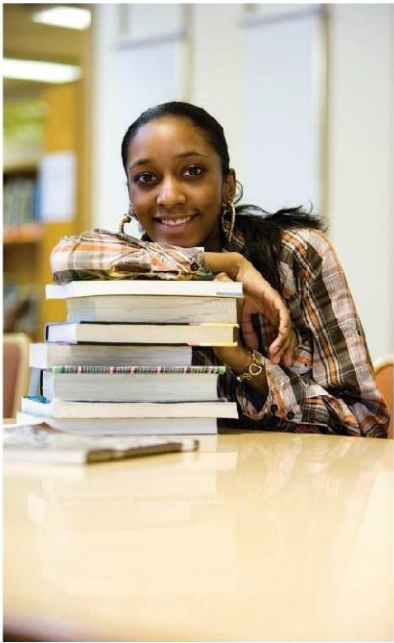


Pathways Focus Group Manual



Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Planning Focus Groups
- 3 Appendix
 - a. Invitation E-mail to Students
 - b. Student Consent Form
 - c. Student Participant Profile Sheet
 - d. Student Focus Group Protocol
 - e. Faculty Consent Form
 - f. Faculty Participant Profile Sheet
 - g. Faculty Focus Group Protocol
 - h. Suggested Room Set-Up



Introduction

For SUNY Guided Pathways Institute #4: Supporting Students Progress on their Pathway, college teams will conduct focus groups with students and faculty, providing authentic voices to help enrich understanding of the quantitative data.

An Appendix contains all of the materials necessary to successfully plan, schedule, and facilitate focus groups with students and faculty.

These structured discussions will help the college better understand students' experiences, as well as uncover possible strategies to consider for improvement. They will provide qualitative information to enhance other data. To complement the findings from the focus group discussions, student and faculty participants should be asked to fill out the respective profile sheets, which collect demographic and other information.

In addition to gathering information from students, it is recommended that the college also conduct focus groups with both full- and part-time faculty who serve these students to learn their perspectives on factors that support or hinder the success of students.

The qualitative report that the college prepares based on the findings of the focus groups should complement survey and other quantitative data to provide the college a more complete picture of student experiences on campus.

Planning Focus Groups

Preparation and planning for conducting effective focus groups consists of four key components: proper scheduling of focus groups; targeted recruitment of student and faculty participants; effective communication with these participant groups; and attention to the logistics of each focus group session. The college should identify a campus employee to serve as the Focus Group Coordinator.

Step 1: Schedule Focus Group Sessions

There are a total of three focus group sessions required for the Pathways Institute #4 advance work: two focus groups with students, and one focus group with faculty. Each focus group session generally lasts approximately 75–90 minutes. A cushion time of no less than 30 minutes between sessions will be necessary so that participants can comfortably arrive before and leave after other scheduled groups and have a few minutes to enjoy the refreshments that have been provided for them.

Student Focus Groups

The scheduling of the student focus group sessions should reflect the times that are best for students. In order to attract a representative cross-section of students, the college may want to consider conducting one of the student focus groups in the evening. If the college does not expect evening registration to yield a different mix of students from daytime registration, the focus groups can be scheduled during the day only.

Faculty Focus Groups

The college will also conduct at least one focus group with faculty.

Step 2: Recruit Focus Group Participants

Student Focus Groups

The Center recommends that each focus group involve no more than seven to ten students.

► Student Participant Specifications

The Center uses the following guidelines in identifying student focus group participants. The college may use other criteria; however, this is a suggested model:

- Students need to be over 18 years old.
- To the extent possible, students should reflect the diversity of the college's student population by enrollment status (full-time/less than full-time), major or program of study, first-generation/not first-generation status, and socioeconomic status (as determined by eligibility for financial aid or students' self-reporting about need for financial assistance).
- It is recommended that dual credit students not participate in the focus group.
- It is recommended that student government and honors students not be recruited. You are looking for your institution's typical community college student.

► Student Recruitment

Recruitment should begin as quickly as possible. A sample Invitation E-mail to Students is provided in the Appendix section of this manual. If the college is able to utilize other technology, like posting a message on the college's website, texting students, or using Facebook, these methods have also proven effective recruitment strategies. One week prior to the scheduled focus group, the Focus Group Coordinator should finalize the participant details in spreadsheet form.

Faculty Focus Groups

The Center recommends that the focus group involve no more than seven to ten faculty.

► Faculty Participant Specifications

In considering who to include, the Center

recommends full- and part-time faculty from arts and sciences and career and technical education.

