

## **Category One – Helping Students Learn**

### *Summary of Themes:*

*Question 1 – In regard to student learning, what do we do now? What do we need to do? What do we want to do?*

Instruction at RRCC, rather than learning, was characterized as hands-on, experiential, and inviting. Tutoring was seen as a major concern and area for expansion. Likewise, scheduling and class offerings that met student needs were a major theme. Another theme concerned the quality of facilities. There was an acknowledgement of the importance of student support and learning life skills. There was also a concern for maintaining standards.

*Question 2 - What In regard to student retention and completion, what do we do now? What do we need to do? What do we want to do?*

Advising and student academic planning are viewed as central. Program review that determines whether our expectations for students are reasonable, both in terms of our current curriculum, job markets, and four-year transfer, is another major theme. Respondents also raised the question if students knew and planned for expectations realistically. Connection with individual students, and frequency of contact, were felt to be critical. Although there was some recognition that classroom instruction played a role in retention and completion, most respondents associated the area with student support services or as an administrative responsibility.

*Question 3 - What In regard to assessment of student learning and outcomes, what do we do now? What do we need to do? What do we want to do?*

About 25% of the respondents said they didn't know what assessment was or left this question blank. Another 25% associated assessment with the classroom and grading. The other responses ranged from observing a need for this information to suggestions of various methodologies such as rubrics, and how assessment of student learning might improve curriculum and instruction.

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### **Representative thematic responses**

*Question 1 – In regard to student learning, what do we do now? What do we need to do? What do we want to do?*

1. Excellent instructors
2. Instruction that is “hands on” and enjoyable with many opportunities for students to learn with real world experiences.
3. We help and support for students with all learning needs
4. More tutoring time needed
5. Need more opportunity and training for how to do active/experiential learning well.
6. Engage students where they are and challenge them to expand their learning through more expanded educational offerings - cross cultural learning, service trips, cross academic pathways, credit for prior learning and work experience.
7. Need to provide students a comfortable learning environment
8. I feel that our students are way ahead of us in IT areas. So what we need to find a way to prepare ourselves for this. I , for example, just learned about the urban dictionary today (from a student).

9. We offer a great range of courses for students. We want to make it easier/more straight forward for students to identify what is required of them to complete a degree or certificate. We need to do more specialized advising with students.
10. Make classes fun help students think outside the box.
11. We need to engage with the community to find out what training and development students need to enter the workforce. We also need to prepare students to be citizens of their communities by instilling in them a sense of civic engagement, an understanding of diversity and intercultural communication, and critical thinking skills in order for them to navigate the world.
12. Student learning is diverse. We need to offer different formats of classes and have various ways to present materials. Technology should be used as a tool but not a substitute for presentation.
13. Online classes are great but could be cheaper.
14. Student learning includes many facets inside and outside of class. If we strive to meet their needs both in and out of class then we will see higher rates of learning and more success.
15. Confirm learning outcomes align with career and industry needs
16. Don't trade rigor for retention. We do our students no favors if we coddle them. They need to be learning workplace skills and college level content in our courses.
17. Provide opportunities for students with all types of learning styles and learning strengths to succeed. Encourage collaboration and a mentoring program for people to share strategies that have proven successful.
18. Student learning should be at the heart of all decision making at the institution, keeping in mind that all we do is in the service of learning.
19. Consider implementing midterm grades so students know where they stand in their courses early. It would also help inform an early alert/intervention system.
20. Move faculty offices into a remodeled learning commons (D.U. English faculty as a model). A student could then meet with their instructor and find the appropriate service in one stop. Ensure faculty are holding appropriate office hours and are available to help students.
21. The question for me is how to better engage students that seem to be their own worst enemy. The successful students in my classes build a cohort as they go through the calculus series so helping create those might be useful.
22. Utilize real life equipment and circumstances in course work.
23. My students need refresher training on studying best practices and test-taking tips and how to reduce anxiety.
24. I think that we should take a closer look at instructors. I personally took a remedial math course online. It consisted of tests on my math lab. No homework, nothing other than tests. I learned nothing, the instructor did nothing for the course. I could have saved myself the money and just purchased mymathlab and done all of the course work alone.
25. Need outreach to schools
26. It is very important that they learn how to think critically, write ethically, avoid cheating, learn from other cultures via the study abroad programs, develop talents via the arts, and learn useful skills for the workforce.
27. It's a hard balance sometimes between holding students accountable for their learning and being flexible because of student's life issues. I think there has to be understanding that when you are an open enrollment college and teach a rigorous class, you may not have an optimal rate of student success.
28. keeping class size down for a more easy access for student to teacher to gain a grasp on subjects
29. The key to enabling student learning is recognizing the level of knowledge the student currently has, finding out in what method of learning the student performs best, and supporting the

