

Project 5: PSEO - Process and Policy Evaluation Improvement

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Team Charge: Survey and analyze current admission practices, program practices, and campus policies for students enrolled in PSEO across the system. Provide policy recommendations

Overview: Our action learning group wanted our project to produce information that would be useful for both system office employees concerned with policies and practices as well as to PSEO coordinators at the individual colleges and universities. We designed a survey and distributed it to all campuses, asking that the coordinator for the school's program respond for the school. The results were presented and discussed at the PSEO Annual Conference.

Survey: The survey was distributed electronically by Jessica Espinosa to her list of campus PSEO Coordinators. The response rate was very high, with responses to quantitative and qualitative questions being anonymously completed by 32 individuals (representing 12 metro area and 20 outstate programs). 85% of respondents expressed satisfaction with their current PSEO program. Topics of interest that emerged from the results included: performance indicators (what makes a program successful or not); communication and relationship with high schools; support provided to PSEO students; and eligibility requirements and access. Copies of the survey results are available by contacting Jessica Espinosa.

Presentation: The survey results were analyzed and shared with the project sponsors. It was important to our group for our results to be useful, so we agreed early on with our project sponsors that the results would be shared at the PSEO Annual Conference held at North Hennepin Community College on June 8, 2016. Many of the attendees at this conference were the PSEO Program Coordinators who were the respondents to the survey. Despite our team charge to provide policy recommendations, our group preferred an action learning approach, presenting our results as questions for discussion among the experts in the room. The conference was organized around this approach, such that the survey results were presented first, and then conference attendees divided into groups to discuss the results, the questions raised, and their implications for policy and practice.

What we learned: Despite losing two team members to jobs outside of MnSCU (including our coach at the beginning of the academic year), we found the process to be very satisfying and are pleased with what we accomplished. We will elaborate on the following, but our group and individual take-aways from this process include:

- the importance of “backing up” and identifying/checking assumptions: the culture of questioning allows for opportunities to explore when we are making assumptions.
- the usefulness of checking in with each other and then checking out at the beginning and end of meetings: this is a simple technique that can build group cohesiveness.
- group dynamics that lead to a feeling of a safe space: a group constructed without power differences (and local politics) made for a harmonious, well-functioning group
- respecting differences/appreciating strengths: like all groups, each individual had particular strengths that could be called on at different points in our process.