Rock the Discussion:
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June 12, 2006
Conference Rooms A & B

FINAL REPORT
Presented by the students in
Speech 60: Facilitating Collaborative Communication

Background Information

An important goal of quality education is to equip each generation to participate effectively in what has been called “the great conversation” of our times. This means, on one hand, being unafraid of controversy. But it also means being sensitive to the values and outlooks of others.... For only in such a climate will we come to see our differences as sources of enrichment rather than sources of division. And only in such a climate can we come to see “the other” not as a curse or a threat, but an opportunity and a blessing---whether “the other” lives across the street---or across the world. The Aga Khan

The conceptual thinking and the goals of Speech 60: Facilitating Collaborative Communication

There are many things we can say about life in the 21st Century but, no doubt, one of them is that the world is complex and rapidly changing. Among other things, we observe and experience this complexity in terms of differing values, beliefs, and ideals. These differences are expressed “across the board” within families, organizations, communities, and nations.

Too often, these fundamental differences have led to misunderstanding, polarization, and conflict. Consequently, one of the great questions confronting us is how to create a world in which these differences are sites for exploration, greater understanding, deeper wisdom, and community.

This class is one attempt to answer this question. It is designed to sensitize students to the power of communication in creating our social worlds and to introduce principles and practices of designing and facilitating public meetings and conversations.
With that in mind, the primary project of our class involved designing and facilitating a campus-wide discussion. The following three objectives were central as we worked on this project:

1. We did not want to assume that we knew which topics should be discussed; instead, we wanted the issues to be campus generated. Consequently, we spent the first few weeks of the quarter interviewing a cross-section of administrators, faculty, staff, and students to find out the issues that others thought were important to discuss. A clear theme that emerged from these interviews was a desire to build a closer campus community. Within that framework three overall topic areas emerged: student retention; access to information; and, equity. We formed four discussion groups based on these three topic areas and gave them the following titles:
   - MySuccess@DeAnza: What can De Anza do to help every student achieve his or her potential?
   - Juggling More Than You Can Handle?: How can De Anza best help students juggle multiple and oftentimes competing responsibilities?
   - 1-800 Students Connect: What are the most effective ways to get students the information they need?
   - Students R’ De Anza: How can De Anza create a welcoming environment for all students?

2. We wanted to design an event that would allow the participants to experience a qualitatively better form of communication than what we normally experience in public forums. We wanted to emphasize the importance of speaking and listening in ways that help create openness, respect, and trust, despite different perspectives.

3. We wanted the information generated from these discussions to be offered to the appropriate groups on campus and used for future planning and/or decision making. We did not want these discussions to be an “academic exercise;” but rather we wanted to truly make a difference.

The rest of this document is a summary of the information generated from the discussion groups. Our hope is that you will use these ideas in ways that make our campus the best it can be.
Summary of the Small Group Student-led Facilitated Discussions

Over 90 students, staff, and faculty participated in the discussions. Participants chose which group to join based on their primary area of interest. All responses were recorded and are included in this report.

The symbol “+” indicates frequency of response.

Topic 1: MySuccess@De Anza: What can De Anza do to help every student achieve his or her potential?

Question 1: As a student here, what are your goals?

- Transfer/graduate AA ++ +++++++++
- Achieve a certificate ++
- Develop personal interests; such as singing +
- Get in and get out
- “Complete” education
- Flexible education
- To be motivated - “Don’t stop keep going”
- Gain work experience
- Obtain a 4.0 G.P.A
- Decide on a career

Question 2: What has De Anza done to help you accomplish your goals?

- Professional atmosphere- “all thumbs up” +++++++++
- Counseling has helped direct goals ++++
- Friendly and beautiful environment +++
- High quality of teachers compared to other Community Colleges +
- Re- Entry Program +
- Transfer representative access – very helpful, vs. other schools
- Extremely helpful International Program Office
- Sitting in the quad being able to study
- Tutorial Center- efficient and useful
- Un-official teacher guidance
- Classes/teachers have helped direct goals
- Helped me understand myself more
- Offers large variety of courses
Question 3: What could DeAnza do that it is not doing now that would help you reach your goals?