student in reaching their learning goals using what is known about their knowledge level and learning method.

30. The quality control for measuring how much students are learning in each class is not as good as it could be.
31. Student learning encompasses a broad range of skills and competencies. I am so glad to know that RRCC is developing core competencies and support their full implementation. I also believe that we need to be reminded that learning goes on throughout the campus. It is not strictly an objective of "instruction."
32. longer open hours in the library and other study areas
33. Continue to encourage faculty to monitor trends and try new techniques in the classroom. Broaden the definition of "classroom." Provide professional development opportunities for faculty. Many are subject matter experts but may have never taken a training class on how to teach. Focus some training on how to reach new generations without sacrificing academic integrity.
34. I believe experiential learning is most effective--students attain and retain more when learning is relevant and hands-on. Having majored in mass communication, I appreciated having two internships--both on campus and off campus, which helped me apply my knowledge and also allowed me to put items in my portfolio.
35. I would love to see harsher prerequisites for certain classes. Though I am aware of the fact that we have a "common" CCCS criteria, but we also have a transfer agreements with CSM. We need to implement higher standards.
36. We have great faculty and staff but we need to be more organized to document that we are making a difference in a macro level, at the college or department level. Faculty tend to see this as threatening their independence and academic freedom. If we cannot show well we do we can't defend ourselves from criticism from the outside or identify legitimate areas of concern on the inside.
37. To support 21st century students, we need learning environments that foster student-centered, technology-literate, critical thinkers for increasingly complex problems in society. Classrooms should enable more student-student interaction, and should be connected to the broader community. Students learning should be relevant to today (and tomorrow's) problems.
38. Content needs to be coupled with knowledge acquisition and retention skills.
39. Add a D2L tutoring component (or tab) to the content bar. Link it to web sites such as Kahn Academy or iTunes U. Link to You Tube for classes like Basic Electrical, Theater, or PE.
40. Further enhance student learning with co-curricular programs, i.e. global study abroad, service learning, more idea labs, STEM & STEM labs. Faculty development community groups.
41. Students' learn when they are excited about their future. They learn best when they are actively involved in their education and believe RRCC is going to get them where they want to go.
42. They learn when they feel supported and valued in their classes, on campus jobs, as vents and when their opinions are listened to.
43. Staying consistent with best practices and industry standards. More innovative learning environments.
44. More diverse curricula, and continue to seek out diverse faculty
45. More collaboration with others academic programs that instructor's team teach.
46. Options for morning, day, evening and online courses. Study areas around campus tutoring in all subjects. Mental health counselors.
47. Online paired with hands-on skills training
48. Comfortable, inviting study zones

