

# Career Center Services

- Workshops (Open and Classroom-based)
  - Résumé writing
  - Career exploration
  - Personality style and career choice
  - Identifying and marketing your skills
  - Perfecting interview skills
  - Job search strategies
- Individualized Career Counseling Sessions
- Job Search Assistance
  - Résumé and interviewing critique sessions
  - Four job fairs per year

# Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)

- Assists member institutions gather information about the quality of their educational practices
- Compares results with a cohort of other community colleges of similar size and characteristics
- Helps institutions analyze and interpret data

# The Problem: Survey Results

According to a 2007 survey of BCC students:

- Very few reported using career counseling and job placement services
- Few students reported satisfaction with the services they received
- Many students feel these services are important

## Student and Academic Support Services Survey Results

|                                       | Use        | Satisfaction | Importance |
|---------------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Academic Advising/planning            | 53%        | 67%          | 88%        |
| <b>Career Counseling</b>              | <b>18%</b> | <b>33%</b>   | <b>72%</b> |
| <b>Job placement assistance</b>       | <b>7%</b>  | <b>17%</b>   | <b>63%</b> |
| Peer or other tutoring                | 22%        | 36%          | 68%        |
| Skills labs (writing, math, etc.)     | 33%        | 46%          | 73%        |
| Child care                            | 3%         | 10%          | 46%        |
| Financial aid advising                | 38%        | 45%          | 78%        |
| Computer lab                          | 54%        | 65%          | 80%        |
| Student Organizations                 | 12%        | 23%          | 57%        |
| Transfer credit assistance            | 26%        | 33%          | 73%        |
| Services to student with disabilities | 7%         | 15%          | 58%        |

Source: 2007 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)

# Survey Results vs. Staff Perceptions

1. Students not associating the services they receive with the Career Center.
2. Students don't know we exist.

“I thought you were just a teacher who just goes around talking with students about résumés and things like that.”

-Graphic Arts student, talking to my boss

“I've been coming here for four years and I didn't know there was a Career Center. Where is it?” -Graphic Arts student

# Action Research

## Governing Question

In what ways can we increase the usage of career planning and job placement services?

- Informing (e.g., new students)
- Raising awareness
- Addressing other challenges

# Illuminating the Past

# Why is this important?

- Retention rates

BCC loses about 1/3 of its full-time students and 1/2 of part-time students in the first year. Only 6% of these transfer to other schools. These figures are representative of most community colleges.\*

- Studies show that students who use support services in the first years are less likely to drop out.

\* Source: FYI



# Some Possible Causes

- Identity Crisis – Multiple names
- Signage
- Disengaged faculty
- Inadequate introduction at workshops
- Multiple moves: students don't know where we're located
- Students not making connections
- Bland “vanilla ice cream” outreach materials

# Planning Phase

# AR Governing Question

In what ways can we increase the usage of (and satisfaction with) career planning and job placement services at BCC?

# Constituency-Building

- ✓ Coordinator of Career Planning (My boss)
- ✓ Director of Counseling
- ✓ Director of College Communications
- ✓ Program Coordinator, Animation, Graphic Design & Web Design
- ✓ Studio Design Class / “Creative Director”
- Vice President of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment
- Faculty

# Graphic Design Studio Class

- Events Calendar – making the connections
- Disengaged faculty
- Career Center is the client
- Design Brief
- Contest: \$50 gift certificate to bookstore

# Director of Communications

- Agreed that numbers are excessively low
- Logo might provide visual association
- Create a useful, inexpensive marketing tool (e.g., bookmark)
- Internal use only / unified identity
- “Studio Design Project” vs. “Contest”
- E-newsletter

# The Plan

- Boss delivers workshop as usual
- I visit classroom one week later and survey students using a Critical Incident Survey:
  - Who was here?
  - What is the name of the department that he/she represents?
  - What services does this department offer?
  - Where is this office located?

# The Plan (continued)

- Give bookmarks out first
- Identical introduction
- Administer identical survey
- Change will be measured by the results we get



# Evaluation

With all else the same, will the distribution of bookmarks prior to a classroom-based workshop help students retain information about our services?

Will this strategy ultimately lead to increased usage of our services?