- Wireless access
- Offer more classes
- More technology access
- Graduate level courses
- Website
  
  Should be or have:
  - Easier & user friendly
  - Job hotline
  - Contact information
  - Making the website student driven- as in letting them control/ manage the website
- Teachers need more enthusiasm in classrooms and more respect for students
  - To give 100% to students
  - Help students in a positive manner
  - Teachers that want to be here and want to contribute to students’ success
- Teachers need to make this more than a job
- More linked classes
- More night classes/programs
- More medical/ nursing programs at night
- Connection/Continuing education
- Make De Anza a four year college
- Library
- Teacher accountability and availability
- Elicit more student feedback
- Remind students of important dates more often with emails
- The counselors have not given help regarding transfer to a four year college
- More notice through email or postal needs to be given regarding any activities which will better your chances of getting into a 4yr college
- Would like to see counselors personalize needs, give more precise information on what to do in order to transfer
- De Anza needs to help and direct interests into career goals
- Have a class that provides and directs a student to career goals
- Keep the same standard for each class regarding number of students that may attend
- Need more activities to give students a sense of belonging at the school
- Many people think De Anza only values money and not the students
- De Anza needs to help students do whatever it takes to transfer
- The Transfer Center is not well prepared; we need people with the experience to direct student towards careers based on their interests. We have only been given many tests to direct us.
• The Counseling Center needs to have more direct contact with 4 year colleges to give students more direction in when to transfer (papers) and what classes to take.
• Counseling classes need to be more in depth and personal
• Students feel that counselors provide you with information, but don’t help you develop direction of your path in careers
• Counselors tell students to go to UC instead of helping the students think about the best college for their needs
• Give more information about clubs on campus
• De Anza feels like an empty house/ little interaction
• De Anza needs to be more enjoyable
• More emails about events, elections, discussions
• Give other alternatives rather than just saying “It is the system, can’t help you” regarding registration, dropping classes, etc.
• There is a lack of communication between staff (transfer center, etc.)
• Students have been given run around, seems that no one really knows answers regarding transferring, etc.
• Each department needs to know system instead of passing the student off

Question 4: What would you want the faculty and administration to know about the challenges you think students face that make it difficult for some students to succeed more than others?
• We have work/ jobs/ children +++
• Selfish inconsiderate faculty ++
• Allow for more flexible attendance
• Would like to see paperwork stating exactly where students’ money is going.
  Put our money back into the student services
  Return on investment
  Need monies to go to student services such as tutoring, library, Counseling services
  Don’t cut student services budget
• More communication between student body and students
• Focus on student services
• Remember that De Anza is a school not a corporation or business
• Give an oath to students. Invest in their future.

Topic 2: Juggling More Than You Can Handle?: How can De Anza best help students juggle multiple and oftentimes competing responsibilities?
**Question 1:** What are you currently juggling that makes it more difficult to achieve your goals at De Anza?

- Not enough sleep ++++
- Transportation: getting here, insurance, care maintenance, GAS! ++++
- Classes and work +++
- Home life/parents +++
- 35 hours/week work +++
- Work graveyard/late night and have early morning classes ++
- Participation in clubs
- Commute
- Tests
- Reading, studying, ignoring homework in order to finish class projects
- Classes at other schools, classes at De Anza, and work
- Break time between classes – too short/too long
- Full-time student, Teacher Assisting and home/family – no time for self

**Question 2:** What services, programs, or experiences have been most useful to help you juggle these competing responsibilities?

- Do like the flexibility at De Anza offering morning, afternoon, and evening classes; like classes being offered at different times ++++
- Class about study habits
- Bookstore
  - VTA flash pass
- Disabled Student Services help (extended time for homework)
- EOPS (Extended Opportunity Programs and Services)
- Long distance education
- Teacher office hours
- Open media lab
  - Printing assignments
- Tutorial center
  - Learning from other students

**Question 3:** What services and programs do you wish De Anza had to help students juggle their multiple responsibilities?

- Wireless access on campus ++++
- Break on book prices ++++
- Book buy-backs should be more money ++++
- Offer short classes/seminars on time management that are not quarter length ++++
- More financial aid so students don’t have to work full-time, but study full-time/full-load ++++
- Better advertisement regarding financial aid +++
- More resources for students to complete their assignments +++
- Make De Anza web site accessible without the need for green sheets for all classes. (Students had difficulty accessing information on De Anza web site, and needed her “green sheet’ to locate needed information.)++
• Smart classrooms ++
• More off-site campuses/extensions (Hayward) ++
• Interdepartmental Community for better communication between teachers about student difficulties and challenges++
• Better advertising regarding counseling services for people facing personal problems ++
• Better website (teachers have other websites that don’t link to De Anza website)
• Having the gym open for all students
• Multiple club and activity days different days of the week
• More information on campus about bus lines/schedules to get to De Anza
• Final exam should be same day as class
• More flexible office hours
• Allow credit/debit card options for payment at food services
• Payment for tutors
• Larger variety of classes
• More arts classes
• Language department allow more flexibility and provide more classes
• More weekend classes
• Course description on-line
• Offer more major-related classes so that you don’t have to attend other community colleges in order to finish your AA.
• Better communication between teachers
  Assignments due dates should not fall on similar days for different classes
• Free Kinko’s on campus!