49. Opportunities for in-class, online and hybrid make it easier for students' to find a work/school balance.
50. I think this should be more engaging. An instructor should never read from the Power Point.  
More cross- discipline interaction would be beneficial
51. Give faculty time to do more research and prep to make classes up to date and relevant. Let students' know we do care and are concerned that they succeed.
52. Offer more non-traditional/ non-credit courses
53. Please give students more of these things...
  - a. Variable class times (more evening/weekend classes)
  - b. More, "trade" classes (Pharmacy tech, dental hygiene, welding, etc.)
  - c. Language options (Japanese, Chinese, Arabic)
  - d. More activities for students promoted by teachers
  - e. More job fairs and counseling that is REQUIRED for students who don't know the current job market
54. Computer access to the NFPA for fire and emergency. We had a set at the library. If it's in storage, let's bring it out and update it.
55. Keep instructors current in their teaching field and bring the outside world into the classroom.
56. We teach a variety of strategies; lecture, whole group discussion, small group activities and experiential learning.
57. My students are engaged and learning. I do worry about increasing distractions with technology in the classroom.
58. Need to provide more support for universal design approach to instruction.
59. Need better, more consistent networking service to D2L (Less crashes)
60. We are great at providing resources for typical 9-5 daytime students but neglect our evening/weekend/online students. If we are truly a community college we should offer the same services to all students.
61. being an evening student here as well as an employee, I still don't understand why there is not some sort of food option for evening and weekend students. I see many of them on break looking for something in a vending machine, which is not always the healthiest options to support the brain and body for learning.
62. Learning/ teaching that prepares students for a quality 4yr college as well as beyond into a career.
63. Some classes REQUIRE software programs that are NOT loaded on library/accessible computers on campus. This is a real issue for those who cannot afford a laptop/software yet are required for our class work. this SEVERELY INHIBITS LEARNING.
64. Create a sense of community within the college to facilitate collaborative learning.
65. As a student, we learn various skills to help us succeed inside and outside the classrooms.
66. What needs to happen: We should have a place for students to learn about financial decisions they will have to make. Educate them not only about student loans, but educate them on banking (i.e. checking accounts, credit vs. debit cards, credit scores, collections and investment) real world education.
67. Too much student learning is focused on memorization and application. There should be a shift towards higher cognitive skills like evaluation, analysis, and synthesis. This idea should be communicated to the student, not only by the faculty, but by advising and marketing as well.
68. What we do well is affordable, fairly personalized education with small classes and good instructors.

69. What we need to do is focus on the basics first. Board space, tables and enough chairs. Have a space that makes people want to show up. (Annex : ) Then we can talk about higher level issues.
70. Need more feedback with students to find out what they need. Ask 4 year schools and employers how well prepared our students are
71. -Cross learning- emphasis how, "academic subjects" effect, "technical" classes and vice versa.
72. Require a, "computer literacy" class. Many students don't know how to use word, excel etc.

*Question 2 - What In regard to student retention and completion, what do we do now? What do we need to do? What do we want to do?*

1. Allow each department a budget for their own recruitment
2. I think a big problem with retention and completion is students' outside lives interfering and needing outside resources. I think our campus does a good job of connecting students, which helps.
3. We need to accelerate their learning by increasing their course loads so they finish their degrees sooner.....7 to 8 years is too long of time for them to complete a degree....too many life distractions can occur.
4. We also need to seriously look into credit for prior learning and life experiences.
5. Provide student access to professors
6. Specialized advising helps greatly with completion and retention. We want to have students feel more involved on courses. We should try to foster student involvement in school and programs which will aid in retention and completion.
7. We need to retain them for our college to thrive, but we do not want to lower our standards just to retain students that are not serious about their education. I think our college has some very good services for our students. However, the issue is getting that information to the students. It would be an interesting idea to require some form of orientation for them to let them know of all services available.
8. Assign students a councilor that will work with them.
9. We offer mentoring programs, a top-notch advising team, and support services. We want to make sure every student has the tools and resources they need to accomplish their goals at RRCC. We need to use data to determine where there might be drop-off points and develop strategies to address any barriers students are encountering. We also need to find a way to address discrepancies in our data systems (i.e. students with the incorrect degree program listed so that it isn't accurate and affects our retention/graduation rates).
10. Students need active ongoing advising. An early warning system for students of all levels and not just remedial.
11. By helping students learn, recognizing mental health issues, and reducing the stigma we will retain more students.
12. Retention at RRCC is phenomenal; what we need to work on is completion. Students routinely come to me saying they have been at Red Rocks for 7-10 years. How are we working to help students achieve? Goal setting is great, but can we coach students through their campus interactions to maintain and accomplish said goals? I see a lot of Let's help first years get into college, but what then? Maybe we could work on achievement coaching and how to make life transitions--especially for those students who form systemic dependencies on the college.
13. Is not being tracked
14. Students need to be engaged and have success in their classes to retain them at the college.

