

Credit Student Success Framework (CSSF)

Focus Group Final Report

– Part II Micro

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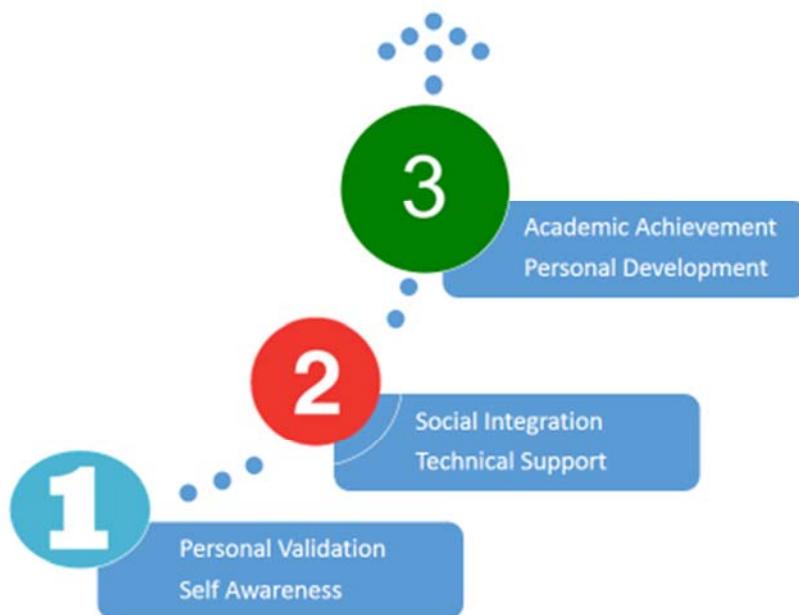
Highlights from the Focus Groups

- *President Mellow's commencement speech was so beautiful that I decided to come to LaGuardia.*
- *I like to come to school. I think that says a lot about LaGuardia. It is a community.*
- *My previous college doesn't provide those fairs. I feel more integrated here.*

Purpose of this study

To understand student perspective and experience of academic (i.e., academic path, measuring progress, learning support) and non-academic support services (i.e., support communities, college feasibility, career services) at LaGuardia Community College. More specifically, what and how students perceive, feel and think about their experience at the college through multiple lenses. The final report consists of two parts: Part I presents student experience at the micro level and Part II synthesizes student's perception of their college life at the macro level.

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Sampling: We used non-stratified random sampling with conditions specified by group needs. 600 students were selected from the current actively registered student pool, with 100 students per group. More specifically, we overweighed students with personal email address in the database. No additional condition for Group 1-Academic Path; overweighed students with a community visit record for Group 2-Support Communities: overweighed students attended First Year Seminar (as a proxy for using E-portfolio) for Group 3-Measuring Progress;

overweighed students with a Financial Aid visit record for Group 4-College Feasibility; overweighed students with a Career Development Office and Transfer office visit record for Group 5-Career Services; and overweighed students with a lab visit record Group 6-Learning Support.

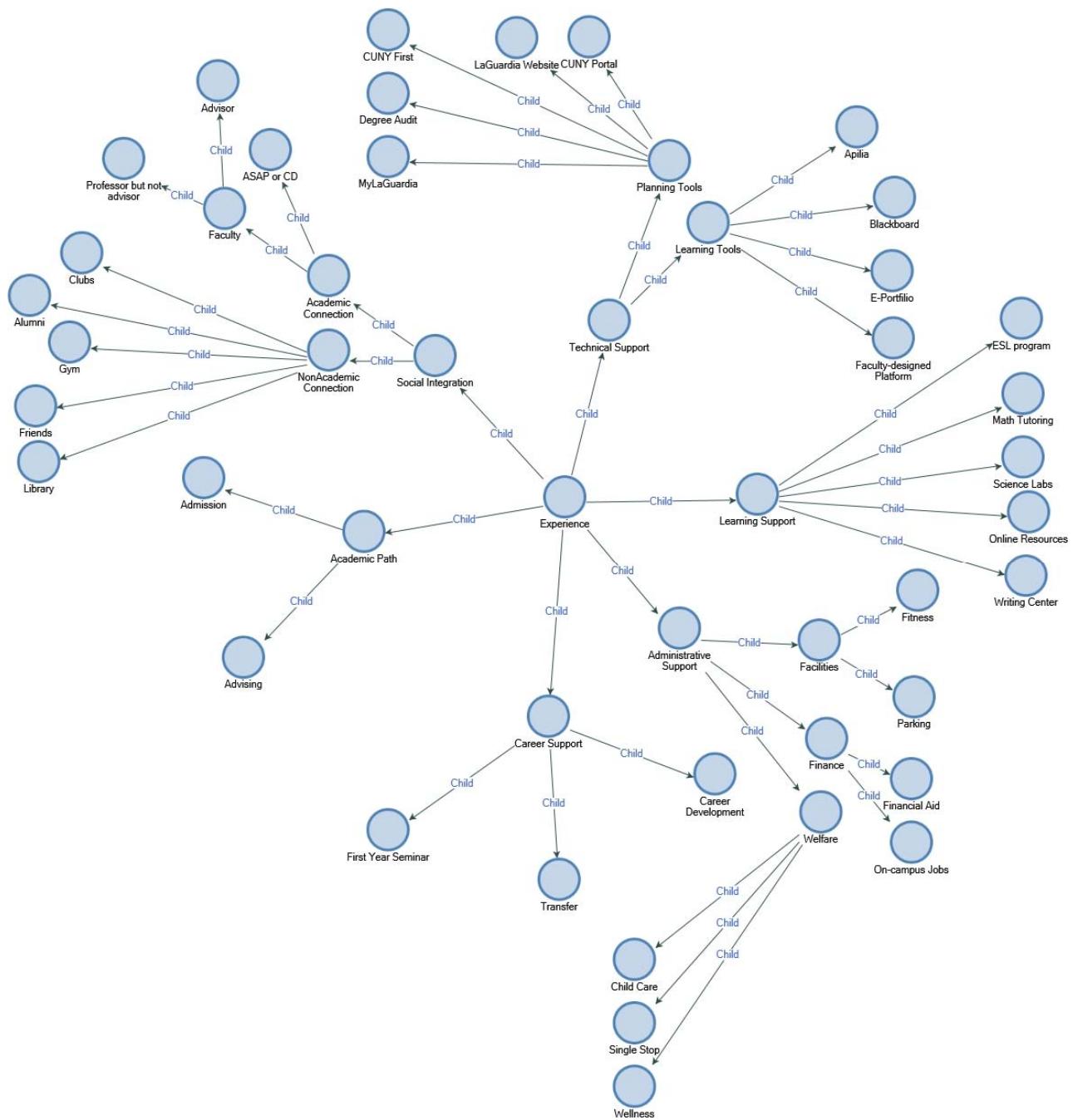
Recruiting: We provided the sample list to the street team. Students in the street team emailed students and followed up with phone calls.

