

**Committee on Student Experiences (COSE)  
Memo to Campus and Recommendations in  
response to the Noel-Levitz Student  
Satisfaction Inventory and Berea-Specific  
Student Satisfaction Survey Results**

**Response Rate: 81%**

**Administered in Spring 1998**

**Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment**

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment  
CPO 2177

To: All Members of the College Community (College, General, and Emeritus Faculty, Staff and Students)

From: Judith Weckman, for the Committee on Student Experiences (COSE)

Date: September 11, 2000

Re: Update on the Student Satisfaction Survey Project Including Recommendations, Current Actions, and Possible Initiatives

The purpose of this memo is to update the campus community on the results of a major project begun in spring 1998. At that time the Administrative Committee gave its support to proceed with surveying the entire Berea College student body. Students were given labor time to complete two detailed surveys aimed primarily at ascertaining levels of perceived importance and satisfaction with various aspects of campus life. One of the surveys was a nationally used instrument (constructed by the Noel-Levitz company) and the other was designed locally (Berea-specific instrument). Because of the two surveys' length and breadth, the results proved to be voluminous. A committee was formed in June 1998 to begin the task of interpreting the data and initiating discussions to act upon the results.

By Fall Term 1998, the Committee on Student Experiences (COSE) replacing the previous Retention Committee, had officially formed and began meeting regularly. Its members included 12 administrators and faculty. Refer to the list at the end of this memo. A comprehensive report of the survey results was provided to each committee member and all members of the campus were invited to inspect the completed report which was placed on reserve in the library. This report also included results categorized by selected subgroups of students (e.g., African Americans, international students, males, females, classification levels, etc.).

During the 1998-1999 academic year COSE members worked to understand and discuss the implications of the survey results. Members began their work by reading a detailed summary of the findings and then reflected on their reactions, questions, and the major areas each thought needed further investigation and discussion. The group soon discovered that in order to understand the initial findings, more detailed explanations were needed from students. In fall, 1998 groups of students (116 total) were assembled and asked to help explain in more detail the ratings obtained on 45 of the 155 survey items. These explanations were then organized and COSE members began outlining the major areas for which they believed concrete recommendations were warranted.

As the COSE group continued its work over the two years, data generated by the study have been used in a variety of ways. People in various offices, departments, and serving on other committees have drawn directly upon the work of the COSE. Users have included a committee charged with investigating the viability of a Teaching and Learning Center, a committee charged with working on issues related to diversity, a group charged with providing input for the Woods-Penniman and Fairchild arcade projects, the Admissions Office, the library, etc. Also, a follow-up retention study conducted the year after the collection of the student satisfaction data focused on what items actually predicted subsequent student attrition. This report entitled "Relationship of Student Satisfaction Project Results to Student Retention: Preliminary Results" (March 10, 1999) was shared with and discussed by the COSE group.

At this time the COSE group would like to share with the campus community a list of recommendations and possible initiatives, the tangible outcome of our efforts. As with any long-term study, we have found that in many areas we are dealing with "moving targets." Therefore, we have also included current actions relevant to the recommendations we have proposed.

Please review the attached list of recommendations, current actions, and possible initiatives and share with us your comments and thoughts. Our intention is to share these recommendations broadly with the campus community in hopes of stimulating discussion and action in each of the areas. Feel free to contact any member of the committee.

Also, please contact me if you would like a copy of any of the specific reports (the comprehensive results of the initial survey project, follow-up student focus group results, and/or retention follow-up study).

Committee on Student Experiences (COSE) Members:

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Philip Schmidt  
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Staff Support for COSE

## **RECOMMENDATION 1**

*Strive to provide a safe campus environment and to promote students' understanding of and satisfaction with measures taken to provide such an environment. Students should be encouraged to be active participants in maintaining a safe and secure environment.*

### Current Actions

- The Public Safety Office has been located in a central location on campus and is open 24 hours a day.
- Foot patrol is being emphasized by the Public Safety Office. This provides more interaction between students and officers.
- Special attention is being given to the development of good rapport between security officers and students especially during second shift (3 PM– 1AM) when most contact occurs.
- Phones outside each residence hall and Phelps-Stokes Chapel can serve as emergency phones to contact Public Safety or call 911. There is discussion about adding phones at the track, behind Lincoln Hall, and at the women's athletic fields.
- A Public Safety informational brochure is distributed to all students at the beginning of each Fall Term.
- Based on regular lighting surveys conducted, lighting improvements have been made on campus.

### Possible Initiatives

- Encourage regular rounds by Public Safety officers within residence halls to increase visibility of Public Safety in non-crisis situations.
- Continue to investigate the feasibility of and need for a campus escort system.
- Regularly solicit suggestions from students relating to safety and security and communicate measures being taken.
- Regularly assess satisfaction with safety and security measures (e.g., night lighting, availability and effectiveness of public safety officers, crisis intervention procedures, emergency reporting, etc.).

