

Student Focus Group Resource Guide

What is This Guide?

Public Agenda and WestEd developed this guide for CBD to support cadres in their efforts to learn from students. What follows is intended as a user-friendly tool to help with the planning, execution, analysis, and reporting of student focus groups, and includes tips for each phase of the process. Appendices A and B include a sample discussion guide (also called a protocol) and a sample facilitator de-brief form or protocol, respectively. Appendix C includes questions that CCRC developed to help the cadres learn more about their targeted student groups.

Carrying out high-quality focus groups does not take much more work than putting together lower-quality focus groups that provide less valid or reliable information -- and the pay-off of doing it right is worth it. As this guide discusses, WestEd and Public Agenda are working to develop a solid system of supports so that the cadres will be able to conduct quality focus groups to inform their work during both the planning and implementation phases.

Why Conduct Focus Groups?

Unlike surveys, which are designed to identify patterns across large numbers of individuals, focus groups are best used to explore in greater depth the experiences of a subset or cross-section of a larger group and to learn from interactions between two or more individuals. Focus groups should create a safe space for dialogue in which a relatively small number of participants—10-12—interact by brainstorming and bouncing ideas off of each other. Groups that are much larger than that will not create safe or interactive spaces. Focus groups are often used to inform the design of surveys and/or to dig into and explore the meaning of survey findings. They are also a powerful freestanding research and engagement vehicle for exploring complex issues, identifying communications obstacles and opportunities, and engaging critical stakeholders as partners in problem-solving.

BEFORE CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

Below are some tips and guidelines to think about and discuss with your team when designing student focus groups:

- ***Be clear about your goals and what you hope to achieve from the groups.***
 - When you begin planning the focus group, ask your core team questions such as, “What are you most interested in knowing? What do we want to learn from student focus groups? How will we use the information?” There are a number of valid reasons to conduct student focus groups, but without clarity about your team’s

goals, it is unlikely that you will be able to ask the right questions or listen deeply to students.

- ***Develop and organize questions according to themes or areas of interest.***
 - When writing questions, it is helpful to think about the general themes/areas of interest and organize the questions along those lines. That will help include all the relevant questions and eliminate nonessential questions. For example, the student focus group questions could be organized across the Loss and Momentum framework.

- ***Frame questions with a focus on students.***
 - When writing questions, step outside of yourself and think first about students' experiences and what you are most curious about. Rapid-fire yes/no questions or survey questions are usually not appropriate for focus groups, nor are questions framed from the perspective of administrators or faculty. Focusing on better understanding student experiences as you write the questions will result in better questions and better groups.

 - Think about how your questions can spark a conversation between students, and especially a conversation that will provide the space for students to build off of each other and brainstorm together. That is a unique benefit of focus groups.

 - Assume that students are experts on their own experience, but not necessarily on what is required for success in college.

 - Avoid all jargon and technical language, and make sure the questions are not leading or loaded.

- ***Recruit participants carefully.***
 - Be very clear as a team about which student groups you are most interested in learning from and why.

 - It is important to identify the best strategies for recruiting the kinds of students you are most curious about and avoid relying on "easy access" students (e.g., those in student government) to populate focus groups. Easy access students might be the ones who are most motivated, engaged, and/or academically successful, for example. At the same time, there may be some student organizations that are populated by specific types of students that you're interested in.

 - Targeting classes that are heavily populated by the kinds of students you most want to know about can be a good strategy, and a single class can often yield multiple groups. It is also a way to respect students' time and not ask them to take time out of their busy lives to take part in another activity. Note, however, that finding quiet

space to conduct and record groups during a class period can be a challenge (each group needs a separate space).

- Holding focus groups at the end of the day can be challenging, since many students need to work and have other responsibilities.
- Groups should be capped at about 12, and should last no longer than two hours (or be shorter than one hour). Ninety minutes is the ideal length for a group because it is a good balance of having enough time for good give-and-take while ensuring that the conversation will not take too much of students' time.

➤ ***Choose the facilitator carefully.***

- The quality of facilitation can make or break a group and, unfortunately, some people who are likely to self-identify as strong facilitators (e.g., instructors) may not have the qualities necessary for strong facilitation of focus groups. The facilitators of the conversations must be neutral and credible (i.e., have no baggage for students) and the students should not know the facilitators as this can make it more difficult for students to be candid or critical.
- Facilitators should be provided a copy of the Completion by Design Facilitator's Handbook produced by Public Agenda, and should take time to review the key traits of a good facilitator and the basic "moves" of facilitation. (The Handbook is available on CBD's Knowledge Center, <http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org>.) Ideally, facilitators should take part in training offered by WestEd and Public Agenda.

