aware of type of learner from CSP type classes
- Learn ABC shorthand to assist in note taking
- Information available to students on a variety of professors including teaching/testing styles (exp: a disc of mini-class session allowing student to see teaching methods)
- Allow students to chose teachers that teach the way they learn
- Students interviewing professors
- Find ways to get information to students via electronic media/modern technology.
- CSP should be required for students other than those in suspension/developmental classes

March 11, 2009

Facilitator: Yolanda Turner

Session Recorder: Ben Gomez

Notes from Session Three

RED TEAM

Anything that has happened related to this issue that you would like to share?

- Professor used his class as a sounding board. About students being prepared for college, those students who had some sort of training about college in high school through some type of program, he found those students have performed better than the students who did not have any type of training to prepare them for the college experience.
- Some students have expressed that comp. 1 was very boring. When one student went to comp. 2, it revolved around music and they enjoyed it more.

What Signs of Hope do We See?

- Freshman summer success program.
- Action circle program is a sign of hope. Student's involvement with it shows it.
- Someone attended the graduation ceremony for UHD in December 2008 and they had the biggest class graduating, this is a sign of hope.
- Professor read an article about the University of Massachusetts and the University was thinking about re-locating their campus. They engaged the community and got them involved in their decision, instead of relocating, they built a high school, which in turn ended up improving the neighborhood. Some of the students from this high school moved on to Ivy League schools. We need to be proactive. UHD must involve the community around them.

What Strengths Can Our Community Build On?

- We should do a better job utilizing partnerships.
- More Internships could be obtained if UHD put forth greater effort to acquire them.
- New website looks better.
- Look into things that could be implemented to prepare students for success.
- Achieving the Dream has a program for high school students called Preparing The Dream, which focuses on preparing students in high school.

Opinions on Viewpoints

- #2 – UHD has great professors. Student has experienced professors from all over the world. Some problems he's encountered has been with their accent.
- Improve on more degree programs being offered.
- Some courses offered only 1 to 2 years.
- #4 – Poor advice from counselors

Action Ideas

- Offer more degree programs
- Consistency of course offerings. Because of small classes, sometimes there isn't enough students to make classes.
- Availability of degrees.
- Sometimes UHD don't have people to teach the courses.
- In certain majors, students take a long time to graduate because UHD does not offer the classes needed often.
- Sometimes have faculty advisors advising.
- UHD to send a letter, an email, or better communication from advisors to students about how they're progressing towards their degrees. .

- Students can go to the Chairman of the dept to petition classes to be offered. A minimum of 10 students are needed to make class and sometimes UHD can and will make exceptions.
- Childcare facilities are needed.
- Activity center for students, UHD has a gym, however students need somewhere where they can watch television or listen to music. Hallways are being used for this now and it gives a bad impression.
- Create and design a digital online plan that students can refer to for their degree plan. Is there a mechanism where it can be stored online?
- How about an electronic plan, something where students can submit future plans about classes they're intending to take so UHD can offer those classes. Must be done early in the semester.
- Empower students.
- Expand on the job training for degree programs.
- Students choose organizations for internships.
- How about forming a student organization to raise money for UHD?
- University Advancement to give back to the University.
- UHD has a small dept. for University Advancement to engage students with their education.
- Mentors in the business community.
- There is a learning disability center but not meeting the needs about students with disability.
- There are other Universities dealing with learning disabilities.
- Better develop staff to explore new opportunities or strategies.
- We should be proud to promote UHD.
- Some Universities offer email.
- Are students and faculty full time and part time and head of depts. Meeting to discuss issues?
- Depts. To have conferences for student at local, state or national level.

- Involve student's parents with college, especially first time students.
- Making scholarship information more readily available for students to access.
- Better advertisements for scholarships available.

Things We Are Already Doing

- UHD has a Math lab, an English lab and a Computer lab.
- Freshman orientation summer program.
- Freshman mentoring program – this is first year, small staff and faculty, pilot program. University College. Meet with students constantly. They need to broaden it.
- Implemented program to track Alumni.
- Conferences that students can attend.
- Opportunities to study abroad. Open to all students.
- Fine Arts Dept.
- Scholars Academy – Limited to sciences
- Learners Community – Supplemental instruction program linking classes. Marriage of subject matter and see connection between courses. Pilot program, they are planning to do more.
- Supplemental Instructors - supplementing students. Students are invited. What are the requirements?

Where Do We Agree?

- A student feels like UHD doesn't care about him and his problems.
- Where do we get the money to do these improvements for UHD?
- University advancement does raise money for the University. Lack of funding. We're imagining how to make the world a better place. Forget about limitations.

Where Do We Disagree?

- Standards? What are they and how are they defined?

SESSION THREE YELLOW TEAM

Tiffany Gains, Moderator
Shelly Mordhorst, Session Recorder

I. Session 3 Part 1: Introduction

- **Has anything happened to you or someone you know within the past week that relates to this issue?**
 - The University revamped the website which is more appealing to new students, current students and alumni.

II. Session 3 Part 2:

- **Signs of Hope at UHD**
 - Again, the website is a huge step for the University
 - Faculty, Staff & Students are becoming more aware of student success- things are going on that are helping students succeed.
 - Students started to speak up after the steam of the UHD name change. Caused students to have pride
 - New faculty with new ideas
- **What strengths can our community build on?**
 - Taking advantage of our great student body
 - All departments are great and doing great things and have great initiatives. If we can get that word out there outside the UHD community it would be great.
 - Showcase the university, show what we have to offer the community.
 - Why do we not have better coorelation with our community and our interns?

III. SESSION 3, PART 3

- **How did people react to this section? Tell us what happened.**
 - We read through the view points as a group. We had many agreeing parties throughout our discussion and no disagreements.
- **Which viewpoints did participants like the best?**
 - The participants favored viewpoints #2, #4, and #4.
- **Where did participants agree?**

- Communication is the key.
- Missing opportunities to have a connection with the community.
 - Not taking advantage of downtown
 - We need to help on providing training for faculty on diversity of students at UHD. We can benefit from effectiveness learning training.

- **Other general notes on this section:**

- Students don't know how to make a community out of our University.
- We are not building the bonds that it takes- no one is talking to each other until they are forced to.
- Only so few of us that are actually involved and LOVE the university.
- We have art and buildings donated to us, but how does that benefit ME as a student?
- Student Associations don't realize the power that they have within the University.
- These groups exist, we don't have to invent them, just use them.

IV. SESSION 3 Part 4:

- **What is already being done?**

- Changes are being made in the communication process
- Connections with the Theater District
- Career Services- Job Fair Twice a Year, have companies come in and do interviews with students.
- New Alumni Director!!!! ☺
- Writing Lab, Math Lab
- Some professors invite academic advising to their classrooms to talk to students about getting advised and the help that they need.
- Parent / Family Orientation- Work in Progress
- Welcome Week- Could Improve However

- **Did any action ideas emerge?**

- Yes!!!
- Alumni being more active
- More student evaluation of professors
- Standardized tests on professors from a national level

- Developing a relationship with those orgs listed on website
- Equipping the family for the experiences they will have with a student in the family.
- Workshops for families
- Current students sharing stories and experiences with new students
- Parent / Family Association @ UHD- Possible a Newsletter to parents only
- Day / Night equal staffing / amenities
 - ACTIVITY PERIOD once or twice a semester—no classes at all, just social time on campus.