

Listening to Students

California State University, Sacramento

Problem or challenge faced: While diversity is a wonderful gift to college learning and campus life, it also poses a real challenge to all institutions in terms of full awareness of the specific life-circumstances and educational needs of students of different academic, racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds; financial, family, and citizen status; and age, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and more. We strive for every student's success. We know how much students stand to gain for themselves, their families, and their future generations with that college degree, and we know how much our communities and country stand to gain, as well. But we may not always know how best to serve our many different students in our classrooms or across our desks or counters, especially those most in-need and at-risk in their education.

Description of the intervention/solution: Listening to Students is work done at California State University, Sacramento and Sierra Community College in Rocklin, California, that is meant to inform and inspire those in higher education and foster greater awareness and advocacy for all students, and especially those most at risk and in need in academia.

One of the best ways to learn about the different types of students that you teach or work with is to just ask. Accordingly, students were invited to take a survey asking them to share their thoughts and feelings regarding their education. Hundreds of student responses were received and then categorized into sections that include: Students of different grade levels, ages, cultural backgrounds, disabilities, and more. Each of these sections contains: (1) the stated perspectives of that type of student, (2) information and suggestions for faculty and staff to better work with or teach that type of student, and (3) a list of applicable campus services for that student group. One section per week was shared with the campus. All of the sections may be seen at the website, and there you will see the power of student voices and potential value of this project to an institution.

Keywords: Student Success, Diversity and Inclusion, Teaching and Training

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Further Information: www.csus.edu/saseep/listeningtostudents.html.