➤ ***Find the right space.***

- Physical environment can have a major impact on the quality of a focus group. The ideal space is one that is quiet, that is temperature controlled, and in which everyone can see each other and is close enough together for a comfortable conversation. A round table or chairs organized in a circle is the ideal configuration for a conversation. This also allows for all voices to be picked up by a recorder. (See below regarding the importance of recording focus groups.)

DURING THE FOCUS GROUPS

Below are some tips and guidelines to keep in mind when conducting student focus groups:

➤ ***Provide incentives for participation.***

- Food or refreshments are a nice way to give back to students—to thank them for their time—and to help recruit students outside of classroom time. They should be provided at all focus groups. Other ways to give back to students include providing them with information about key issues of interest at the end of the focus group

(providing information at the beginning would bias their responses), and talking with them about social science research (how will this information be used to make change—letting them know their voices will contribute to reforms).

- ***Set norms and use ice-breaker questions to help set the tone for the group.***
 - This is particularly important for students since they might feel uncomfortable talking about sensitive issues in front of each other and they might be concerned about possible stakes for themselves in terms of how faculty and administrators might view them. As mentioned earlier, it is important to think about these issues when developing the questions to minimize the possibility that students might feel stigmatized or uncomfortable during the conversation. Students should be told that their comments are anonymous and their names will not be used in any materials developed from the focus group information.
- ***Provide context, but keep it brief.***
 - It is important to provide some context about the work but not so much that the information might bias participants' contributions during the conversation. It is a good idea to avoid the temptation to “data dump” at any point during a focus group.
- ***Create space for questions from students, let the conversation flow.***
 - It is important to leave time for participants to ask questions before starting the focus group questions, such as, “Is there anything you would like to ask before we get started with questions?” Keeping the tone and pace conversational and light, rather than rapid-fire or excessively formal, will help create a safe space for students. Curiosity is the greatest resource at a facilitator's disposal, and sometimes curiosity calls for letting the conversation flow where it may.
- ***Quantify responses when possible.***
 - Focus groups should not be treated like surveys, but be on the lookout for ways to appropriately quantify responses to questions that are especially important to you. For example, if a student said, “I chose my certificate/degree program because one of my instructors told me I'd do well in that area,” the facilitator could say, “From a show of hands, how many others have had a similar experience? Did some people have other reasons for choosing a certificate or degree program?” The facilitator can then state, “Oh, I see that ten people shared that experience” in order to document that number in the transcript/recording.
- ***Elicit detail and examples.***
 - It is critical to ask students to give examples throughout the conversation. That can help make sure you know you are all talking about the same thing, and examples are concrete ways to illustrate a point. Simple probes like, “Can you say more about that?” and “Does anyone have an example of something like that?” are the best for eliciting detail.

- ***Capture the information carefully.***
 - The facilitator should not be distracted by taking detailed notes during the conversation nor should a silent scribe sit in the room writing while students talk (as this can make participants uncomfortable). Instead, record the conversations with a digital voice recorder and assure students that no quotes will be attributed when the recordings are transcribed. Let students know that the conversation is being recorded to ensure that their thoughts and ideas are captured exactly as they said them (instead of having to rely on people's interpretations or paraphrasing which can be distortive). It is also helpful to mention that recording the conversation allows the facilitator to be in the moment with students and not focused on taking notes. Facilitators can jot notes to capture key themes or words along the way, but most of the time should be spent listening attentively.
 - Minimize the chance of technical failures by using the following checklist:
 - ✓ Have you tested your digital recorder before using it?
 - ✓ Is there sufficient space on the recorder to record the whole group?
 - ✓ Is the battery life full?
 - ✓ Is the recorder placed to pick up all the voices (center of the table)?
 - ✓ Are you in a location with minimal ambient noise?
 - ✓ Do you have a back-up digital recorder you can use in case the primary one malfunctions?

See Appendix A for a Sample Focus Group Protocol.

AFTER THE FOCUS GROUPS

Below are some tips and guidelines to keep in mind to ensure that you are able to capture and use the information generated in the focus groups.