► Faculty Recruitment

The Focus Group Coordinator should invite faculty to participate several weeks prior to the scheduled focus group. As with student participants, one week prior to the scheduled focus group, the Focus Group Coordinator should finalize the participant details in spreadsheet form.

The Focus Group Coordinator should prepare a spreadsheet for each focus group containing the following information.

Student Participant Details: name, e-mail address, phone number, and major

Faculty Participant Details: name, e-mail address, phone number, course(s) taught, and employment status (full-time/ part-time)

Step 3: Communicate With Focus Group Participants

Communicating With Students

Following up with students in focus groups to encourage participation is the most important thing to do in order to ensure students feel a commitment to the focus group and show up for scheduled focus groups. The Focus Group Coordinator will be responsible for communicating with recruited students prior to each focus group.

Prior to the focus group, the Coordinator should

- send an e-mail and/or make a phone call to each participant following the initial recruitment and one week before the focus group;
- have the college president's office e-mail or phone each participant prior to the focus group, thanking them for agreeing to participate, emphasizing the purpose of the focus group and its importance in helping the college provide the best experience and support for students; and
- call or text each student that agreed to participate the day before the focus group, reminding him or her of the session,

providing directions to the location, and confirming attendance.

Communicating With Faculty

The Focus Group Coordinator is responsible for communicating with recruited faculty.

Prior to the focus group, the Coordinator should

- send an e-mail and/or make a phone call to each participant following the initial recruitment and one week before the focus group;
- have the college president's office e-mail or phone each participant prior to the focus group, thanking them for agreeing to participate, emphasizing the purpose of the focus group and its importance in helping the college provide the best experience and support for students; and
- call each faculty member who agreed to participate the day before the focus group, reminding him or her of the session, providing directions to the location, and confirming attendance.

Step 4: Focus Group Logistics

The Focus Group Coordinator is responsible for the following logistical arrangements:

- arrange for and set up the meeting room as outlined in the Room Set-Up diagram;
- provide refreshments/snacks that will be attractive to participants and reflect genuine hospitality and appreciation (e.g., boxed lunches, pizza and soft drinks, brownies/cookies and soft drinks, etc.); and
- be available throughout each focus group session to make sure everything is in place, and to text and/or make phone calls to participants as necessary.

Additional Coordinator Responsibilities:

The Focus Group Coordinator is responsible for providing all necessary participant materials, including name cards, consent forms, pens, and profile sheets. The Focus Group Coordinator will

also identify a note-taker and will provide the note-taker with necessary materials. If you choose to record the focus groups, a digital audio tape recorder and microphones are necessary. However, a note-taker in the room is also acceptable.

Finally, the designated Focus Group Facilitator is responsible for facilitating the three focus group sessions. During each session, the Facilitator will follow the outline below (see protocols in the Appendix):

1. Meeting overview
2. Consent forms
3. Participant introductions
4. Questionnaires (e.g., demographics forms/survey items, etc.)
5. Discussion
6. Summary
7. Thanks

Appendix

The Appendix that follows contains materials to assist the Focus Group Coordinator in scheduling focus groups, recruiting participants, communicating with participants, and preparing focus group logistics.

These templates were designed to help Coordinators facilitate the focus groups and may be modified to best meet the needs of the institution.

- a. Invitation E-mail to Students
- b. Student Consent Form
- c. Student Participant Profile Sheet
- d. Student Focus Group Protocol
- e. Faculty Consent Form
- f. Faculty Participant Profile Sheet
- g. Faculty Focus Group Protocol
- h. Suggested Room Set-Up

a. Invitation E-mail to Students

Invitation E-mail to Students

[Tailor e-mail to meet your student target population. If your college already has a standard focus group invitation, please use that instead.]

To: [Student e-mail address]

Cc: [If applicable]

Subject: Student Focus Group Discussion at [Name of Institution]

Dear [Student Name]:

Your success as a student and your learning experiences at [Name of Institution] are very important to us. We know that many students face significant challenges in their efforts to achieve their educational goals. Therefore, we are very interested in learning what we can do to help students stay enrolled in school and have a successful and satisfying experience.

To help us identify ways to improve programs and services, we need to hear from you. To learn about your experiences at [Name of Institution] and hear your opinions, we invite you to participate in a 90-minute group discussion with up to nine other students.

Details on the group discussion are as follows.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

Directions: _____

Refreshments will be provided!