Organization: From October 18 to November 3, we have organized ten focus group sessions with a total attendance of 36 students. Due to low attendance, we had to reschedule sessions for several times. The ten focus group sessions cover all six group themes, with a particular focus on how students keep their ***momentum*** going towards their academic goals, what sources and services related to that specific group theme has helped them, and what slowed them down. All sessions were recorded and transcribed.

Student Profile: The 36 participants come from a wide range of academic backgrounds: Biology, Business Administration, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Fine Arts, Liberal Arts: Childhood Education, Liberal Arts: Math and Science, Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities, Mechanical Engineering, Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Programming and Systems, Travel, Tourism & Hospitality, Engineering Science, and Undeclared Health: Nursing. Among these students, approximately 50% are male students. 80% of them are attending college full-time and 20% of the participants are freshmen.

Data Analysis: We used NVivo to conduct a full-transcript based analysis by sorting out what student said with the following coding structure.

FOCUS GROUP FINAL REPORT – PART II MICRO



Overview

Overall, students regard LaGuardia as a very good school. They are grateful for the resources the college has already provided, and are proud of being a LaGuardia student. More specifically, students are drawn by LaGuardia's diverse student body and the vibrant atmosphere. Yet, students feel uncomfortable when they encounter problems with disconnected or poorly communicated services, with too much information, and with unclear directions.

Academic Goals

1. Many students have a clear goal before they came to the college. Some students show a strong self-awareness and self-efficacy.

I have three plans for the future. – A Nursing student

I actually want to be an FBI agent as well. I will be transferring to John Jay after I graduate from LaGuardia and do two more years and then my criminal justice teacher told me that after FBI—that I could do three years of policing and then become FBI agent after that. – A Criminal Justice student

I do actually want to become an engineer but I wouldn't like to work for someone else. I would like to do some research and to discover new technologies so that, for example, new technologies that can help the world. – A Mechanical Engineering student

2. Some students identified their real interests after they started the college, and a few of them switched majors.

Last semester I came here and just picked a major. I picked mechanical engineering, because I thought that it sounded cool. I didn't know that it was all math-based. My math is not very good so I switched to liberal arts to find something that works more to my liking.

I switched my major. I used to be in radiology technology and I got a B in English 101. They told me that it's very competitive, so I might not be able to pass the requirements just because I got that one B.

I spoke to an advisor. She recommended that I switch my major because I told her that I wasn't really excited about the math. So she recommended liberal arts to test the waters in a new environment.

3. A few freshmen are still unclear about what they want to do.

I haven't decided yet.

Not actually because I'm just starting. So I think that actually I'm ahead of time for going to the transfer office.

Experience & Outcomes

- a) LaGuardia is a very good school.
 - Students who have friends or family connections with LaGuardia have a strong sense of belonging. One student chose LaGuardia because her husband is a LaGuardia alumnus. Her original plan was to attend a college in the Bronx where she lives. But when she attended her husband's commencement, she was highly motivated by President Mellow's speech and decided to follow in her husband's footstep. She will transfer to another CUNY college for a bachelor's degree and sincerely wishes LaGuardia was a four-year college so that she would not have to go elsewhere.

When I went my husband's graduation day the president of LaGuardia was speaking and her speech was so beautiful. She was praising the fact that LaGuardia has a lot of students that come from different diversities and stuff like that. Yeah, that's why I changed my decision and I came here.

- Students who need help are grateful for the resources and services that the college has generously provided. For example, students who were struggling with math and writing strongly thank the tutoring and writing center; students in science majors thank the labs; students with financial difficulties thank financial aid, Single Stop, Work Study, and on-campus jobs; students with kids thank the day care; and students who live far away thank the parking service.

I had like \$207 dollars left and they will waive the fee if I can't pay it. – A student struggling with crisis

I know the day care is doing well. My son, when he first started day care he didn't say a lot of words, but now he is coming home and he calls me Mama. He calls his father Dada. So I know that he is learning stuff here. – A student with child

They (ASAP) help you with your Metro Card. You get that monthly Metro Card and it is so helpful because you don't need to work or even if you are working and you don't have enough to get to school, you don't have to worry about, "Oh my God, can I get to school today?" They help you a lot. – An student planning for a PhD

- In general, students see the college as an integrated community. Students who transferred from another 2-year or 4-year college commented that LaGuardia is less

fragmented than their previous institution. The LaGuardia Fair that brings supporting centers together makes students feel that this college is well-organized and integrated.