- ***Facilitators should de-brief (either with a team member or on her/his own) to capture initial impressions of the groups. This is a way for you to get some quick information that you can use to inform your plans.***
 - Facilitators should receive a de-brief form before they conduct the focus group so that they will know what the expectations are with respect to capturing information immediately following the group. The facilitator should write down how many students were in each focus group, note if there were no-shows, and capture basic information about the method of recruitment, composition of the group, and length of the conversation. It is critical that the information be connected to the digital

recording. Otherwise you will end up not knowing which recording is connected to which student group.

- Facilitators should also write up their general impressions of the focus groups immediately after the discussion, such as the biggest surprises, the main themes, areas of agreement or disagreement between students, and so forth. Those notes can be used as initial impressions that can later be confirmed (or not) by comparing those impressions with the transcripts. Such notes can also add useful context, such as noting if the group was interrupted at some point, or if one person dominated the conversation (though facilitators should try to make sure that one person does not dominate).

See Appendix B for a Sample De-brief Protocol.

- ***Send digital files to WestEd and Public Agenda to have the focus groups transcribed for you.***
 - Transcription will ensure that you will have useable data. CDAT can fund about \$1,000 per cadre for transcription costs (each hour of recorded conversation amounts to roughly \$150 dollars for transcription).
- ***If you do not have the time or capacity to develop a sound process for analyzing transcripts and reporting the results, Public Agenda and WestEd are offering to analyze transcripts for you.***
 - It will be critical for WestEd and Public Agenda to work with you to determine how many transcripts they can analyze, given other requests and your timeframe. If there is a high volume of requests for analysis support, it is likely that Public Agenda and WestEd will review the de-brief forms to select the highest quality groups for analysis. Depending on demand, a cap on analysis support may be placed at five transcripts per cadre. Therefore, to ensure that WestEd and Public Agenda are able to provide help with focus group analysis, it is extremely important that the debrief form (Appendix B) be used.
- ***It is important to note that there are different types of analysis that are more and less rigorous, and that different types serve different purposes.***
 - For your purposes, you may decide that less rigorous analysis is most useful given the compressed timeframe of the planning period. If the groups are digitally recorded, the data are preserved for future use, and it is possible to conduct additional analyses of the groups to inform the implementation phase.
 - Even in cases in which analyses will be less rigorous or formal, there are some basic practices that can help ensure that the information gathered and the story told about that information is reliable and useful. This is one of those areas where doing it well is not that much more difficult than doing it poorly—and the payoffs of doing

it well are enormous (while the costs of doing it poorly are quite significant and potentially dangerous to the work or to the perceived credibility of those conducting and analyzing the groups).

- ***Below is a basic description of how WestEd and Public Agenda would plan to analyze the data for the purposes of the planning year. We suggest you approach the work of making sense of the focus group conversations similarly, if you chose to do the analyses.***
 - To begin, at least two individuals should read the same transcript to ensure “inter-coder reliability” of the findings—to make sure that they are analyzing the data similarly. This is also called calibration. Each individual should read through and jot down notes regarding themes as they emerge. Through this initial run-through, readers can develop a simple coding system to identify those themes or issues each time they arise. It is also useful to highlight the quotes people think are important.
 - After each reader has had time to read the transcript and jot notes about themes and their frequency, the readers should sit together and share their notes, “coding” schemes, and highlighted quotes to ensure that those analyzing the groups are on the same page about what they are hearing and what it means. Ideally, the individuals should repeat that exercise with another transcript or two, especially if there are very different conversations across, for example, different student groups.
 - Once people are confident that they are on the same page it is still ideal to have two people read each transcript, but, if time is an issue, it is possible to have one person read each transcript as long as the readers are well calibrated.
 - Based on this system, a set of core themes can be identified and the transcripts can be combed for illustrative quotes. It is often useful to develop matrices to “chunk” the information by theme. For example, there could be a matrix for each student group of interest (such as part-time students, students who placed one level below in developmental education, and so forth).
 - The people analyzing the transcripts should pay close attention to particularly instructive quotes and can keep those in a separate file, or below the relevant matrix. It is important to keep information that can identify the quote with the student group of interest—to be able to know, for example, if the quote was stated by a student who was enrolled part time, or who was in developmental education, or both.
 - Team members should look across the matrices to determine which themes are common across focus groups and which are not. The common themes can be synthesized into findings, stating that they are common across groups. Findings that are not consistent across groups should be presented as such.