Question 4: If De Anza could do one thing to make it easier for you to stay in school while juggling your other responsibilities, what would it be?
• Cheaper books ++++
• Keep the same book edition for longer than one quarter so they can be resold (one to two years) ++++
• Make campus police earn their money by ticketing smokers, people racing through parking lots ++++
• Reselling program between students – De Anza Craig List ++++
• Ticket people/enforce safety rules ++++
• Placement tests should be one among a variety of ways to fulfill prereqs for classes. (This began with a concern that the placement tests could fulfill some prerequisites for some later courses, and then it became refined to say that many courses have prerequisites, and that it makes it difficult to take them because they have to backtrack so much.) ++++
• Teacher evaluation by students +++++
• Teachers getting better technology to use in classrooms +++++
• Teachers knowing how to use technology that is in their classrooms +++++
• Teachers lead by example +++++
• Information booths at beginning of quarter to help people find their way around campus +++
• Suggestion box for teachers, and one for students, and share the feedback +++
• Make sure teachers provide understanding – not just assign readings and test without class discussion ++
• Smaller class sizes ++
• Teachers be organized – not disorganized ++
• Teachers not assigning “busy work” ++
• Too many prerequisites for classes ++
• Pay our bills
• Gas card
• Free Kinko’s
• School resource to help students willing to car pool to connect
• Use school budget/resources more efficiently
• More classes for impacted courses
• Last minute drop-offs at library
• Longer library hours
• Longer cafeteria hours for late class students and open on weekends
• Longer counseling hours
• Website should be user friendly
• More promotions of available student programs
• Online classes should not have to come to school
• More PE classes during afternoon
• More availability of PE classes
• Get feedback from students about funding priorities (bathrooms)
• No classes larger than 50 students
• Better signs on campus to find your way around
• Discounts for students in the cafeteria
• Allow motorized scooters on campus to save energy for studying because classrooms are so spread out

Topic 3: 1-800 Students Connect: What are the most effective ways to get students the information they need?

Question 1: From your perspective as a student, what types of information are the most important to have for you to feel comfortable and knowledgeable about this campus?
• Awareness of campus events+++++
• Purposes and eligibility of campus facilities +++
• Transfer information and dates of campus visits by colleges and universities
  +++
• Hours of bookstore, lab services, other campus facilities ++
• Maps of locations of facilities on campus ++
• Awareness of events on De Anza website ++
• Awareness of emails ++
• Access to labs +
• Counseling services
• Update website
• Emails very useful
• Updated student catalog
• [www.Ratemyprofessor.com](http://www.Ratemyprofessor.com) awareness
• More De Anza exclusive teacher rating
• Studying abroad opportunities
• Campus clubs information
• Financial aid information
• Sporting events information

**Question 2: What are the “success stories” you’ve had when it was easy for you to get the information you needed?**

• New student orientation gave the information needed++
• Course catalog gives important dates to drop, withdraw, etc ++
• LaVoz has good and useful information ++
• Counseling meetings ++
• Tutorial Center ++
• Class registration information online ++
• ATC staff very helpful
• Knowledgeable student services
• Friends ask other friends or family members who are knowledgeable about the campus for information
• Emails giving advance notice of upcoming events
• Instructors give useful information
• Information booths, welcome desks during first week of quarter
• Financial aid booth gives students helpful information
• Media Lab and Library; availability of the Internet
• EOPS
• Counselor visits to classrooms
• Campus information in LaVoz
• Information posted on campus kiosks (fixed and portable)
• Cross Cultural Partners
• Counseling Center
• Transfer information at deanza.edu

**Question 3: When did it not go well for you? When was it difficult to find or get the information you needed?**

• General education transfer guidelines hard to find ++
Media lab location and accessibility hard to find ++
Access to faculty office buildings because they are locked until 9:00 AM ++
Some counselors are not knowledgeable and give wrong information
Instructors not always accessible
Instructor office hours and locations hard to find
Instructor websites are not complete or updated
Faculty websites hard to find
Media lab staff not willing to help
Library staff not knowledgeable
Admissions and records need faster service
Bookstore prices very high
Counselors lacking knowledge about transferring, timid about giving advice, need work on interpersonal skills
Information about the community surrounding DA
Searching deanza.edu – main page is too cluttered
How to correctly give feedback about bad teachers, so that the students’ voice is heard and action is taken

Question 4: If you could suggest a change in accessing information that would make a difference, what would it be?

