

Communications Improvement Effort with Students and Parents

Problem / Opportunity Statement Following Summer Welcome, staff in the University Registrar's Office perceived that parents and students were confused over various services, forms and functions:

- Additional Authorized Access (AAA)
- FERPA form for the University Registrar's office that updates myZou
- eConsent
- Maintain Authorized User (for Cashier's Office)
- Student Charge

Goals

- Possibly streamline certain processes around these functions
- Improve communication about terms and functions

Process

- Conducted a brainstorming session with the Student Services group (ad hoc group made up of Residential Life, Parent Relations, Cashier's, Financial Aid and Univ. Reg.)
- Identified groups (students, parents, and staff) to interview/survey to better understand confusion parents and students have

Groups and Data Gathering Method

Students – focus groups

- TRiO (n=25)
- Chancellor's Leadership Group (n=6)

Parents – interviews and survey

- Phone interviews (n=12)
- Survey (n=139 started; n=121 completed out of 199)

Staff – focus groups

- Academic Advisers
- Information Technology
- Residential Life
- Student Services Group

General Questions Asked

- Summer Welcome experience
- Understanding and experiences with FERPA, etc.
- Getting questions answered/answering questions
- Parental involvement
- Opportunities for improvement
- Survey – general satisfaction question about Summer Welcome, advising, registration, billing, access to information, mode and quality of Mizzou's communications with parents

Results: Interviews and Focus Groups

General Strengths – parents and students

- Summer Welcome well-organized and is a good place for students to make initial connections (both)
- Traditions and look of the campus (parents)
- Campus diversity (students)
- Office of Parent Relations (parents)
- Faculty accessibility (both)

Opportunities for Improvement – all groups

- Have more opportunities on Day 2 of Summer Welcome (parents and students)
- Refresher course on arrival (all)
- Rudimentary explanations of myZou, etc. (students)
- Demonstrations of how FERPA, etc. plays itself out (parents)
- Better organization of the Student Center resources session (parents, staff)
- Parental engagement – what this means and what it looks like (parents and staff)
- Clarity on where students can get help (parents, staff)
- More focus on academics during Summer Welcome (staff)
- Honest discussions about residence hall living (staff)

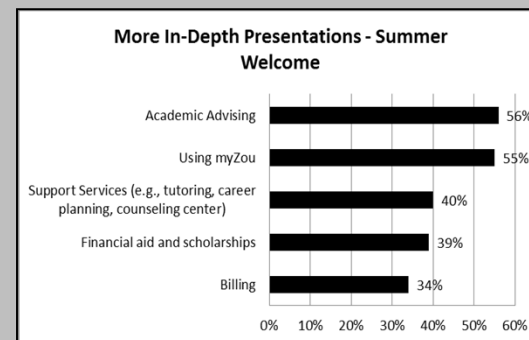
Selected Results: Survey

Demographics

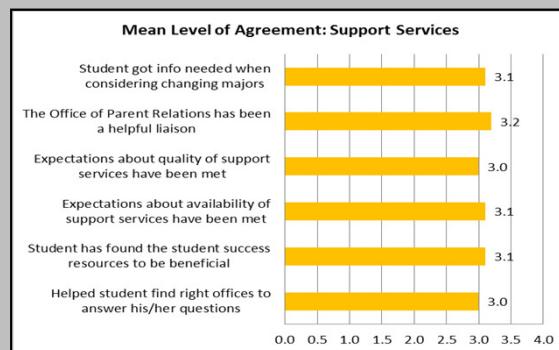
- 80% of the respondents were female
- 93% were white; 3% were African-American, and 1% was Asian
- 23% were the parent of a first-generation student
- 65% had students considered in-state for tuition purpose
- 94% visited campus prior to their student deciding to come to Mizzou; 96% attended Summer Welcome

Selected Results: Survey (continued)

- Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements on a scale of 1 to 4. Statements receiving the highest ratings were:
 - My student feels like he/she made the right choice in attending Mizzou (3.6).
 - My student feels safe in the residence halls (3.5).
 - Columbia is welcoming to Mizzou students (3.5).
- Statements receiving the lowest ratings were:
 - Enough time was spent at SW explaining scholarship opportunities (2.5).
 - The online process for selecting a residence hall met expectations (2.8).
 - Scholarship renewal requirements are easy to understand (2.8).



- Respondents also indicated a strong interest in having more information about off-campus housing.



Next Steps/Changes

- Elimination of the academic-program specific FERPA form as multiple forms cause confusion for parents
- Piloting an additional Q&A session on Day 2 of Summer Welcome to address unanswered questions from parents and students
- Consider offering short sessions during Parents Weekend – helping them help their students
- Office of Parent Relations will reach out to other offices to re-inform them of their role
- Will add some additional questions to the yearly parent satisfaction survey to track improvements
- Each executive steering committee will ask their respective areas to identify improvement projects based on the results.