When I used to go to BMCC I would go take class and go home, but anytime I need help, I didn't know where to go. Here I feel more integrated. I know where to go. I know who to talk to. If I need help I know how to find it. – A transferred student

Everything she (President Mellow) was saying about it is family here, she was so right. I feel so better being here. One day I was saying to my husband, “Why can't LaGuardia be a four year school so I can stay there?” Next year I'm going to (another school), I went there to visit and it was so quiet. I was like, “This is where I'm going to be? Why not LaGuardia be a four year college so I can stay there?” – A graduate-to-be

- b) Students feel confused sometimes.
 - Students do not know what to do when they receive conflicting information from different staff in the same office, different offices, and when offices send them around back and forth.

I had a question a couple of weeks ago and I had to go to four different offices and I ended up with four different answers and I still don't know the answer.

I had to run around from office to office and nobody really had the right information. They were like “Just go talk to this person.” You go to the Financial Aid office and they say “Why did they send you here?” You do a lot of running around at first.

- Students are confused when offices notify them with problems without a solution. When students are notified of a problem, they want to know what caused that problem and what they can do to fix the problem. Unfortunately, that information was not always provided.

I'll say if a student is having a problem, to contact that student, that would be perfect. I realized that I have issues with CUNY First or with my classes and I basically had to figure it out by myself.

I tried to do work/study. I handed in the papers and everything. No one contacted me. Even if it was a yes or a no, I would still have appreciated a call or email.

- Students are confused by various online tools that they need for their coursework, academic and support services. They do not understand why they have to use one tool for one thing, and another tool for another thing.

My professor kind of hate Blackboard, he find it annoying, so he created his own website for us. He made a website and put all his stuff on the website. He ask us to go to the website. I think his website is more straight forward because it is more easier than Blackboard.

There are too many websites, too many log ins, too many—too many places to go.

- c) Certain groups of students (e.g., veterans, international students, student with disabilities) feel that they need more specific assistance to address issues (e.g., work permit, accommodation) that not everybody has.

I enjoy the school. It's just in the beginning it was a little hard to get in, to get admitted and everything like that. Then I noticed that the offices don't really communicate with each other well. Especially for me because I had to go through the whole extra thing of being a veteran and trying to get into school. I had to run around from office to office and nobody really had the right information. They were like "Just go talk to this person." You go to the Financial Aid office and they say "Why did they send you here?" You do a lot of running around at first.

Caveats

- a) Selection Bias

Despite of the random element in our sampling approach, students who showed up at the focus group are self-selected into the group. Very likely, these students are more motivated and more engaged, than those who did not show up.

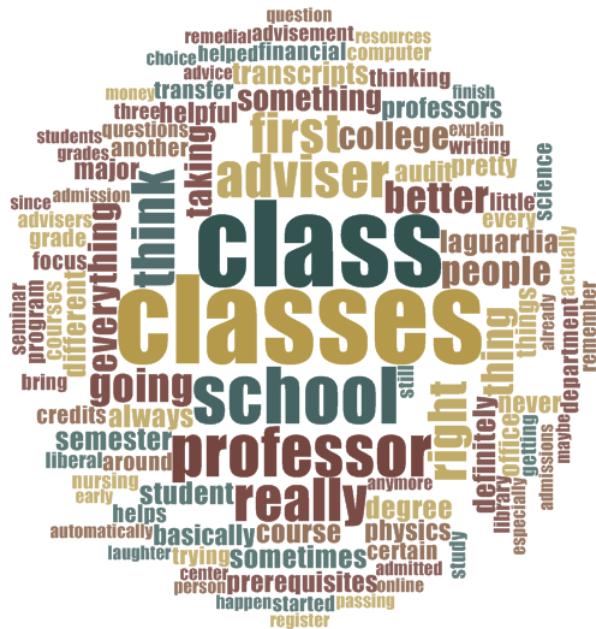
- b) Heterogenous Effect

Outcomes vary by student's individual characteristics (e.g. freshman vs. continuing, traditional vs. non-traditional), the program (e.g. STEM vs. Humanities), and the service (e.g., academic support vs. administrative support). We need to be careful when we generalize our conclusions.

- c) Measurement Error

Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.

Group 1 – Academic Path



Student Experience & Outcomes

a) What helped students to keep their momentum going?
- A clear goal (either academic or career-wise) motivates students.

I am here for child education. I have been doing my fieldwork. I plan to transfer next year, June 2017, to Brooklyn College. So I plan to get my bachelor's, that's the goal. Well, I really want to get my PhD.

You need to have a high GPA to get into Baruch.

I keep my momentum basically with the simple idea of wanting success, wanting to better myself and to create a concrete foundation for myself and I know that just persevering and staying focused is the only thing that will allow me to get to that point in my life.

- Faculty's guidance keeps student on the right track.

I am in the ASAP program so my counselor helps me a lot.

(Professor) Myer. Do you know him? He's one of the best teachers, yeah. Yes, that's it. She gives you a real good introductory about the class.

She (the advisor) saw the physics class and she said, "You're not majoring in any type of science?" I told her no and she said, "Get out of the physics class." But I like

physics and in high school I was great at physics, but she said not at this level. She told me that she would keep an astronomy class open for me, because that was my second choice, and she told me to go to a physics class and see what it was like. So I went to the course and within five minutes I literally just walked out. The professor just started writing crazy equations on the board. I didn't know what was what so I ran away. I went to the adviser and said, "Get me out. Please. Get me out." Yes, and she was very, very helpful. She knows everything about everything. Do what the professor wants you to do.

