QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THAT MATTER

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THE CONNECTIONS CENTER TRAINING FOR NEW STAFF/FACULTY

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• Many students think they are ‘just’ coming to school.

• Often times they don’t know the procedures in place.

(Why something would matter in order for something else to happen)
THE QUESTIONS WE ASK ARE ONLY AS GOOD AS OUR LISTENING SKILLS

• STUDENTS OFTEN DO NOT KNOW WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK BECAUSE THEY DON’T FULLY UNDERSTAND THE PROCESSES. WE LISTEN TO FOCUS INTO THEIR CONCERN.

• SOMETIMES, IN ORDER TO BEST HELP A STUDENT, WE MAY HAVE TO ANSWER THEIR QUESTION WITH ANOTHER QUESTION.
THE QUESTIONS WE ASK ARE KEY

• THE QUESTIONS WE ASK ARE KEY TO CLARIFY WHAT THEY THINK VS WHAT REALLY IS
• NEW STUDENTS COME WITH AN IMAGE OF WHAT THEY THINK IS GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN THEY VISIT US. THIS IMAGE IS BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE OR ON WHAT THEY’VE HEARD FROM OTHERS.

All I did the last time was……

My friend said I just have to…..

This makes sense because I did this before (even if it was in a different school/country) and it worked.

This makes sense because my friend would not lie to me & because I can trust my friend more than someone I just met (Advisor).
SAMPLE SITUATION

• STUDENT:
  • I received an email saying I had to turn in something to financial aid or it would not be approved. Why are they sending this email to me when I already submitted this to them? Does this mean I can’t start classes?

• ADVISOR:
  • What document did they say you had to submit?
    • (There are different documents that affect financial aid)
  • How long ago did you submit this document?
    • (There are deadlines so even if they submitted the document, there may be an issue if it was past the deadline)
  • What department did you submit this to?
    • (Not all of the documents that affect financial aid should be submitted to financial aid)
  • Have you gone by their office since you submitted this to ask them why they emailed you?
    • (Sometimes general emails are sent to all students and may be ignored if the student has already dealt with it but to be safe, if the student has not addressed the issue with that department, perhaps they should start there.)
SAMPLE SITUATION

• STUDENT:
  • I RECEIVED A FINAL GRADE OF AN “N” IN CLASS. WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

• ADVISOR:
  • THIS MEANS YOU COMPLETED THE CLASS BUT WILL HAVE TO REPEAT THE COURSE
  • THIS ALSO MEANS YOU RECEIVED A GRADE THAT WILL NOT PULL YOUR GPA DOWN
  • FINANCIALLY- WHILE THIS DID NOT LOWER YOUR GPA, IT DOES FACTOR IN TO YOUR COMPLETION RATE AND MAY AFFECT THE FUNDING AVAILABLE TO YOU

FOCUSING IN FURTHER:
• THIS MAY BE AN INDICATOR THAT YOU WOULD BENEFIT FROM TUTORING
• HOW DID YOU DO IN YOUR OTHER CLASSES?
• WHAT IS YOUR WORK SCHEDULE LIKE?
• DO YOU HAVE A SET STUDY TIME/PLACE?
• HOW ARE YOU MANAGING YOUR STUDY TIME?

Again, One Student Question
Multiple Responses to Advise After Clarification is Sought
HOW DO WE ANSWER STUDENT INQUIRIES?

WE DON’T HAVE TO KNOW EVERYTHING!

KNOW ENOUGH TO POINT STUDENTS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE PERSON WHO CAN ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS. OFFER TO FIND OUT AND CONTACT THE STUDENT.

THINGS CONSTANTLY CHANGE

CONSTANTLY LEARN THE MOST ABOUT EVERY DEPARTMENT AND THEIR PROCESS AS IT AFFECTS OUR STUDENTS.

GIVE SPECIFICS IF YOU CAN

GIVE COMPLETE RESPONSES (NOT PARTIAL ONES: FOR EXAMPLE, IF SOMETHING IS A TWO PART PROCESS EXPLAIN IT ALL AND NOT JUST THE FIRST STEP)

WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING STUDENTS A DEFINITIVE ANSWER ON SOMETHING WE DON’T KNOW, WE ARE GAMBLING & RUN GREAT RISKS FOR THE STUDENT & OURSELVES! (EXAMPLE)
BODY LANGUAGE

- Smile
- Give them full attention (don’t be distracted by your phone, watch, etc)
- Uncross your arms
- Move/clear any objects between yourself and the student
- Set your personal mood/feelings aside
- Be mindful of your facial expressions

*Remember, no one will ask you a question if your body language says “go away” “I’m not interested” “you’re bothering me”
WHAT CAN I DO?

• DO I NEED TO PRACTICE LISTENING?
• DO I NEED TO BE MORE APPROACHABLE?
• AM I AWARE OF DIFFERENT PROCESSES TO BETTER ANSWER STUDENT QUESTIONS?
• WHAT DOES MY BODY LANGUAGE SAY TO OTHERS?
• DO I KNOW WHERE TO FIND ANSWERS WHEN I NEED THEM?