



Evaluating the Sophomore Questioning, Understanding, Engaging, Succeeding, and Transforming (QUEST) Program

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BACKGROUND

- Living on campus as a second-year student at a four-year institution can increase student GPA and retention rates, lower academic probation rates, and encourage a timelier graduation¹
- The Sophomore Questioning, Understanding, Engaging, Succeeding, and Transforming (QUEST) Program requires that students within SDSU's geographical service area are required to live on campus for both their first and second years. It is designed to connect students to appropriate academic, social, and career-planning resources offered at SDSU
- Students who live on campus for two consecutive years are 13.5% more likely to graduate in a timely fashion¹

RESEARCH AIMS

1. Better understand the academic and personal experiences of students living on campus
2. Inform and establish best practices for the Sophomore QUEST Program
3. Measure well-being, sense of belonging, engagement, program participation, and student success

METHODS

1. OHA/REO sent a Google Forms survey to three groups of first-year students to submit interest for participating in 90-minute focus group session that would explore on-campus residential experiences
2. The first 15 students from each group to complete the Google Forms survey were selected to participate in the three focus group sessions
3. Pizza dinner was provided to participants directly preceding each focus group session
4. Each focus group session was led by two moderators who were on-campus Residence Hall Coordinators
5. Moderators asked participants questions regarding four central themes that were derived from the findings of the 2017 Student Success Pathways Post-Assessment Survey: "Relational", "Academics", "Life Skills", and "Transitioning". Students were also asked to complete an Exit Quiz after the conclusion of the focus group discussion
6. Audio recordings were sent to and transcribed by a third-party transcription company

FINDINGS

Theme	Focus Group #1 (n=3)	Focus Group #2 (n=3)	Focus Group #3 (n=7)
Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roommates are either closest friends or very distant - Little-to-none mingling in the residence halls - Difficult to study and sleep due to hallmates partying late at night - There should be a more rigorous process for pairing roommates - Issues with dividing chores with roommates - Would have been nice to get advice from upperclassmen about campus life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Made good friends inside and outside of residence halls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residence halls did not participate in events - Greek life was a positive experience for making friends
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GE courses are irrelevant/not interesting - Important for professors to have a sense of humor - Difficult to retain so much information - Uncertainty of academic standing in certain classes throughout semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classes are rewarding but information is also repetitive - Prefer to self-study instead of attend classes - Not all residence halls are equipped with the same academic resources such as STAR centers - Students need to be more proactive with contacting professors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For international students, there can be a language barrier - Increased motivation when students on same floor are also studying - Some teachers are inattentive
Life Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenging to balance school and social life - Due to limited finances, additional pressure for finding a job - Dissatisfaction with meal plan and limited resources for cooking in residence halls - Opposition to sophomore live-on requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meal/housing plans don't allow students to be independent - Residence halls are a great transition into adulthood - Personal finance classes/resources would be helpful - Need for more frequent residence hall inspections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard to be healthy with the current meal plan options - Difficulty living with roommates that have different wants/needs - Hard to keep up with Greek life events and still do well in classes - Need to improve time management skills
Transitioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult to wake up early for 8AM classes - Academic advising is not always helpful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to put more work into learning - Difficult to deal with academic advising - Difficult for international students to adjust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excited to be in college - Want more career/life advice

CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Students reported a mix of positive and negative experiences associated with living on campus during their first year
- Overall, students are developing critical skills for navigating challenging situations while living on campus
- These findings support the integration of a second-year live-on requirement into the Sophomore QUEST Program

REFERENCES

¹SDSU Office of Student Affairs Research & Assessment