Last year I had a crisis and I dropped all of classes a couple of days before school started, thinking I could go back and register for classes. No! It was this year. So I dropped all the classes and she was just like, "Oh no you don't." And then I was able to go back and get some classes that I needed.

- Technical tools are super helpful to track their progress and keep them focus.

It was more help than the advisers. When you go to the advisers they tell you this and they tell you that. When you go to Degree Audit—when you do stuff on the computer sometimes it explains better than a person sitting there talking to you. The professor can teach you one way and then you do it the other way, the way the computer does it, and you get it right. The professor's way is always more complicated.

My LaGuardia helps me go anywhere.

- Organizations, professors, staff and fellow students make them feel valued and keep them connected.

The professor really helps a lot. He will break stuff down step-by-step. He don't leave nobody behind. I like how he tries to make things fun and he tries to bring everybody together. Even if the class is quiet he'll try to do something different to get anybody to speak. He always saying he wants everybody to respect one another. I also like how he just have so much energy. He always have a smile on his face.

I have gotten help from my ESL professor. Yeah. She listen and she always keep us after class and tell us some questions.

The first year seminar, we went to a transfer—it was like a lecture. So there was a guy and I don't remember his name, but he was really good because he was really sincere and was actually trying to help.

(ASAP) students do things together, look at what they offer.

- b) What slowed students down?

- Some courses don't list prerequisites. Students did not know that they had to take another course until they tried to register for the course.

Especially the prerequisites that you need for classes, because it never shows. It's like you get to the end of a certain time in school and you think you're almost done with all these class and then you go to your adviser and they're like, "You have to take these prerequisites in order to graduate." You're like, "Didn't I just finish everything I need for my degree work?" I didn't know about these other courses I had to take. It holds you back. It drags the year out.

- Some courses don't have enough sections for students to choose from.

One thing that I notice is there are some certain classes, courses, and you don't have a lot of teachers, so you don't have choice. I took [inaudible] and they only have two teachers. I didn't like my professor. I didn't like him really. So I went and talk to my adviser. My adviser was like, "I know, but we only have two professors." So this other class is full. I wasn't able to change is what I'm saying. That was worst grade ever. But there are only two classes and the other one is full. So I have to stay or find another class. But I had to take the class so I have no choice. It doesn't make any sense to me. I had to take the class and I only get a C.

- Some students are struggling with life issues.

The only thing that can slow me down might be the accountability. That is the only thing that will slow me down. Money-wise I tell myself I don't care how much the loan will cost. I have to take it because I gotta finish school no matter what.

Sometimes I would come in late or I didn't read the material and it wasn't because I just didn't want to; I had a lot of things going on

I can't register for the second session because that hold is still in my account, so they don't allow me to register for the second session.

- Students cannot catch up with coursework.

I'm currently on probation because I had an unlucky professor. I passed my lab with a perfect grade but the lecture professor really messed my grade up. Some professors teach from different books. You buy one book and then they end up teaching from a different book. I've had that happen multiple times.

I'm not going to blame the professor. I think it is the class in general. I thought it would be more science, but it's more math than science.

When you are taking a theory and a lab, but the fact that you are ... I don't know why you have to take them both together. Let's say that I'm doing well in my practice, but I'm not good in theory, like, I don't know why I have stay one with the other.

- c) Attending LaGuardia is a life changing event to some students.

I didn't really see myself starting college, but my wife was telling me, "Do something with yourself. Go somewhere and do something." She kept telling me I was smart. She pushed me. I just wanted to work and save my money and buy a car. I wanted to just live life for a bit, but she told me I needed to do it now because I never know what will happen in the future. I started and I couldn't believe how happy I was to be here, just the environment, it is so positive.

Group 2 – Support Communities



Experience & Outcomes

a) What support communities helped students keep their momentum going?

Students mentioned faculty, advisor, student organizations, clubs, family members, staff (e.g., gym, library, veteran's office, student with disabilities, etc.)

- ASAP & College Discovery

Each month I have to meet with my adviser twice. Regarding classes, how well you're doing. Do not drop your class if you have a problem, they will help you stay.

I am an ASAP student, but that's the only thing I do. I have to take this class or this class and it will help me to transfer easily. So that help me. But ASAP you have to go. It is mandatory. I make my own connections. I stay in touch with my teachers. ASAP is good. Even I refer some friends. Some people (joined) ASAP because of me. I advocate for them to go there.

(ASAP) help you with your Metro Card. You get that monthly Metro Card and it is so helpful because you don't need to work or even if you are working and you don't have enough to get to school, you don't have to worry about, "Oh my God, can I get to school today?" They help you a lot. On top of that, they give you all of these resources.

I am part of the College Discovery program. I came here and I found out more information about College Discovery and I was impressed with the program and

once again to be part of the College Discovery program and now I work there so I feel like it was the best fit for me. No because for the college career program, they offer help with those classes.

- Faculty

I have professors in my classes and I stay in touch with them. Any problem that I have I just go to them.

The heads of the department know what's going on, yeah, they are very useful, helpful.

I went to my writing professor to ask about writing something, just so I could know his point of view about something. I like my writing teacher. Any time that you want to make time for him he will help you.

- Student Organizations

Every Wednesday they have a whole bunch of clubs. I go in and they give you free stuff and all that. So why not?