Since we are talking with a limited number of students, the success and quality of our discussion will depend on the full participation of the students who attend. Please contact [Name] at [phone number] or [e-mail address] to confirm your attendance.

We look forward to seeing you on [date].

Sincerely,
[Focus Group Coordinator Name]

b. Student Consent Form

[Your college may have its own consent form. If not, below is sample text that your institution may choose to use.]

[Name of Institution] Student Consent Form

[Name of Institution] is conducting focus groups and interviews with students in order to gain insights into students' experiences at this college. Information gathered through focus groups and interviews is used alongside other data to help college leaders identify institutional policies and practices that will help community college students succeed.

Your participation in this focus group is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to participate at any time, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with [Name of Institution].

Students who volunteer will essentially participate in a group conversation. By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in one 90-minute focus group.

I, _____, a student at [Name of Institution], have read and understand
Name (please print)

this consent form and agree to voluntarily participate in this project.

Signature

Date

c. Student Participant Profile Sheet

[Name of Institution] Student Participant Profile Sheet

ALL RESPONSES WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

1. What is your gender?
 Male Female Agender/Non-binary

2. How old are you?
 Under 18 18–19 20–21 22–24 25–29
 30–39 40–49 50–64 65+

3. Did you enroll in college immediately after graduating from high school?
 Yes No

4. Is this the first college you have attended or did you begin college elsewhere?
 Started here Started elsewhere

5. Is this your first academic term at this college?
 Yes No

6. What is the highest academic credential you have earned?
 None Vocational/Technical
 High School Diploma Bachelor's Degree
 GED Master's/Doctoral/Professional Degree
 Associate Degree

7. Who in your family has attended at least some college? (Check all that apply.)
 Mother Spouse/Partner
 Father Legal Guardian
 Brother/Sister None of the Above

8. What is your enrollment status?
 Full-time Less than full-time

c. Student Participant Profile Sheet

9. What is your meta-major (or use your college's terminology for meta-major)?

10. Are you eligible for financial assistance?

- Yes No Don't know

11. If you **are eligible** for financial assistance, please indicate which of the following describes your current situation?

- I have received financial assistance
 I applied, but have not received it
 I have not applied for financial assistance

12. Are you married?

- Yes No

13. Are you employed?

- Yes No

14. If yes, how many hours do you work each week?

- 1–5 hours 6–10 hours 11–20 hours
 21–30 hours More than 30 hours

15. Do you have children or other dependents living at home with you?

- Yes No

16. If you have children living with you, which of the following best describes your child care situation?

- My children are enrolled in a child care center at this college.
 I currently have child care arrangements for my children outside of this college.
 Finding child care is a major issue for me.
 My children do not require child care.

17. What is your racial identification?

- American Indian or Native American White, Non-Hispanic
 Asian, Asian-American, or Pacific Islander Hispanic, Latino
 Native Hawaiian Other (Please specify) _____
 Black or African-American

18. Are you an international or foreign national student?

- Yes No

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

[Name of Institution] Student Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Purpose

[Name of Institution] is conducting a series of focus groups with students and faculty on our campus(es). Our objective is to build understanding of pathways integration at the college, and the kinds of experiences that students *perceive* are critical to their success in the community college, as well as the kinds of challenges they face. What we learn can be very helpful as [Name of Institution] works to serve its students more effectively.

Focus Group Outcomes

Outcome 1: To understand students' educational goals for attending the college.

Outcome 2: To understand students' learning experience at the college.

Outcome 3: To understand students' engagement experience at the college.

Focus Group Outline

Each focus group will comprise the following activities:

Meeting overview
Consent forms
Participant introductions
Questionnaires (e.g., demographics forms/survey items, etc.)
Discussion
Summary
Thanks

Approximate total time 75-90 minutes

Focus Group Prompts (Pre-Discussion)

- 1. Introduce facilitator:** Hello, my name is [Name of Facilitator]. I work for [Name of Institution].
- 2. Explain purpose of focus group:** [Name of Institution] is conducting a series of focus groups on our campus(es). Our objective is to build understanding of pathways integration at the college, and the kinds of experiences that students *perceive* are critical to their success in the community college, as well as the kinds of challenges they face. What we learn from you can be very helpful as [Name of Institution] works to serve its students more effectively.
- 3. Explain desired outcomes and how gathered information will be used:** [Name of Institution] will prepare a report that captures your voices and major themes of this conversation. *Your voice counts!* However, you will not be identified by name.