15. Many factors outside of class play a role in student retention. Advising students of the factors and meeting those needs will mean higher rates of retention.
16. Require students' complete career assessments when they are not able to determine focus of certificate/degree of study. All students must be on plan.
17. Students who are encouraged and understand the resources available to them are going to be retained and are going to succeed towards completion. Providing students a place to engage with those who have common goals and network with those who have been in their shoes before can show them the keys to success.
18. Make sure students have the proper prerequisites and make sure that expectations in a particular class are clearly laid out.
19. Follow up calls and more direct contact with the student towards the end of the semester.
20. Evaluate the effectiveness of new student orientation. Are students getting the information they need up front in order to be successful, persist, and complete in a timely manner?
21. Can our degrees be completed in two years or are there "hidden" pre-reqs that extend the time to completion?
22. Consider mandatory advising for all first-time full-time students.
23. Connecting with students individually helps them feel like they are connected to the campus and are more likely to be retained. Without that connection they disappear. This can be accomplished through faculty connections or peer connections with clubs. Students don't live on campus so it is more difficult to get them connected so faculty outreach is even more important.
24. Focus on getting students aware of the resources that already exist for them. Train faculty on what to do to intervene when students aren't doing well. Give students as much individual attention as we can, maybe sending out personal e-mails from advising under certain conditions to follow up? Give students a faculty advisor to meet one on one with? Obviously we can't do this with every student, but we might be able to target certain populations.
25. Develop short pathways for students to gain employment, and/or have businesses share the costs of education
26. Some way to track students on a voluntary basis and maybe connect those interested with recent graduates or active student mentors who have gone through the same classes.
27. Retention is contingent on proper placement in classes. If students get into a class they're not prepared for, they likely won't complete or won't do well.
28. I think sometimes scheduling is an issue with student retention and completion. Often our schedules are built to be faculty-friendly rather than student-friendly. Sometimes students have trouble continuing in or completing a program due to limited schedule options and conflicts with work or other things in their lives...
29. There should be a range of services to help students work through their issues outside the classroom. I appreciate that RRCC offers mental health care to students. We need more support for students who are victims of sexual assault, student housing assistance, and other types of student financial aid and planning.
30. Sore spot for me. Students know that if they all 60 credits required to graduate at RRCC that even though all 60 credit will \*transfer\* to a 4 year school, not all 60 credits \*will apply to their degree\* so many times they only take the 50 or so credits that \*will apply to their degree\* and forego graduation. RRCC gets dinged for that.
31. A bright spot is reverse graduation but I believe the student has to ask to have that done. If a student takes, for example, 50 credits at RRCC, if they take 10 credits at a four year school then they should automatically be reverse transferred to RRCC for a 2 year associates degree \*without\* the student needing to ask.

32. customer services, better communication, quick respond to students' inquiries, respect and educate
33. We need to first give students fewer choices and a plan of study to follow so they aren't overwhelmed and have a clear direction. We need to have the resources to follow up with students at particularly vulnerable touch points. Encourage students to register early; faculty can really help with this
34. Students need to be able to get into classes that are required in order to complete their degrees in a timely manner. Ad Astra should help with scheduling and hopefully this won't be an issue in the near future. If key classes are canceled, students need to be allowed to take the course through independent study. Degrees with Designation should help with retention. Also, advising is necessary to help students who may not know that they have enough credits to have earned a certificate or degree. Maybe mandatory advising is order, especially when students plan to transfer.
35. Should be the problem to solve for the administration. Faculty members should concentrate on providing a superior instruction to our students, and the administration has to help with retention and completion.
36. Expanding inclusion and diversity activities ensures that student feel they have a place at RRCC. This is why our I&D office is growing and constantly training to better serve students as individuals.
37. Engaged students in the classroom (with student-centered pedagogies) with the support, resources, financial ability to complete a program, certificate or degree. Students should be able to follow guided pathways with advising, learning support and co-curriculars built in to pathways. More structure eliminates lost time and tuition on random course-taking. Pathways should lead to meaningful destinations (transfer, workforce, stackable certificate, etc.)
38. I don't care. Knowledge acquisition should be al a carte. Pick and choose. Take it or leave it. But everything that RRCC makes available should be rigorous and of the best quality possible. If that means cutting programs to divert funds to properly support other areas, then that's what should be done.
39. Scholarships and affordability
40. I think that we should encourage more involvement in clubs and activities could help retain more students.
41. Exciting new programs including bachelor and master's programs
42. More work needs to be done with the students' who just disappear midway through the semester.
43. But it would be great to be able to teach student retention and completion from semester to semester in a given discipline.
44. We need to show students that it's more advantageous to attend our college rather than a four year or competitor college (Cheaper, better recognized, better programs).
45. The large amount of adjunct instructors really cuts down on a student's feeling connected because the instructor isn't connected.
46. Communication more directly and more frequently with students
47. Keep students but showing them success along the way. If we can give students a taste of success, they will likely build confidence to do better in the long term. Achieve this by using different assignments and techniques in class.
48. More experiential learning= higher success and completion rates.
49. A more structured sequence would help and there should be more understanding of why students drop out -- whether for academic or non-academic issues, and what can be implemented to support students in completing.