- Financial club is beneficial for business students

They have a financial club here, but I'm not a part of it. I just go sometimes. Some friends are part of the club, so I just go with them.

They have a financial club here. I just go sometimes. Some friends are part of the club, so I just go with them. It is something that will help you very much how to manage your finances and stuff like that. I made some friends there.

Financial Club. We already learned about two apps. One is Acorn, which is about mutual funds and the other is Robin Hood. Put money in and then the people will take care of your money and stuff like that. For Robin Hood you can buy your own stock online.

- Chinese Students association meet regularly; invited alumni come to meet with current students

I joined clubs and I am leader right now in the Chinese Student Club. I don't know how to apply the financial aid and how much I need. Yeah. And I have transfer problem. They know that. We have tutor in the club on Wednesday and Friday. Anything they can help us with. Like homework or some problem you have in the school. And I would tell them (new students) to join some clubs. Join some clubs and soon you be leader in the clubs and that will really help you with your (career).

- Women in Technology

I just became part of the Women in Technology program that is going on. I feel a little more privileged because they actually do put us in the loop. I feel like there is a lot of inclusion. They let us know things that are going on in the school. My advisers are pretty good too. I think that it's progressing because the technology part is new, so they make us a little more aware of things that we need to know.

- Veteran's Club

You really need to find somebody somewhere in some office anywhere in the school that you feel comfortable checking in, developing some kind of friendship, and stay in communication with so they can help you stay in the loop.

- Family and friends who are LaGuardia alumni

My husband was here two years ago; he graduated from here. I have a person who can just walk me through it and talk me into doing the right thing as opposed to something crazy that I will regret, because I'm like that.

My sister-in-law used to go here. She graduated and moved on to John Jay, which has a great program as well. She definitely recommended taking a certain amount of classes in the 12 weeks and then a certain amount of classes in the six weeks to be able to juggle everything.

For me it was because of my husband. He was already doing RN program over here and I was looking to change my career. After coming over here he was already into the RN program and he said it is a good school for nursing. So that's how I joined. My husband told me about the loan option. They (financial aid office) didn't tell me.

b) How did students find out about these communities?

High school, college advisor, friends, family, LaGuardia website, college fair, flyers and signs.

c) Why some students do not participate in student organizations?

- No time

I didn't really have the time to go. My schedule is all over the place, so I don't think I'm ready to join any clubs yet. I live an hour away. So I was like I'm going to join clubs when I have the time and a better schedule.

- Some students prefer to be alone or a small group with friends

I'm shy and not always social at times. Maybe if I had a few friends and if one of them was going there as well I could follow behind, but if not, then I can be quiet all the time.

Group 3 – Measuring Progress



Experience & Outcomes

a) How do students track their academic progress?

- Ask department, ask advisor, check with friends

Each month I have to meet with my adviser twice. Regarding classes, how well you're doing.

The heads of the department know what's going on, yeah, they are very useful, helpful.

Advisers need to be more accessible to the students. Don't just sign them up for classes and send them on their way and they have to figure out from other students or via their mistakes like "Okay I don't have to do that or I don't have to take that class."

b) What academic progress measuring tools helped students?

- E-portfolio

- Some students find it very helpful. Some do not.

I use E-Portfolio and at FYS seminar class. That's really nice. I like it. That helped me a lot.

E-Portfolio I think it is—I have used it a few times, but I don't think it's all that helpful.

- Some students use it only when it's required by the professor, such as the First-Year Seminar. Very few students update their e-portfolio regularly.

Not a lot of people use it, like none of my professors. One time I used it was for First Year Seminar and the second time was for English 101, and that's it. I haven't used it for any other classes. Maybe that's why I haven't used it.

I just don't like it. First of all is you can't change the privacies, but I don't like—I'm more careful when I'm writing—more than E-Portfolio, more Blackboard where my teachers can see it. E-Portfolio is all the students.

- Some students feel uncomfortable when they google themselves, the e-portfolio pops up. They thought the e-portfolio is supposed to be private.

I am very private person. I don't like leaving my things open.

So I Googled my name and E-Portfolio came up. My professor told me it was private, so why did it?

- Some students have concerns about their intellectual property.

I'm confused. So you're telling me if I post something on E-Portfolio it's no longer mine?

- Degree Audit. Many students find it very useful. Study Hall feature is highly appreciated.

I used it to check what classes I need to take. It was good. It helped me. It was simple and clear, yeah. I like it.

I use it to check on my credits, my grades, to plan ahead with classes I need to take. Oh yeah, a lot. I think it's very good.

It was more help than the advisers. When you go to the advisers they tell you this and they tell you that. When you go to Degree Audit—when you do stuff on the computer sometimes it explains better than a person sitting there talking to you.

- CUNY First. Some students find it very confusing; some students love it; students found the big HOLD at the front-page intimidating but agree that it's helpful.

I check CUNY First. I go to CUNY First and I go to the Student Center in CUNY First and that's how I check my progress. I can see everything. I see my transfer credit there and everything because that's where everything is.

It's helpful. It has resources. Check my grades, financial aid, and credits. So basically those three things. Oh yeah, and my schedule too.

I think it is not user friendly. When you print, like if you want to print something, you can't print it.

- Blackboard. Student like it because it's well-structured; some students don't like it because it's not user-friendly.

I like Blackboard because—if every teacher would use it, it would be better because you go and see what your homework is, what is the deadline. I wish every teacher would use it.

I like it. It's helpful. I prefer Blackboard to E-Portfolio.

I realized that when I was using Blackboard so much, it's easier for me to contact my professor. They put down their email address there so it's just like scroll there and it's there.