- The summary report produced should be quote-rich in order to best illustrate the main themes of the groups. Direct quotes are the best vehicles for understanding and exploring student experiences, both because they are compelling and because they require a certain diligence in analysis that less formal interpretation does not afford. This is another reason why it is important to create audio recordings and transcriptions if at all possible. The quotes should be framed so that the reader knows if the quote is representative of the conversation, or if it is unique.

For further information on conducting student focus groups, please contact Andrea Venezia, avenezi@wested.org, or Alison Kadlec, akadlec@publicagenda.org.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL (DISCUSSION GUIDE)

Public Agenda and WestEd developed this protocol for Lorain County Community College's student focus groups. It was developed around the Loss and Momentum framework.

SAMPLE OPENER:

Thank you for agreeing to talk with us today. We want you to know that we think everything you have to say is important and we are here to learn from you. We are working on a project to include student voices and experiences in discussions that community college leaders, faculty, elected officials and others are having in [name of state] about how colleges can do a better job of helping students succeed. Our discussion should take about [duration of time]. We know you have a lot going on and we really appreciate your willingness to share your thoughts and experiences with us. There are no right or wrong answers—we are interested in knowing more about your perspectives and ideas. We are recording the conversation so that we can be absolutely certain that we are capturing all of your ideas, exactly as you present them. We won't quote you—we just want to make sure we're hearing you accurately.

The information you give us today will be shared with people across the state to help improve community colleges. We will not use your name. We hope that you can feel comfortable to speak freely about your experiences and we ask that everyone be respectful of what everyone else has to say.

We want to make sure we agree about the meaning of a few words that we want to use. (Are there words you need to define, or are there issues that could be confusing to people that you need to discuss to make sure there is a common understanding? This could be a good time to define developmental education, student success courses, programs of study, etc., but also be sure to use accessible language throughout the development of the questions.)

Do you have any questions or concerns before we start?

SAMPLE PROTOCOL (for a two-hour conversation based on the Loss and Momentum framework)

Warm-up

Please go around, introduce yourselves, and just tell us a little bit about why you decided to go to college. (This will give you a chance to hear people talk, unprompted, about why they're in school. You'll probably get a sense for those who are more and less goal-oriented. In addition, you will get a sense of whether some students are not part of your group of interest. If, for example, you want to talk with students who went directly from high school to college and someone mentions a different path, you know the information you hear from that person will be filtered through a different set of experiences.)

Getting into the issues

How did you decide to come to X Community College?

- *Did you know other people going here?*
- *Do you know people who chose to go other places? Why?*
- *Did you think about going somewhere else?*
- *Did anyone, like a family member or high school guidance counselor, tell you about the opportunities here at X?*

Could you describe the first time you came to campus – why did you come here? Was it before you became a student here, or was it the first day you came to enroll?

- *Was it a positive experience or not so much? (Give people time to chat, listen for stories about orientation vs. other kinds of stories. Good place to ask how many people attended a formal orientation; did they take a placement test the first time they came to campus.)*
- *What could have made that first experience better?*

How are things going so far? Pretty well, pretty rough, somewhere in between?

Is college different than what you expected?

- *Have you been able to get the classes you want?*
- *How was the placement testing process for you? Did you know about those tests before you came here? Did you score about what you thought you would score? Are you taking the level of classes that you thought you would be taking?*
- *Have you talked to an adviser or counselor? Describe that experience--was it helpful or not?*

Readiness

Now that you're here, do you feel like you arrived here ready succeed in college? Why or why not? (Let them talk. Ask simple probes like "Can you say more about that?" or "Did others have a similar experience?")

- *Before you came to X, did you have teachers/counselors/family members/others who talked to you about what to expect in college? If yes, was that helpful? If not, would you have liked to have that?*
- *If your little brother or sister in high school was thinking about going to college, what advice would you give them to help set them up for success?*

A lot of students come to X and need to brush up on some of the basics before they can get into their main courses. Those are often called remedial education or developmental education classes.

- *Do you know a lot of people who have had to take those brush-up courses (or did you yourself)? If yes, what do people usually think about those classes? Do people think those courses are pretty good here or not so much?*

Are all new students are required to take a college orientation class? How many of you already took this class? How many are taking it now?

- *What did you think of the orientation class? Was it useful or not? How so?*
- *How could it have been better?*

Getting into a program of study

How do you decide which courses to take? (Listen for indicators of concentration vs. non-concentration, e.g., are they wandering around taking courses that sound interesting or are they on a clear path?)

