

Summary of Comments from Students on Recruiting and Retention Panel

Academic Advising Luncheon – Sep 30, 2010

Important Factors in Deciding to Attend MSU:

- Location, campus, community, friendly people (mentioned by 3 students)
- MSU Friday experience (2 students)
- Academic major(4 students, but only 1 of them still in major that first brought them here)
- Other programs (Honors, EWB)

What's Critical in First Year:

- Meeting people, making connections (unanimous)
 - o Experienced students to have as models and mentors
 - o Faculty/Staff who recognized them as individuals, their strengths, cared about them as person
- Get involved in campus community activities: RHA, volunteering, EWB, etc
- “Big leap” for freshman to talk to faculty; therefore, connections to older students critical, as not so daunting
- Hard to find rhythm/balance between play/school work/social life
- Extreme jump from high school to college academics – 2 students said they “skated” through high school and college was immediately so much harder. Needed to really learn how to apply their thinking, time, etc. A couple comments on this – difficulty of work (and maybe amount) stunning to them.

Turning Points in College Experience:

- Decided original major not right choice (2 students)
 - o Needed people/resources to help them figure out how to find more appropriate major and help with transition. Hard to figure this out on your own.
 - o Got help from Career Services, advisors (faculty and professional), other students
 - o One student said he almost transferred – thought the problem might be the school initially
- HS – College transition is BIG DEAL. So many changes, not easy.
 - o Quote from one freshman: “High school was only 4 months ago for me, but it seems like a lifetime.”
- Find department that “fits”
 - o Advisors/faculty interested in student’s success – provide challenges and opportunities, knows student as person
- Find “an anchor in something worthwhile” that makes education tangible, worthwhile
 - o Student organizations, dept relationships, opportunities (research, study abroad)
- First Year Seminars w/ Peer Leaders/Fellows
 - o These students are role models who have figured out the balance & can show freshmen what they can achieve and do with their educational experience

Biggest Surprise:

- Quality of academic programs – really happy about that
- How quickly she feels comfortable here– feels like “home” (Freshman)
- Relieved to have teachers to go to if needs help
- New Gaines Hall! Very proud of the facility
- Changing majors – “from saying I’m a physicist to saying I’m a psychologist!”
- MSU isn’t just an Ag school – offers such qualified and knowledgeable faculty across the board
- Offers opportunities for student to do whatever he wants
- Montana school offers things like Arabic and Study Abroad in Morocco! (transfer from PA)
- Faculty don’t bite – “you’re just like me – only older!”

The video is now available here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apufR0waYb0>

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