So yeah I'm like clicking trying to find where it actually says homework and I'm thinking “Yeah that's not it.” I clicked on context and scrolled down and I was like “Oh okay.” But I think it should be a little easier, a little more welcoming. It should say homework.

- My LaGuardia

My LaGuardia helps me go anywhere.

When you login to My LaGuardia page, there's always a hold right there. You're so worried. You're like, “What the hell?” They are important, but they make me worry. I think it should be there, the holds should be there.

c) Sometimes, students got confused. For example, students are confused by CUNY First and CUNY Portal. They don't understand why they need to have two separate accounts for basically the same thing.

I log in CUNY First, and then at the same time CUNY Portal opens, but I want to open the CUNY First it is kind of—you cannot log in at the same time. Yeah, when I log in CUNY First and then it asks me to log in again. Then it kick me out. I am getting kicked off of one because I am signed into the other.

I think it's too much the same. I can still have notes on every website and sometimes I forget the password and I need to call my mom and have her go here, here, here to tell me one password. They should have one website and that's it. I like it, but I think it would be better one page.

Group 4 – College Feasibility



Experience & Outcomes

a) How do students find out college feasibility resources?

Ask department, ask advisor, ask friends, search LaGuardia website. Resources from the office, department, high school, and outside organizations (e.g., Apple Corps, 1199) are helpful.

From my friends because they know and Chinese Club help you with financial aid. In the first year and the first semester I had a lot of problems. I don't know how to apply the financial aid and how much I need. They know that.

It was helpful. They are 1199, they're a union. It was in the city and when we went there were a lot of other people and they just asked us to write.

There is this program called Apple Corps and in order to be in Apple Corps you have to go to a CUNY school.

b) What college feasibility resources and services helped students?

- Finance
 - o Financial Aid including scholarship and work-study

When I didn't have full coverage with my financial aid—I had like \$207 dollars left and they (ASAP) will waive the fee if I can't pay it.

I don't have financial aid just because when I filled out the FASFA they said my mom makes too much money. That's why it was a big issue for me when I wanted to go away. I never had any resources of anybody telling me that there were other options for me.

I tried to do work/study. I handed in the papers and everything. No one contacted me. Even if it was a yes or a no, I would still have appreciated a call or email.

When I applied for financial aid I wasn't approved. I had to go apply for direct financial loans for students, a subsidized loan for students. My husband told me about the loan option. They didn't tell me. They tell me it wasn't approved so I have to pay to the bursar.

They (the financial office) say why don't I have help from my family? I'm trying. I'm just trying. I can't sit with you and explain how I do or why I spend every penny in my house because it is something that you have to figure out.

- On-campus jobs. Very helpful financially.

It was IT work. It helped me financially. I have to pay for my own stuff, and owning a car isn't very easy, it's expensive. I had to work and I also get help from my parents.

- Welfare
 - Metro Card, Text Books for ASAP students

They (ASAP) help you with your Metro Card. You get that monthly Metro Card and it is so helpful because you don't need to work or even if you are working and you don't have enough to get to school, you don't have to worry about, "Oh my God, can I get to school today?"

- Single Stop. Few students aware of it; Students appreciate the help.

What is Single Stop?

I went to Single Stop. They gave me bad information though. I went there when I was trying to get on Medicaid because I had VA health coverage and I wanted to get on Medicaid so I could see other doctors instead of going to the VA all the time. They said that I was ineligible for Medicaid because I had VA health coverage, but it's not insurance.

I did, yeah. I don't qualify for the food stamps or whatever, but I was able to get the food pantry. I guess it helps a little bit with saving my money.

- Child Care Center. Students with kids find the center super helpful; teachers are nice; some teachers are always late; closes too early

I had daycare before, outside, but when I start here I was like it is hard for me to get out of here and get on time to get my kid. I need a place where they can be close to me, and when I went to the MB109 and asked for information from them and they have vouchers for the daycare for outside, so I have to transfer to here.

I know the day care is doing well. My son, when he first started day care he didn't say a lot of words, but now he is coming home and he calls me Mama. He calls his father Dada. So I know that he is learning stuff here. The communication is good. My class is at 8:00 and the day care is supposed to open at 7:45, but they are always late. So I'm always late for my first class. That's my only issue with that

- Facilities

- Parking Service. Students with a car find it very helpful.

I didn't know that LaGuardia had a personal parking area in C building and I found out from my classmates. That's really helpful. I live so far—I live all the way in Brooklyn and there is not much public transportation there. So if I come here on public transportation I usually never make it on time in the mornings and that is a bad situation. It takes almost two hours.

- Fitness Center. Staff brings positive energy to students.

The gym, the staff, James. He's extremely friendly. At the gym I feel very comfortable. I can just go there and blow off some steam and then come back to my work and be focused again.

- c) Financial Aid send students around; Students do not know who they spoke with because staff do not wear name tag; Some staff are not knowledgeable; Students receive conflicting information from Admissions, Financial Aid, and Advising Offices; When things go wrong, students receive notifications of the issue but no instructions for next steps; The layout of C107 makes students feel uncomfortable.

I remember I was going to Financial Aid and there was only two people there and there was a whole bunch of us waiting. How can two people handle all of that? There's not enough.

The financial aid department I think—same thing, sometimes three people will give you three different answers to one question. You have to keep going back and asking the same—I don't know, surely those guys can figure it out.

