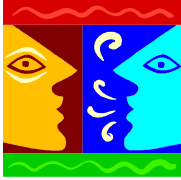## AFRICAN AMERICAN FOCUS GROUP PROJECT

Anderson Conference
January 27, 2012

Sylvania Diversity Council: Research & Assessment Committee

Portland Demographics

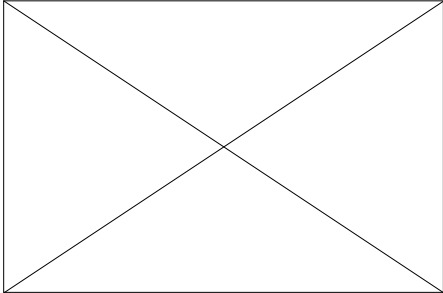|	White	Hispanic /Latino	Asian	Black/ African Am	Native/ Am Indian	Pacific Islander	Other
2010 Census	73.9	8.8	7.8	7.8	2.8	0.6	3
PCC Districtwide	69.7	9.5	7	6.2	1.3	0.5	3
PCC Sylvania	72.9	1.8	6.6	4.5	1.3	0.4	2.9

Campus Climate

- Campus climate is more than just *numbers* of students/faculty/staff of color
  - Experiences of individuals or groups on campus
  - Captures the quality of interactions between various groups or individuals
  - Inclusion
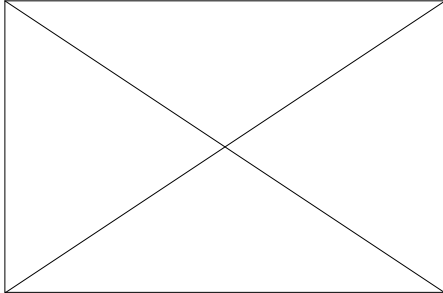

Research on African American Student Experience

- Compared to white students, African American students:
  - Bear more risk factors (i.e., attend PT, work FT, are parents, lack financial support) (Green, 2008)
  - Are less likely to transfer to 4-year institutions (Lewis & Middleton, 2003)
  - Enter college from high school less academically prepared (Cabrera et al.,1999)
  - Have lower GPAs and are less likely to pass courses (Green, 2008)

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Poll: I know the difference between quantitati...

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Poll: Depending on the research question, I se...

Sylvania African American Focus Group Project

- *What do African-American students need from PCC Sylvania to be successful in college?*
- Four major question areas arranged around areas of student expectations:
  - Experiences with instructors and students
  - Student services
  - Cultural awareness
  - Advice for other students

- Targeted recruitment to **credit-seeking** students taking classes **on campus**
  - Varied tenure
  - 3 focus groups

Analysis

- Transcripts analyzed for major themes using qualitative software NVivo9
  - Codes were calibrated
  - Cohen's Kappa coefficient (K) scores and Pearson correlation coefficient ($\underline{r}$) scores utilized to assess the similarity of coding between raters
  - Cluster analysis using the Pearson correlation coefficient to examine codes co-occurring codes

Themes

- **Impressions of College Personnel**
- Differences between PCC Campuses
- Definitions of Diversity
- Student Expectations
- Information Gathering
- **The Classroom Experience**

- **Course Design & Delivery Preferences**
- Student Connections
- Time
- Student Services
- Strategies for Getting Needs Met
- Suggestions & Action Items

Theme 1:
Impressions of College Personnel

> *"They paid attention to me. They know I exist."*

- **Positive authenticity = positive outcomes**
  - Instructors investing time and effort into student learning
  - They "…understand your background [which] helps you achieve your goals"
  - Making efforts to know students' names
  - Instructor willingness to show flexibility to meet student needs
- **Negative authenticity = negative outcomes**
  - Students are not a priority
  - A sense that students cannot be trusted
  - "…they think they're doing you a favor by helping you"

Theme 6:
The Classroom Experience

> *The teacher is just looking around waiting for them to stop talking. Tell them to stop talking and move on!*

> *Not only am I an African American male, but I'm pretty big. A lot of my instructors, when I ask a question, are intimidated. I guess they think I'm going to go crazy.*

- Focused on experiences within the classroom
  - 2:1 Negative to Positive
  - Codes for characteristics of instructors and interactions with peers were both closely related
- Key sub-themes:
  - Student expectations of instructors
  - Perceptions of how participants are viewed by others
  - Exclusion
  - Communication

Theme 7:
Course Design & Delivery Preferences

> *… I'm not successful as a student here because I'm spending more time trying to figure out what the teacher wants.*

- Clear preferences for the way that instructors designed courses and delivered curriculum
  - Dialogue and discussion of course topics
  - Connecting material to real life (putting it in context)
  - Specificity and clarity around expectations
  - Use of technical writing skills for all instructors
  - Understanding students' lives
  - Remembering that students have not taken the class before
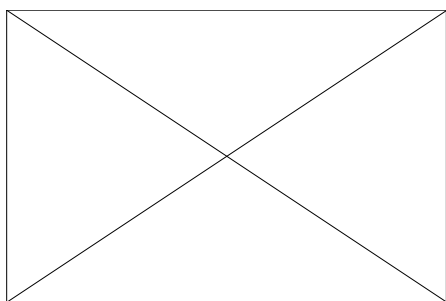
Recommendations

- 16 recommendations
  - Student services, administration, and faculty
  - Tasks to continue, increase, and initiate
- Student suggestions and action items
  - Advice for other students
  - Impromptu suggestions in dialogue

Your Impact

- Average student spends…
  - **9 hours** per week in your classrooms
  - **½ hour** per week with other college staff/personnel
- Who has more opportunity for influence?

- How does the information you learned to today change what you do in the classroom?

Strategies for Improving the Classroom Environment

Poll: Strategies to improve the classroom envi…

Questions and Discussion

Resources

- Diversity Councils: http://www.pcc.edu/about/diversity/
- Multicultural Centers: http://www.pcc.edu/resources/culture/
- Women's Resource Centers: http://www.pcc.edu/resources/women/
- Division Deans: http://www.pcc.edu/ir/OrgChart/
- Critical friends groups (organized out of TLC): http://www.pcc.edu/resources/tlc/
- Office of Affirmative Action & Equity: http://www.pcc.edu/about/affirmative-action/

Presenter Contact Information

- For a copy of the Focus Group Report or for more information, feel free to contact:
  - Karen Paez – karen.paez@pcc.edu, x4119
  - Katy Ho – kho@pcc.edu, x4191
  - Heather Guevara – heather.guevara@pcc.edu, x8099