NOTE: *At this time, the facilitator can read aloud the outcomes provided in this protocol.*

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

4. **Explain consent form and request signatures:** We ask that you sign a form that stipulates your consent. Participation is absolutely voluntary.
 5. **Describe facilitator role:** My role as facilitator is to ask questions and keep the group on track. We will be moving through the material fairly quickly, so I may have to cut conversations short even when there is much to say about a topic.
 6. **Describe participants' role:** Each participant is expected to do the following:
 - a. share experiences and opinions, both positive and negative
 - b. understand that there are no right or wrong answers
 - c. respect the request that everyone is to participate in discussion and fill out all paperwork
 7. **Logistics:**
 - a. 90 minutes maximum
 - b. Arrangements for water and restroom break
 - c. Ask that all cell phones are turned off
 - d. Other?
 8. **Ground rules:**
 - a. One person speaks at a time; no side conversations.
 - b. No one person dominates; everyone will have a chance to be heard.
 - c. There are no right or wrong answers; the discussion is about your experiences at this college and what we learn will help the college improve upon its work with students.
 9. **Questions:** Now, are there any questions before we get started?
 10. **Introduction of participants:** As we go around the room, I would like for each participant to state their name, how long they have attended this college, and their primary academic goal.
- NOTE:** *If someone does not fully meet the criteria (e.g., is not a current student or is under the age of 18 years), the facilitator should explain why he/she cannot participate, thank him/her for his/her time, and courteously escort him/her from the room.*
11. **Questionnaires:** Administer surveys, questionnaires, or participant profile documents for collecting quantitative data on participants.

Focus Group Discussion Questions

Outcome 1: To understand students' educational goals for attending the college.

Q1: Why did you decide to attend this college? Did you already have a specific goal in mind?

Q2: Any other college-specific questions that your Pathways team would like to include?

Outcome 2: To understand students' learning experience at the college.

Q1: Let's talk about study skills and being prepared for college. Do your instructors help you improve your study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings)? If so, please give an example of how they did this.

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

- Q2:** What about the beginning of your classes, when you first enter or start a class, how do you find out what the objectives of the class are? How do you gain clarity about the desired outcomes for the class or exactly what knowledge and skills you are expected to attain in that class?
- Q3:** Again, when you are beginning your classes, do your instructors spend time helping you to recognize the value and relevance of the class content for your chosen career area and/or transfer goal? Is there discussion about how what you learn in a particular class connects to what you have learned in another class last term or to what you will learn in a future class?
- Q4:** Now, let's talk about your major. What is your major or program of study? Were you advised to take math that's appropriate to or related to your chosen field of study? Tell us more about that. What type of math class have you taken or do you plan to take?
- Q5:** In your required math and English classes, are there readings or other assignments that are clearly relevant to your program area or field of study? If so, please give an example.
- Q6:** In general, do your instructors in required general education core classes (English, math, government, history, psychology, etc.) work to include assignments (readings, projects, etc.) that relate to your program of study (major) and your career goals?
- Q7:** How often as part of your coursework are you asked to complete assignments (in or out of class) that require you to APPLY what you've learned, to really DO something concrete with the content you're learning? *(Prompt if needed: Examples might include building a robot with a group of pre-engineering students, or completing an oral history project for a history class, or writing a classroom management guide for early childhood teachers.)*
- Q8:** Does your program of study require an internship (field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment)? How do internships work? If they are required, have you participated in it yet? What was it like?
- Q9:** In any of your classes, are you required to do a portfolio assignment? If so, in what classes? Describe the portfolio assignment. What did you learn in the assignment?
- Q10:** You have talked about how you came to understand the expected learning outcomes in a particular course. Now, how does your instructor ascertain whether and how well you have actually learned what you need to learn? What methods are used to assess your learning? (Exams? quizzes? Group projects? Hands-on demonstrations of knowledge or skills? Building a portfolio of your work? What else?) Do your instructors use a mix of these approaches or rely mostly on one? Are any of these methods more effective than others at actually helping you better master and retain the new knowledge and skills? Which methods are most effective in challenging you to do your best work?
- Q11:** When you are in a class that you consider really good in helping you learn, what is going on in that class? Tell us what a "good class" is like.

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

Q12: Now the other side: When a class is not going well—boring or exasperating, or leaving you in the dust—what is going on in that class?

Q13: Any other college-specific questions that your Pathways team would like to include?

Outcome 3: To understand students' engagement experience at the college.

Q1: How frequently do your instructors give assignments that require students to work together in groups? In class? Out of class? Examples?