- *Did you know what you wanted to study before you came here? If so, was that a factor in your decision to come here – did you think that [name of college] had good programs in that area?*
- *Are you able to get the advising/counseling that you need?*

How many of you have decided what you want to major in – what kind of certificate or degree you want to earn?

- *For those of you who have already decided, how long had you been here before you made that decision? Did someone help you make that decision?*
- *For those of you who haven't decided yet, when do you think you'll decide? How do you think you'll go about deciding what kind of certificate or degree you want to earn?*
- *How important is it for you or anyone to figure out your program of study—your certificate or degree path—early on? If it's important, why? If it's not important, why not?*
- *For those who think it's important, what could the college be doing to help more students get locked in to the right program of study as fast as possible?*

Derailers

Do you know anyone who has had to stop or drop out before finishing their classes/programs?

- *Why do you think that happens? What are the kinds of things that make it hard for people to stay in college and finish their degrees or programs?*
- *Have you ever worried about having to take a break or drop out yourself? What's keeping you going?*
- *What kinds of things can the college be doing to help students overcome the biggest challenges and stay in school?*

Digging deeper

Ok, now we're going to dig a little deeper and talk more about your best and worst experiences here at X.

Thinking about the best instructors you've had here, what were they like? Why were they so good?

Thinking about your worst instructors, what were they like—no need for names—we just want to know what the experiences were like that made them challenging for you?

What about advisors and counselors—have you had good experiences or bad experiences? (Let them talk. Probe around what counselors could be doing differently.)

What about other staff, like people in financial aid, librarians, others? Have you had any particularly good or bad experiences?

Have you ever sought out extra help or tutoring with a class? Was it a good experience or not? How did you learn about those opportunities?

- *Have you ever felt like you needed extra help but didn't know how to find it?*
- *In general, do you think there are a lot of good resources, like tutoring and other kinds of help, here for students?*
- *Do people use all the services available? Why or why not? What prevents people from taking advantage of the resources here? (Listen for lack of awareness, feeling intimidated, feeling like the resources are inadequate, etc.)*

Closing

There are a number of ideas leaders have here about how to help more students succeed and we want to know what you think about them. What do you think about xxx? (Insert ideas about promising practices that you are thinking of testing out at the college.)

Ok, to close here, let's go around once and hear from everyone on a "final thoughts" question: If there was one (or two) thing that the college could be doing differently or better to help more students achieve their goals, what would that be? (If they seem intimidated by the question, you can recast it like this: We've talked about a lot of different issues. Of all the things we've talked about, which are the things that seem most important when it comes to helping more students hang in there and finish their programs of study or degrees? What are the things that the college could change? What are the things that are in your control?)

Thank you very much for your time. I learned so much from this conversation and will pass on the information to people who can make changes to improve students' experiences. (If there is anything more tangible you could say about how this will affect change, I would add that here.)

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE DE-BRIEF PROTOCOL

Following the focus groups, the facilitator should have the opportunity to de-brief – ideally with someone who was not in the room. This de-brief should last no more than 20 minutes and should either be recorded and transcribed, or captured on the spot by another person taking notes.

What was the group like?

If the facilitator knows the answers to these questions, it would be very helpful to know,:

- Can you characterize this group – who was in it (students in developmental education, students who have been at the college for five years and have not earned a degree or certificate, etc.)?
- How were the students selected?
- How many were in the focus group?
- Do you know if any students were supposed to be there but didn't come? If so, do you know why they weren't there?

Please describe who you are (the facilitator)—title and affiliation. Why were you selected to facilitate this focus group?

- Was it the right group (what the team was looking for in terms of the type of student)?
- Was it gender balanced?
- Did the students know each other (or some subset know each other)? Did the facilitator know any of them personally?
- Were there any dominating voices? Was anyone silent?
- How were they recruited?
- How long did the conversation last? Too short, too long, just right?
- Was anything about the environment problematic (noise, bad seats, too cold/hot, bad timing for some reason, etc.)?
- Did anyone else join the group (such as an instructor or administrator from the college), or was it just the facilitator and students?

How did the conversation go?

- Did it feel like a good conversation? Why or why not?
- Was it hard to get them talking, to get them to open up?
- Was there anything surprising in the conversation?
- What were some of the most interesting themes or ideas that emerged in the conversation? (The person conducting the de-brief should focus a majority of the time on this question and ask light probing questions like, "Can you say more about that?" or "Why do you find that especially interesting?")
- If you could talk to this same group of students again, what would you want to know more about?
- When the transcripts are ready, are there parts of the conversation that you will be most interested in revisiting?