- Change, update, modify website design ++++
- Make my De Anza page easier and faster accessibility +++
- Earlier notice of course schedule maybe one quarter in advance +++
- Make instructor websites easier to find and more accessible +++
- Course schedule should include textbook selections +++
- Media lab employees more knowledgeable ++
- More current emails sent out more often about events or other advertising +
- Customized email filters to choose which events you want notification of +
- Easier access to General Education transfer requirements +
- Accessibility to dates of school recruiting on campus +
- Lower bookstore prices +
- Central mailbox for faculty building
- Advance notice of instructor textbook selection for each quarter
- Counselors should only be teachers or professional counselors whose only job is to provide counseling
- Make counselors more knowledgeable: they should have deeper and more specific transfer information
- Opportunity to rate counselors similar to instructor rating
- Faster service in admission lines
- Information exchange forum between students
- “iTunes” style download of information
- Provide a computer in each classroom
- Use of pop-ups to remind students of important information (when logged into MyDeAnza system)
• Have computer available at Counseling office for registration purposes (like “Express Lanes” for registration)
• Choose to have text messages sent to cell phones about timely information
• Campus events information on the main DA webpage
• More computers in the library
• Provide 24-hour access to mailboxes for teachers (better ability to have paper communication between teachers and students)
• Provide all DA students with a DA email address and send information about: registration, events, e-LaVoz
• Bring local newspapers (e.g. the Mercury News) to campus, so people are more in touch with the local community

Topic 4: Students R’ De Anza: What can De Anza do to create the most welcoming environment for all students?

The students in this group addressed one question: What can De Anza do to create the most welcoming environment for all students? Each individual was asked to generate five useful and creative ideas and to share the two most exciting ideas with the group. The group then clustered these ideas into categories and created a title for each area. They ended by rank ordering each category. Six categories were generated and rank ordered from 1 (most important) to 6.

#1 Welcome Aboard!
  • Have student support groups on campus
  • When a new student registers, a packet of information is mailed to him/her welcoming them and providing information about specific campus services, etc.
  • Better explanation of services provided by the campus like health services, student discounts at local retailers, etc.
  • Have Brian Murphy give a welcoming speech the first week of the fall quarter to the campus
  • Provide 2 free tickets to a new student for a Flint Center event

#2 Mentoring
  • Assign a mentor to each new student (student can approach with questions - the mentor can be a sophomore student, staff members, or faculty member) ++
  • Mentor program where a returning student can get service learning units to keep in touch with a new student or group of students
  • Student ambassadors like high school link crew

#3 Faculty Contact and Outreach
  • Every faculty member e-mails students in his/her class at least once during the quarter
• Teachers call students who stop coming to class (like John Swenson does)

#4 Great Service with a Smile
• More helpful, knowledgeable, and respectful counselors ++
• Always try to improve service for students and staff
• Provide “smile training” for receptionists and staff
• Treating students like customers, not like people waiting to get food stamps
• Help provide privacy to students
• “Comments” hotline or cards
• Consider degrees from major foreign universities (like Stanford does) so that basic classes don’t have to be repeated

#5 Fun!
• Social night on Thursdays (movie nights, club events, dances)
• Have free fun events that are festive in nature with food (like block parties)
• Have days where clubs hold a demonstration or activity in the main quad
• Schedule De Anza Days the first week of the fall quarter
• Have noon time events for fun (once a quarter) where clubs could compete against each other in carnival-type games, like egg toss, sack races, etc.)
• Martial arts demonstration during noon in the quad

#6 Improve Atmosphere
• Better use of existing technologies (internet hook-ups, smart chips on DASB card, wireless access on campus)
• Create more areas around campus with tables and chairs for students to socialize, study, eat outside
• Put signs in the parking lot to number the rows or sections so that it’s easier to find your car
• Being more active and broadcasting/advertising info about campus events
• Make access to financial aid, grants, and stipends easier to locate and understand
• Inspire creativity by decorating different corridors with different themes