Q2: How often do your instructors in a class learn your name? Learn about your academic and career interests? Take a personal interest in you and your success?

Q3: Have your instructors had assignments that introduced you to other students? Please give an example.

Q4: How do your instructors communicate with you about their views of your potential as a college student? Share an example—positive or negative, good or bad.

Q5: Have you talked with your instructor about your plans after college? Plans to transfer? Career plans? If so, describe this conversation.

Q6: What happens if you are struggling to learn the required knowledge and skills in a course? Follow-up: Does the instructor reach out? Someone else at the college? Do your courses typically have built-in supports to help you succeed? (Tutoring? Time in a lab? Extra instruction? Study groups?) Is participation in these learning support activities optional or required? Are they part of all courses or only some courses?

Q7: Any other college-specific questions that your Pathways team would like to include?

Conclusion

Q1: What advice would you give to a new student about the best way to learn and do well academically at the college?

Q2: What advice would you give to a teacher about how to help students learn?

Q3: Any other college-specific questions that your Pathways team would like to include?

e. Faculty Consent Form

[Your college may have its own consent form. If not, below is sample text that your institution may choose to use.]

[Name of Institution] Faculty Consent Form

[Name of Institution] is conducting focus groups and interviews with faculty in order to gain insights into students' experiences at this college. Information gathered through focus groups and interviews is used alongside other data to help college leaders identify institutional policies and practices that will help community college students succeed.

Your participation in this focus group is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to participate at any time, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with [Name of Institution].

Faculty who volunteer will essentially participate in a group conversation. By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in one 90-minute focus group.

I, _____, an employee at [Name of Institution], have read and understand this
Name (please print)

consent form and agree to voluntarily participate in this project.

Signature

Date

f. Faculty Participant Profile Sheet

**[Name of Institution] Faculty
Participant Profile Sheet**

ALL RESPONSES WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

1. What is your gender?

- Male Female Agender/Non-binary

2. For how many years have you taught at the college level (full- or part-time, any college)?

- Less than 1 year 10–19 years
 1–4 years 20+ years
 5–9 years

3. Please indicate your teaching field: _____

4. What is your employment status at this college?

- Full-time faculty Adjunct faculty

5. In which program are you employed at this college?

- Arts and Sciences Career and Technical Education

6. At this college, what is your teaching load this term (not counting overload)?

- 1–3 credits 13–15 credits
 4–6 credits 16+ credits
 7–9 credits
 10-12 credits

7. At this college, what classes are you currently teaching?



g. Faculty Focus Group Protocol

[Name of Institution] Faculty Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Purpose

[Name of Institution] is conducting a series of focus groups with students and faculty on our campus(es). Our objective is to build understanding of pathways integration at the college, and the kinds of experiences that students *perceive* are critical to their success in the community college, as well as the kinds of challenges they face. What we learn can be very helpful as [Name of Institution] works to serve its students more effectively.

Focus Group Outcomes

Outcome 1: To understand the teaching and learning experience at the college.

Outcome 2: To understand students' engagement experience at the college.

Focus Group Outline

Each focus group will comprise the following activities:

- Meeting overview
- Consent forms
- Participant introductions
- Questionnaires (e.g., demographics forms/survey items, etc.)
- Discussion
- Summary
- Thanks

Approximate total time 75-90 minutes

Focus Group Prompts (Pre-Discussion)

1. **Introduce facilitator:** Hello, my name is [Name of Facilitator]. I work for [Name of Institution].
2. **Explain purpose of focus group:** [Name of Institution] is conducting a series of focus groups on our campus(es). Our objective is to build understanding of pathways integration at the college, and the kinds of experiences that students *perceive* are critical to their success in the community college, as well as the kinds of challenges they face. What we learn from you can be very helpful as [Name of Institution] works to serve its students more effectively. We also are conducting two focus groups with students.
3. **Explain desired outcomes and how gathered information will be used:** [Name of Institution] will prepare a report that captures your voices and major themes of this conversation. *Your voice counts!* However, you will not be identified by name.