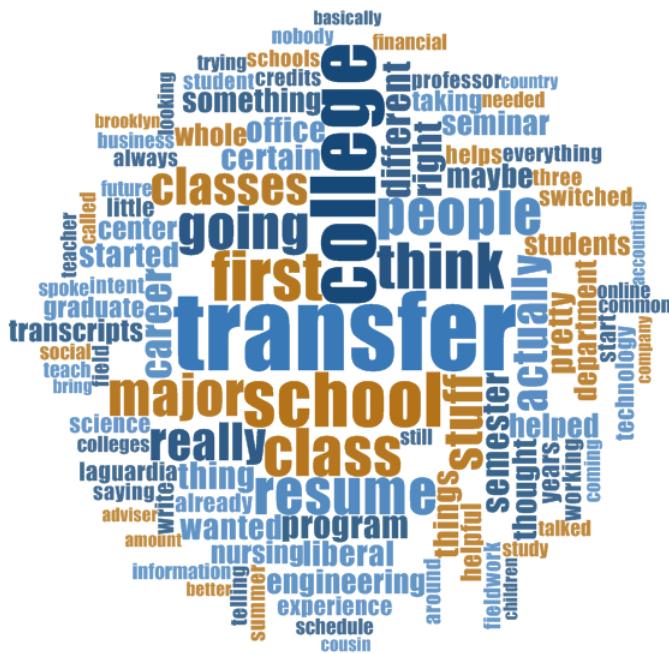
When I went to the financial aid office none of them have a nametag. So I cannot tell who I am speaking to. I have to appeal and I have to explain it, but I can't tell in appeal who I talk to because in the financial aid office none of them have a nametag. They don't have a badge that says, "This is Lisa," or "This is Janet." None of them have a nametag. I tell them that's not right. They need to have a nametag so that I can tell, "I spoke to so and so and I spoke to so and so and this is what they tell me."

When I went there my adviser told me that I have to go to financial aid office. The financial aid office told me that I have to go back to my adviser. It was like I spend three weeks going back and forth.

Something went wrong with my financial aid. I didn't get the right information. I got the information from one person, but I had to go them. Sometimes I feel like it would be better if they reached out to me, if something is going wrong maybe they can let me know. Maybe they could call or email or something like that if there's something that I need to know. So I have to go over there and sign up and then just wait to know what's going on.

I had to run around from office to office and nobody really had the right information. They were like "Just go talk to this person." You go to the Financial Aid office and they say "Why did they send you here?" You do a lot of running around at first. After I was in and got used to school again than I started to adjust and I liked it.

Group 5 – Career Services



Experience & Outcomes

a) Office of Transfer Services

- Students like the transfer fair; Glossary of transfer terms are very helpful.

Yes, because sometimes you research on the internet and you don't find that much, but then you get to the transfer fair and you see that there are a lot more choices.

In my class, the first year seminar, we went to a transfer—it was like a lecture. So there was a guy and I don't remember his name, but he was really good because he was really sincere and was actually trying to help and say, “Hey, you don't just focus in the public colleges. You may bring opportunity to a private college. There was a lot of advisement. And I went to the transfer fair, I think, last week—I'm not sure—and all the colleges were there.

I am business administration major and if you're thinking after two years to transfer to a four year college, so start with math classes very early. I did not know that. So now I have to wait longer. There are five classes I have to take and you can't take them at once.

- Some students do not know that the intent to graduate requirement is required for their application for transfer. One student missed the deadline.

What is the intent to graduate?

I didn't even know about the intent to graduate thing. Nobody was telling me any of this. So I found out last minute about doing the intent to graduate, this is my last semester, you know. So I felt like I was misinformed or not informed at all.

- Students who haven't visited the office because they do not have a plan to transfer to a 4-year college, haven't thought about, don't know where the office is located.

Where is the office?

I haven't gone to the transfer office but the career advisors do advise you to be—when choosing your courses, please first finish your required core courses and all that or else you'll not be able to transfer or graduate and all that. And all of those things, they try to prepare you for your first semester so that's good. And the transfer fair—yes, it gave me a better scope of what can I choose from.

b) Career Development Center

- Students enjoyed the resume boot camp, workshops, career fair.

They do provide certain workshops for a job fair or a resume boot camp. We actually learn a lot from our resume and how different people look at our resume and decide where it is a good fit for them, as well as formatting of the resume. They teach you how to get ready or how to get a job like tying a tie and handshake and also mock interview.

Training. At the end they give us certification or something like that. So I got it. That [inaudible] was you have to work for those companies—insurance company or [inaudible]. I don't have time. I just got my certification.

Yes, very helpful. When I came here I didn't have any jobs. So I used to go to Queens Library and they have me work on my resume. Now I go to Queens Library only when I need to get books.

- Staff are knowledgeable, friendly, and helpful.

At first, I would look online and see certain jobs, but then I went to the Career Development Office here and I sat down with Brian Caba. He started showing me the job qualifications for substance abuse manager and counseling, and stuff like that,

I went to him (Brian) too. He is really nice. He convinced me to go to the transfer and enrollment office and figure out what credits that I needed and what school I could transfer to. Then when I went to the transfer office she helped me fill out the whole application

- Students who haven't visited the office because they have no time to go, have not yet thought about internship or jobs, or have supports outside of the college. Some students were confused about requirements.

I will go when I need.

I watch Youtube videos about my career. I wanted to know the process of being a nurse.

I had a question (about internship) a couple of weeks ago and I had to go to four different offices and I ended up with four different answers and I still don't know the answer. I'm looking, but I don't know how it's supposed to work. I'm trying to figure that out. I'm actually looking for something that's [inaudible] my career. And then I give up. Somebody told me I don't have to do internship at all.

c) Switch Majors

- Quite a few students switched major during their study at LaGuadia.