50. I believe strongly in the ability of cohort models to influence retention and completion for students. By connecting students with each other and providing resources and intervention we can give students the tools that they need to be successful.
51. I think we are too focused on the FTE and not focused enough on retention and completion. Instead of enrolling students late after school has started to increase FTE maybe we should spend more of our time and energy on students who are motivated and want to be here and are prepared for school.
52. Anything we can do to support students in these areas help. For instance, the grant the child care center received that offered students a 15% discount on services made a HUGE difference in several of my student's lives. We need more grants/programs like this....
53. Help students find a direction early in their education. Have it mandatory that all new students meet with an adviser- high school graduates. Students who have met with an adviser seem to have more sense of direction when it comes to their academic plan.
54. Faculty need more time to focus on students. Less administrative work, lighter teaching load would allow faculty to do their jobs more efficiently.
55. This is a good and bad thing. For example, say a student takes a few mechanical trade classes and gets a really good job and never comes back. One one hand, they have a successful career. On the other, they never come back.
56. Need to track students better (academic and individual departments that facilitate their own advising.) Form data base to track where students currently are in their degree path.
57. Provide multiple checkpoints to enhance success i.e certificates that stack on degrees or touch points/ ways to connect to lead faculty, advisers, etc.
58. A student's first semester is critical. Something needs to happen to ensure student engagement. Involvement and knowing where to go for assistance is essential!
59. Support faculty to personalize student advising and follow up in our courses (at least recognize that part of the teaching process)
60. Helping students find jobs AND partnering with businesses that will continue to send their employees RRCC for additional training seems like a great way to encourage completion and retain students even after they graduate
61. First semester students should be strongly advised to: join a club, get a work-study, find an adviser/mentor, build a relationship
62. Empowering students to learn at their own pace, where possible, is vital
63. Consider non-credit options- just not RMEC

*Question 3 - What In regard to assessment of student learning and outcomes, what do we do now? What do we need to do? What do we want to do?*

1. There are many different ways to assess knowledge and we need to be open to the different ways a student can show what they have learned
2. There should be cross-discipline discussion so that all needs are met.
3. We need to create holistic learners.....not just their academics but also them as critical thinkers, community involvement, good citizens.
4. Focus on what students are telling us concerning their own educational objectives.
5. I think assessments should include a variety of modalities. I assess my classes often throughout the course of a semester.
6. Good assessment is necessary, however, too much assessment takes away from the real work of learning and teaching.