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AS A TEAM

Below are discussion questions developed by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) to help teams generate a better understanding of their target student populations. These questions can be useful to reflect upon when developing the student focus group protocols, but they are *not* framed for students and should, therefore, not be used as focus group questions without reframing them for students.

For target students in the "entry" stage of the pathway whom colleges want to help enter a program of study as soon as possible:

- What are the demographic characteristics of these students (age is particularly important)?
 - At which program levels do these students begin at the college? How much remedial instruction are they referred to?
- How do these students find out about the programs of study available to them? Are the options well-delineated for students?
- In what ways does the college help students choose a program of study (or does the college pretty much leave it up to the student to decide)?
 - What role does advising play? What advising generally do these students receive? Is it mandatory (for all or subgroups of the target students) or on an as-requested basis?
 - Are students encouraged/helped to have an academic plan?
 - Are (certain groups of) students required to take a college success course? Do such courses have as an explicit goal or focus to help undecided students choose a program of study?
- Does the college generally, and individual departments, track when students have entered a program of study (for example by taking courses in a required core curriculum)? If so, who looks at this information and how is it used?
- What programs of study do the target students most often declare? How do they make these decisions?
 - Does the college track these students' declared programs of study over time?
 - Who uses data on student majors and how it is used?
- What concentrations (based on students' actual course-taking patterns) do students in the target group tend to enter? What accounts for the choice patterns you observe?
- What can we learn from students in the target group who succeed in entering programs of study? Are there particular characteristics or behaviors of these students that we can use to help other students?

- Does remedial instruction help prepare students in the target group to choose and successfully enter a program of study?
- Are there sets of courses (in addition to developmental courses) that these students frequently take? Of the courses frequently taken by these students, which ones have high failure or withdrawal rate for these students?
- To what extent do students in the target group attempt to enter concentrations in particular fields, but not succeed in doing so? Why is this the case?
- Does the way students receive financial aid encourage or discourage students from entering a program of study as soon as possible?
- What other college or departmental policies and practices encourage students to enter a program of study as soon as possible?
- What policies discourage these students from entering a program of study?
- What incentives (financial or otherwise) do these students have to choose a program of study as soon as possible? Are these incentives evident to students?
- Are students in the target group required to do anything that would help them choose a program of study? What requirements might encourage or help such students to enter a program of study?

For the target students in the "program" stage of the pathway whom colleges want to help complete a program of study as soon as possible:

- What are the demographic characteristics of these students? Through what pathways do students enter the given program(s) of study?
- How do students find out about the requirements for program completion? Are these requirements clearly delineated for students?
- Do the relevant departments or divisions track which of these students are in their programs of study (as opposed to whether they are taking individual courses in an area)? If so, how do these departments or divisions use this information?
- Is any program-specific advising or guidance provided to these students? If so, by whom? How are the students identified? Is it required?
- Does the college or individual departments take steps to engage students (such as discipline- or field-specific clubs) in the field related to the target programs of study? If so, approximately what proportion of these students take part?
- Is there anything distinctive about the behaviors of students in the target group who complete programs of study in these program area(s)? What can we learn from the course-taking patterns and other behaviors of completers in the relevant programs?

- Does the way students receive financial aid encourage or discourage these students from completing their program of study as soon as possible?
- What other college or departmental policies and practices encourage these students to complete their program of study as soon as possible?
- Which policies discourage these students from completing a program of study?
- What kinds of incentives (financial or otherwise) do students have to complete their program of study as soon as possible?
- What is the process by which the college reviews the programs in question? What measures are used for this purpose? How is the information from such reviews generally used?
- For transfer programs, what policies or agreements are in place to help these students transfer successfully to baccalaureate programs in related fields?
 - Are program completers readily able to transfer to baccalaureate programs with junior standing in relevant fields?
 - Does the college track students in these programs who transfer to baccalaureate programs? If so, how is this done and how is this information used?
- For CTE programs (some of which may also be transfer), what does the college or relevant departments do to ensure that students who complete the programs in question advance in the labor market?
 - In what ways does the college or departments ensure that the programs in question meet labor market needs/demands.
 - Does the college track the labor market outcomes of students in these programs (including placement rates, satisfaction, and licensure rates)? If so, how? How is this information used?
 - What assistance does the college or departments provide to students to secure internships and/or jobs?