

## QEP Topic Conversations: Student Government Association Executive Council (04.07.09)

- Students need help with time management, and to realize that their focus should be on class.
- Mention was made of the need for student mentoring – beyond the peer counseling program – especially for incoming students. Additionally, peer counselors need help in seeing their responsibilities as extending beyond basic introductory matters; to this end, need to take a fresh look at Freshman Orientation. As things stand, Orientation seems to focus more on “cramming” in a lot of important information in a relatively limited amount of time, whereas it should focus more on connecting with students.
- On a closely related matter, it was suggested that the Freshman Orientation program should be extended over the course of an entire semester. Within this, emphasis should be placed on the distinctly Lasallian character of CBU, students would be encouraged to take ownership over their degree, and there would be increased contact with professors to begin to open the lines of communication (a vital piece that is often missing in a student’s time at CBU); the latter would obviously aid in retention.
- It was suggested that our students don’t really have a sense of vocation, and the career fairs sponsored on campus are not especially useful in this regard.
- Discussion then turned to the relative isolation of the CBU community from the larger Memphis community; we seem, all too often, concerned primarily with more “internal” affairs. Along with this, students need to be able to articulate who we are as members of the CBU academic community. As a way of addressing this important matter, it was recommended that the second half of the peer counselor program focus on a sort of mission through mentoring program with involvement from professors and various other staff members.
- There was a general consensus that students and faculty need more pride in CBU! The student leaders on campus are, more often than not, spread very thin; these leaders often serve on several committees in addition to their involvement in various other student organizations.
- One participant bemoaned the elimination of IDS and what we lost by eliminating it . . .
- Discussion turned to the importance of developing a sense of caring in students, of enlarging their world beyond the parameters of their own individual lives and campus life. To this end, participants agreed that more needs to be done in the direction of some sort of service learning requirement, especially given our identity as a Lasallian university. Perhaps incorporate service learning component into every degree program, offer a service learning diploma at the end of the program, contract with professors for service learning credit, etc. This would obviously serve to highlight CBU’s distinctively Lasallian character. Of course, this would need solid administrative support, especially given the additional demands this would place on faculty members. Within this conversation, emphasis was placed on resources and advising.

- Another participant acknowledged that, for many of our students, CBU was not their first choice. This being the case, it becomes all the more important to have some kind of Lasallian formation program which could, among other things, provide coherence to a student's overall academic experience.
- Several participants expressed a strong aversion to the importance the administration seems to be placing on developing and offering more and more on-line courses. The consensus was that, although there may be some financial benefits to doing so, it detracts from what CBU is all about and betrays the importance of one-on-one attention from professors and building a strong sense of community in the classroom. Moreover, it was suggested that such courses could actually serve to de-value one's degree. This is to ask: What might we lose in terms of the inherent value of the distinctive character of a CBU student? What do companies who hire CBU students look for? They frequently speak of their moral character . . .
- Finally, several students bemoaned their experience(s) taking classes populated by evening or non-traditional students, and spoke generally of the inferior quality of these students in terms of basic skills and their ability to make substantive contributions to the overall class experience.

(Participants: S. Alperin, C. Saint-de Felix, K. Latta, J. Wortham, B. Bridges, K. Weyrick, Ian ?)