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

*Create a service-oriented climate within our community, especially in all areas which provide service to students, which communicates to students a concern for their personal and academic well-being.*

### **Current Action**

- The offices of Academic Services and Records and Registration are being merged, both physically and programmatically.
- People Services is developing an orientation program and review process for all new and continuing staff members that will emphasize employee responsibilities to and for students as articulated in a set of “Workplace Expectations.”

### Possible Initiatives

- Provide on-going training for office personnel and student workers on professional etiquette and customer service to help ensure that students are consistently treated with respect, kindness, and concern. Develop standard office procedures to guide the work of all employees.
- Enlisting the aid of outside consultants or agents, as appropriate, develop recommendations to improve student service processes, practices, and procedures.
- Identify processes in all areas serving students that require various signatures and investigate how to simplify those processes.
- Provide regular orientation sessions for faculty and staff on the various campus services.
- Give attention to ways of seeking student and other forms of feedback on the efforts underway.
- Encourage departments and offices to review the content and modes of communicating important information. Important information should be communicated clearly and repeatedly.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

*Improve the student residential experience.*

#### **Current Actions**

- A ten-year project to upgrade all residence halls is underway.
- Increase student choice regarding residential living arrangements including development of theme and alternative community housing opportunities where students will live together in small houses renovated for this purpose.
- Family housing is being expanded to provide thirty-two new two-bedroom apartments.
- Through the collaboration of the Student Life, Admissions, and Academic Services offices, work was done to accommodate entering student requests for roommates and specific residence halls.
- Plans are being developed for a new residence hall, which will incorporate ecological design principles.

#### **Possible Initiatives**

- Give attention to ways of seeking student and other forms of feedback on the efforts underway.
- Enhance the Integrated Learning Communities program to include more opportunities for first-year students to connect academics with residential life.
- Continue to review the effectiveness of the Collegium structure.
- Create study spaces in residence halls.

## **RECOMMENDATION 4**

*Expand access to information resources through the Library and Computer Center.*

### **Current Actions**

- The library is now open two additional hours on Saturdays and one additional hour each night during examination weeks.
- Fifty additional workstations have been added to public computer labs, including 20 in the library. A 25-workstation computer lab in the library is now available for student use in the evenings and on weekends.
- Workstations, printers, and software programs in many computer labs have been upgraded.
- A three-year, 3.6 million dollar network project that should be completed by the end of summer 2000 will bring stable and fast network connection to every classroom, office, and residence hall room as well as to many public areas.
- Plans are underway to provide all students with portable access to network resources over the next three years.

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Expand library instruction opportunities.
- Explore ways of enhancing training/feedback processes aimed at effective functioning of student computer lab consulting.
- Explore a more targeted technology training strategy for faculty, staff, and students.

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

*Seek to improve the graduation rate by enhancing various support programs, improving students' experiences overall, and providing structures to monitor and assess at-risk behaviors.*

### **Current Actions**

- The Early Warning Program involves College faculty, the Collegium, and labor supervisors in identifying at-risk students.
- Comprehensive academic adviser training has emphasized retention methods.
- The Undergraduate Research and Creative Projects Program has been expanded to enable students to engage in significant research and creative activities during summers in collaboration with faculty members.
- The Basic Mathematics curriculum and placement testing have been revised to better reflect changes in entering students' backgrounds and needs.
- Study and tracking of students aimed at understanding the variables associated with attrition continues to be provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) working in conjunction with the Director of Admissions and other members of the Dean's Committee.
- The Integrated Learning Community Program has been established and expanded to include programming for all entering students.
- Faculty acted in Fall 1999 to require continuous enrollment in basic mathematics until the program sequence is finished.
- The Peer Mentoring program has been re-established by the Black Cultural Center.
- The 8-term limit has been repealed and replaced with a more flexible 10-term limit.
- Summer Registration and Orientation Weekends (ROWs) are attended by 90% of all entering students.

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Train labor supervisors to implement early warning procedures and intervention strategies within the labor program.
- The mathematics and science faculty should continue to engage in curricular and pedagogical planning aimed at providing academic services to students in pre-professional as well as developmental programs.
- Provide for more tutoring services across disciplines.
- See possible initiatives listed under Recommendation 7 pertaining to enhancing career development support services.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

*Improve the overall Berea experience for international students.*

### **Current Actions**

- The International Center is located in a prominent campus location and additional professional staff has been hired.
- A Host Family Orientation was conducted prior to Freshman Orientation in Fall 1999 to facilitate understanding of the host parent commitment to the student.
- Host families are being kept apprised of campus activities involving international students.
- An International Student Guide is being produced and will be sent to all international students prior to enrollment.
- An extended orientation program for new international students has been established.
- Funding is provided to assist international students in obtaining Optional Practical Training permits.
- A course in English as a Second Language will be offered beginning in Fall 2000.