NOTE: *At this time, the facilitator can read aloud the outcomes provided in this protocol.*

4. **Explain consent form and request signatures:** We ask that you sign a form that stipulates your consent. Participation is absolutely voluntary.

g. Faculty Focus Group Protocol

5. **Describe facilitator role:** My role as facilitator is to ask questions and keep the group on track. We will be moving through the material fairly quickly, so I may have to cut conversations short even when there is much to say about a topic.
6. **Describe participants' role:** Each participant is expected to do the following:
 - a. share experiences and opinions, both positive and negative
 - b. understand that there are no right or wrong answers
 - c. respect the request that everyone is to participate in discussion and fill out all paperwork
7. **Logistics:**
 - a. 90 minutes maximum
 - b. Arrangements for water and restroom break
 - c. Ask that all cell phones are turned off
 - d. Other?
8. **Ground rules:**
 - a. One person speaks at a time; no side conversations.
 - b. No one person dominates; everyone will have a chance to be heard.
 - c. There are no right or wrong answers; the discussion is about your experiences at this college and what we learn will help the college improve upon its work with students.
9. **Questions:** Now, are there any questions before we get started?
10. **Introduction of participants:** As we go around the room, I would like for each participant to state their name, title, academic department or program, and years employed at the college.
11. **Questionnaires:** Administer surveys, questionnaires, or participant profile documents for collecting quantitative data on participants.

Focus Group Discussion Questions

Outcome 1: To understand the teaching and learning experience at the college.

- Q1:** Let's talk about study skills and helping students prepare for college. Provide some examples of how you help your students improve their study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings)? How frequently do you do this (in the first week, every other week...)?
- Q2:** How do you share the objectives of the class that you are teaching with students? When does this occur? How do you share the knowledge and skills that students are expected to attain in class?
- Q3:** How do you help students recognize the value and relevance of the class content and how it applies to their chosen career area and/or transfer goal? Do you talk with them about how what they learn in your class connects to what they have learned in a particular class last term or what they will learn in a future class? If so, tell us about that conversation? How do students respond?

g. Faculty Focus Group Protocol

- Q4:** How do you work to include assignments (readings, projects, etc.) that relate to students' program of study (major) and their career goals? Can you give an example?
- Q5:** How often as part of their coursework are students asked to complete assignments (in or out of class) that require them to APPLY what they've learned, to really DO something concrete with the content they're learning? Provide some examples of the types of assignments students are asked to submit.
- Q6:** Are students required to submit a portfolio assignment? If so, describe the portfolio assignment. What information do students learn in the assignment? As a faculty member, why did you decided to incorporate this method of learning into the class?
- Q7:** How do you ascertain whether and how well students have actually learned what they need to know? What methods are used to assess their learning? (Exams? quizzes? Group projects? Hands-on demonstrations of knowledge or skills? Building a portfolio of your work? What else?) Do you use a mix of these approaches or rely mostly on one? Are any of these methods more effective than others at actually helping you better assess whether students have mastered and retained the new knowledge and skills? Which methods are most effective in challenging students to do their best work?
- Q8:** Any other college-specific questions that your Pathways team would like to include?

Outcome 2: To understand students' engagement experience at the college.

- Q1:** How frequently do you give assignments that require students to work together in groups? In class? Out of class? Can you provide examples?
- Q2:** How do you learn about your students' academic and career interests? What about their extracurricular activities, how do you learn about these?
- Q3:** How do you incorporate assignments that introduce students to their peers? Please provide examples.
- Q4:** What happens if a student is struggling to learn the required knowledge and skills in a course? Follow-up: Do you reach out? Does someone else at the college reach out? Do courses typically have built-in supports to help students succeed? (Tutoring? Time in a lab? Extra instruction? Study groups?) Is participation in these learning support activities optional or required? Are they part of all courses or only some of your courses?
- Q5:** Any other college-specific questions that your Pathways team would like to include?

g. Faculty Focus Group Protocol

Conclusion

Q1: What advice would you give to a new student about the best way to learn and do well academically at the college?

Q2: What advice would you give to a fellow community college instructor about how to help students learn?

Q3: Any other college-specific questions that your Pathways team would like to include?

h. Suggested Room Set-Up

Suggested Room Set-Up

Characteristics of a Suitable Focus Group Space:

Large space	The space must be large enough to accommodate the focus group, with a separate small table for the note-taker, and any audio visual equipment desired.
Quiet	If you are recording audio, noise cannot be heard through the walls from other rooms or the outside.
Equipped with controllable window light	Concerning video, if there are windows, they should have shades. Sun pouring in presents a problem.

Table Set-Up:

Approximately three classroom style tables in a U-shape is the best arrangement, allowing focus group participants to face the moderator and also to see each other. The long rectangular classroom tables, end to end, but somewhat wrapped into a semi-circle, make it easiest for the moderating team to reach the participants. The note-taker's table may be near an electrical outlet, if taking notes on a computer/iPad.