7. We use grades and degree checks to see where students are in their course of study. We want to get a more holistic perspective of student learning. We need to develop assessment strategies or evaluate if and how students are achieving the common learning outcomes of the college.
8. Various and thorough assessments must be used for our students. Rubric training would be helpful for instructors.
9. Resources such as TAs would be very helpful in assessing student performance more frequently. We could turn to online programs but that increases the financial burden on students.
10. We should strive to keep high standards so that if your students transfer to other schools they show up well prepared. So our expectations for our students should be clear. Tests should be at least somewhat standardized and centered around state curriculum guides.
11. Continue to provide a variety of methods to assess student performance, while also assessing our assessment processes in order to improve. Be open to new assessment methods and encourage faculty to explore.
12. Provide up to date information on how to track performance and ways to lead to improve student performance.
13. We need an encouraging way to provide student performance actions that can assist improvement.
14. The grade a student receives in a class should reflect the student performance. However, I understand that is not always true in every academic area. Assessment of student learning and deciding how to grade that progress is an on-going issue.
15. Assessment of student performance has to meet mandated college standards but should also depend on the individual progress of the student. A student who has gone from a second-grade level to twelfth-grade level has made great progress even if the student isn't yet at a college level.
16. There is no consistency in how we measure how much are students are learning.
17. Let the faculty handle it.
18. A wide variety of assessments will give a better view of student competencies. This is especially important for Student with Disabilities who may not perform well on traditional tests but will shine if given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the knowledge/skills in an alternate way.
19. Relate these to what industry and workforce are asking for - teamwork, collaboration, creative problem-solving, communication, interpersonal skills. Need more out-of-box thinking here like portfolios, competency badges, co-created with students.
20. Deans need to be more involved with adjuncts to ensure educational goals are being met. They need to schedule regular visits to the classrooms to see first hand what the environment there looks like. Do students do class evals at the end? What is done with this information? Is it being used to improve the academic experience? Is it being ignored? Do adjuncts get feedback so they can improve?
21. Portfolio to show mastery in subject matter.
22. Not important to me!
23. Assess students at beginning, middle and end of their enrollment.
24. See where the student ends up after completing a program and use that information to inform our career services department so they can encourage students away from money wasting programs that don't get them jobs.
25. Assessment through not only testing, but other forms such as projects and service learning.
26. Must complete a freshman orientation, assign students an adviser, have advisers meet with faculty members to determine the best classes for students

27. faculty and advisers need a closer relationship, change the add/drop date, It's TOO LATE in the semester
28. Beside individual instructional classes assessing student learning, there isn't much else that assesses learning.
29. Cohort models (previously mentioned) offer a great format for assessment of student performance. by tracking the impact of targeted intervention, we can collect valuable data on efficiency. This data can be used in data driven discussions.
30. We need better tracking of transfer out students. Transfers to 4 years are a success but aren't tracked well enough to prove so.
31. Variety of assessment tools needed to engage all learning styles.
32. Tracking students as they move from easier to more difficult levels of coursework has been helpful in my area. Faculty often have great ideas for assessment, but need the help IR- expand this office and give faculty more access to it!
33. Continue to work with students throughout their degree path to ensure they stay on course
34. Good assessment looks at a wide variety of student performance, including personal growth, academic progress, behavioral competencies, willingness/ability to help others and give back to the college/community.
35. Use understanding of adult learning theory
36. I think RRCC's instructors do a great job already at assessment. My only concern is how specific pathways and prerequisites are structured. For instance, a student who CAN enroll in calculus CANNOT enroll in trigonometry without first taking algebra? doesn't exactly set one up for success in calculus, if the student needs to brush up on trigonometry. Many examples like this exist, how can this be fixed?
37. Publish more information on how RRCC students compare to their peers nationally and locally
38. We should use any assessment to measure the quality of our curriculum, not just the students.
39. We need qualitative and quantitative data- just looking at grades is not enough. student exit interviews on how they thought they did?
40. We are lacking a scientific way of assessing student performance of higher cognitive skills (e.g analysis and synthesis) that could be applied to every course as a pre and post test. We have these tests that assesses student performance on concepts and facts, but not skills. The latter is much more useful for workplace success
41. Capstone classes required for each discipline that draws from all classes required for degree-student portfolio
42. What is the purpose of assessment? What are the criteria for good performance. Is it doing well on tests? Or doing well in real life?
43. I think assessment should focus primarily on student SATISFACTION rather than performance; "How well do you feel you understand the information"
44. Academic rigor needs to be a focus.
45. Assessment beyond testing can be more telling of what a student has learned and gained from their education. Assessments of jobs, income, promotion at 3, 5, 7, and 10 years post RRCC would be a good way to assess student performance