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Regularly assess the needs of international students and make appropriate changes in the services.

## **RECOMMENDATION 7**

*Improve support to students to help them make effective transitions from high school to Berea and from Berea to the world of work/graduate study and improve effective advising related to internships, careers, and graduate study.*

### **Current Actions**

- An Orientation Bulletin has been developed by the Office of Admissions.
- Group Tours and Group Information Sessions are being provided for all interested prospective students.
- All entering students are included in the Integrated Learning Community Program.
- Funding is provided to assist international students in obtaining Optional Practical Training permits.
- Career planning and goal setting are introduced in the ILC Program.
- Juniors and seniors are invited to apply for up to \$500 for visiting and applying to competitive graduate schools.
- The Undergraduate Research and Creative Projects Program has been expanded to enable students to engage in significant research and creative activities during summers in collaboration with faculty members.
- For the past two summers those faculty involved in adviser training have been given a packet of information that indicates literature and services available in the Career Development Office. Also included in the packet is a timeline of suggested career exploration activities for students to pursue in each of their four years at Berea.
- Administrators continue to explore the development of an automated degree audit and registration system and its application to enable effective curricula/career planning.

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Investigate an intensive-term experience for entering students, either before fall term or during short term; such courses could explore college success, life success, and career exploration.
- Administer Career/Aptitude tests to new students.
- Explore the expansion of Career Development services and integration with Academic Services.
- Explore the feasibility of purchasing career assessment/feasibility software which can be accessed by students, faculty, and staff through the campus intranet.
- Seek to ensure that students know how to access psychological services for help with personal issues.
- Assess the sufficiency of psychological services currently available to students.
- Offer workshops for students on balancing academic, labor, and social demands.
- Provide better coordination of tutoring services in all fields and provide better development for student tutors and teaching associates in learning theory and effective conferencing pedagogy. Encourage tutors to establish and facilitate student study groups.

- Include focus on vocation/world of work and life beyond college in appropriate curricula such as GSTR courses and GSTR seminars, departmental introductory courses and/or senior seminars and at other external places.
- Include the topic of preparation for graduate school in adviser training.
- Provide graduate school information days (in a context like the academic Merry-go-round) that would address various subjects related to preparing to apply to graduate school (vita building--grades, majors and minors, taking tests, taking part in research, formal presentations at professional meetings, publications, etc.).
- Provide labor program advising to help students understand the choices available to them in seeking labor positions.

## **RECOMMENDATION 8**

*Examine and modify the General Studies Program in order to determine its appropriate scope and to clarify its purpose, its value, and its relationship to other areas of the curriculum.*

### Current Actions

- The APC is studying recommendations related to the number of GSTR courses.
- More evening GSTR courses are offered to provide schedule flexibility for students.
- The Convocation Program has been revised in order to allow for the improved integration of GSTR courses, convocations, international studies, and other aspects of campus life.

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Create more flexibility in the GSTR curriculum.
- Explore the desirability of giving students more elective choices in their pursuit of majors, minors, and inter-disciplinary studies.
- Find ways to make greater use of the dual credit option.
- Survey academic units in order to assess the value of the GSTR program and to understand how the GSTR program meshes with other areas of the curriculum.
- Develop a statement of rationale for the General Studies Program that is aimed primarily at students.
- Support faculty's development of alternative courses/means for students to achieve GSTR program goals.
- Institute regular assessments of effectiveness of GSTR courses. Develop means of assessing GSTR courses across sections.
- Create more opportunities for dialogue among GSTR faculty.

## **RECOMMENDATION 9**

*Seek to ensure that prospective and currently enrolled students develop an accurate impression of the College's Christian heritage and contemporary commitments and that each enrolled student, regardless of faith perspective, is treated with dignity and respect.*

### **Current Actions**

- A letter describing Berea College's Christian perspectives has been developed by the Office of Admissions and the Campus Christian Center and is sent to prospective students who indicate an interest in Berea's Christian nature.
- A brochure describing program offerings and support services is being produced by the Campus Christian Center and will be sent to prospective students.
- The opening Service of Dedication is a worship service in which the College's Christian heritage and commitments are emphasized.
- A representative of the Campus Christian Center describes the Christian character at the annual Blue Ribbon Open House day; this occurs prior to students making the decision to attend Berea.