I was in the military, so when I came here I just decided to do criminal justice because it was the most—it is like basically the same thing. Like police and stuff. I thought with a bachelor's degree I would be eligible for most jobs, as far as, federal, state, and city. What I really want to do is be a substance abuse counselor. I can't do that with a criminal justice degree. All of the jobs that I am looking at you need a master's in social work. So I decided to switch to social work.

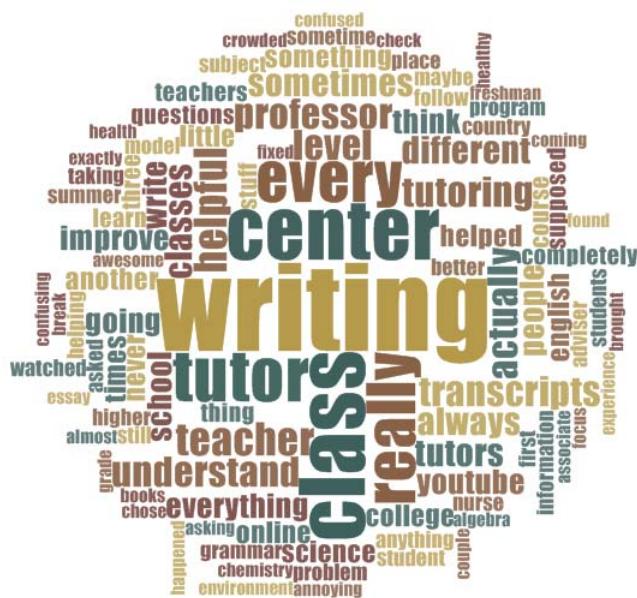
When I first entered college, my major was Liberal Arts, Math and Science. So after a semester the school had a club fair of all the different clubs on campus, and I talked to an occupational therapy club member. I was interested in the field and that's why I changed my major to occupational therapy.

- A few students switched from other majors to liberal arts because they wanted more time to decide what they want to do. Liberal arts major gives them options and flexibility.

Last semester I came here and just picked a major. I picked mechanical engineering, because I thought that it sounded cool. I didn't know that it was all math-based. My math is not very good so I switched to liberal arts to find something that works more to my liking.

I was in nursing, but I switched my major to liberal arts math and science. The reason being is because it's a little competitive and a lot of the students, even with good grades, don't get in.

Group 6 – Learning Support



Experience & Outcomes

a) ESL Program

International students found ESL program indispensable.

I have gotten help from my ESL professor, Christine. She helps me to fine tuning and after that my grammar is improving a lot. It has clearly helped me. It's really nice. When a teacher will spend the time to help you, that's really good.

b) Writing Center

- Faculty refer students to the writing center.

My English professor recommended.

- Students go to the writing center on a regular basis; some students go there every day; with the help, students become confident about their English and study.

Always I visit the writing center. It is very helpful for all my papers, I got like A, A, A, A, and I like that.

Writing Center. I do one class a week. I want to improve my writing skills. I go there with questions and they help with answering.

When I failed in the class I cannot understand so I used to go to the tutoring. It was for myself. It was not for a grade, I just went. So it's never too late.

- Students who haven't visited the center because they don't need the help; some high schools prepare their students very well.

The work I did before was in a PR department writing press releases. So writing for me is not that hard.

The high school I went to was a high school in Long Island, and the way they teach things there compared to how they do things in city schools, I was actually more prepared for college related things.

c) Math Tutoring

- Students use it almost every day and find it very helpful.

I need a lot of help in math. I go there every day. Another thing that they don't tell you is that if you go to lab every day they add five points onto your grade.

When I took algebra I was down there every day to get help, to the math lab, and it helped me. But without that I don't think I would have survived basic algebra.

I actually just came from the math center. They're very helpful and inviting. It's not like they sit in a corner and wait for you to come. They come to you if they see you working on something and ask if you need help.

My math class actually has a tutor inside the class. So every time the class starts he will always write on the board when you can meet with him, and I like that because it helps a lot. The math center when I used to go it wasn't always open. I was going at the wrong times. But it was very helpful.

If you're not very proficient in math or you are and you still need a little bit of help, go there. Even if you are, go there still because you can learn things.

They'll help you with anything you need. You just go in and tell them.

- Tutors are helpful, but some don't have the knowledge of advanced math. STEM students need more advanced math tutoring.

They have different levels of people. Say you chose Math 115, [inaudible] but you are in Math 115, someone will come in and say you're not on the level of 115. So sometimes it gets confused. Like, who should tutor which class? If you find tutor on same level that you are (lucky), they will help you.

They have many tutors for the base, for 95 or 120 or 125, but if you go higher, like 200, 204, it's like really hard math and they don't have kind of teacher.

Math is related for many majors, many majors, almost everything. They need more teachers for high level math. The teachers in higher level math are going very fast and it is hard to keep up. So then you go to the math lab and it's not helpful.

- Students who haven't visited the center because they don't need the help.

I looked at the math center, but I didn't go there because my math is good.

I have never been to anything. My brother was a tutor when he was here. I just never accessed it.

d) Other Labs

- Students do not know where the bio-labs are; nursing labs are super cool.

My Biology is not good. So I don't know, is there any centers?

E312. They have the practicum part, which is with the model of the veins and the bones, and across the hall they have the lecture lab where they help you on the lecture portion of the class.

Some people have to take chemistry, but the science labs are really good because they have the same tutors there every semester and then they have the model of brain, muscles, and veins. Unless you can learn on paper it's better to go to the lab with the actual model.