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Make certain that outcomes of the work done by the subcommittee on the Christian Commitment are reflected in all relevant publications.
- Educate Berea faculty and staff about the variety of religious expressions in Appalachia.
- Develop educational forums which encourage students to explore the cultural, theological, and philosophical bases of their own faith and the importance of openness to dialogue for the purpose of refining their own perspectives.
- Consider student feedback available from the self study conducted in Campus Ministries and respond appropriately.

## **RECOMMENDATION 10**

*Seek to ensure that students, including prospective students, develop an accurate impression of ongoing campus and off-campus recreational opportunities and are aware of the opportunities to participate in activities including clubs, organizations, and other extracurricular activities.*

### **Current Actions**

- A Campus Map and Visitor's Guide has been developed which includes a listing of regional and local attractions.
- Group Tours and Group Information Sessions, which include a description of on-campus activities, are now available to all interested prospective students.
- Development of an integrated wellness and recreation program is underway.

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Strongly encourage a campus visit for every admissions applicant.
- Increase communications with new students and others about opportunities for recreation, participation in clubs and organizations, and other extracurricular activities.

## **RECOMMENDATION 11**

*Emphasize education of the whole person and encourage the continued practice of excellence in teaching.*

### **Current Action**

- A group of faculty appointed by the Dean of the Faculty is working to assess the needs of faculty, staff, and students and design a structure and appropriate programming for a coordinated and integrated teaching and learning support center.
- New tenure-track faculty are released from teaching in their first Short Term to participate in a seminar on teaching and learning.
- Adviser training in developmental pedagogy has been expanded.
- Additional opportunities for faculty development in instructional technology, teaching, writing, and diversity have been provided.

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Encourage and support faculty exploration of ways in which various pedagogical approaches can be useful in engaging students who bring a variety of learning styles, cultural experiences, and levels of accomplishment.
- Encourage faculty to develop class assignments that allow students to connect academic learning with personal dimensions. This could include a variety of assignments on course web pages, particularly GSTR web pages.
- Provide workshops for faculty and labor supervisors that stress personal dimensions in teaching and learning (modeled on mentoring program, Inner Landscape of Teaching and Learning workshop, CAC program).
- Develop the GSTR Communication and Research Portfolio as a place to demonstrate broad growth, not only from the six core classes; e.g. the portfolio could include material reflecting student learning in labor positions.
- Continue and intensify opportunities to explore the spiritual base in education (interfaith dialogue among students, faculty meditation/dialogue).
- Intensify development for labor supervisors as educators with opportunities to encourage broad learning (not just specific skills learning) in students.
- Encourage all students and faculty to participate in service learning, internships, international study, and other living-learning opportunities; increase funds to support such participation.
- Increase and formalize the ways in which faculty receive and have access to discussions of pedagogical and curricular practice within the first year of employment.
- Publish a short newsletter each month about interesting teaching practices and challenges.
- Educate faculty about effective means for obtaining feedback in their teaching (mid-term assessment, peer observation, etc.).
- Explore ways by which the institution could provide for, encourage, and support additional time for faculty-student interaction.

## **RECOMMENDATION 12**

*Intensify efforts to create a college community that celebrates diversity and treats all members of the College community with respect and dignity.*

### **Current Actions**

- A group of faculty and staff has been exploring the feasibility of preparing themselves to facilitate discussion on diversity issues.
- The facilitating group has provided workshops devoted to the issue of diversity in the student body for the Integrated Learning Program and for the Communication Across the College program.
- New tenure-track faculty participated in discussion of diversity issues during a January 2000 orientation program led by members of the facilitating group.
- The Black Cultural Center and International Center have been centrally located in Woods-Penniman.
- Opportunities for faculty and student international travel are increasing.
- Martin Luther King Day is being celebrated through various activities throughout the day and dismissing classes and non-essential labor.
- Significant funding has been secured to facilitate increased diversity initiatives.
- Workplace Expectations, as developed by the People Team (BC employees) include a statement of the value of diversity and institution-wide expectation in this area. Also, additional funds from the regular budget have been directed to this area

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Increase the emphasis on the value of diversity at all staff and faculty orientations.
- Increase the emphasis on the critical importance of treating everyone with respect.
- Extend faculty, student, and staff knowledge of and the ability to work efficiently with people of different learning styles.
- Extend faculty, student, and staff knowledge of and the ability to work efficiently with people with differing abilities.
- Provide workshops for faculty in communication-intensive courses (GSTR and majors) to enhance understanding of communication differences among cultures, races, genders.
- Make available to faculty, staff, and students working with diversity issues, a list of resources (people and audiovisual materials).
- Establish a position for a diversity Educator, perhaps working with the support of the proposed Teaching, Learning, and Research Center, to provide ongoing support for faculty, staff, and student learning about diversity.
- Continue efforts to hire faculty and staff who represent greater diversity in terms of ethnicity with emphasis on the hiring of African American faculty and staff.