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| Focus Group | April 14  2009 | |
| Focus group on individual’s bachelorette experience at Northern Illinois University eight individuals were surveyed at NIU. The focus group was conducted by: Dave, Phillip, Andrew, Ricky, Rashida. | | Focus group |

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At Northern Illinois University, Market research was conducted of a team of five members, Dave, Philip, Rashida Ricky and Andrew; conducted a focus group of eight participants to answer questions in regards to their baccalaureate experience as a student at NIU. There were five aim goals to accomplish, how to promote a literate society, contribute to a democratic society, value interdependence between people and nature, diversity, learn about the world and themselves, and how they will be able to create, transfer, and preserve knowledge. The answers were analyzed for an analysis review, in the analysis you will find each respondents answers and our recommendations and suggestions ending with a closing statement.

A focus group was conducted on Friday April, 10, 2009 at 11:15 located at Northern Illinois, Barsema Hall, Marketing Department. There were a total of eight participants 2 female and 6 male. All respondents were Caucasian and one black respondent. They were between the ages of 19-25; Rashida Cooper, was the moderator, Dave observer, Phillip, and Andrew, were note takers, and Ricky took notes and used the flipchart.

The focus group started at exactly 11:15am and ended at 12:30pm. There were a total of eight participants, some of the participants were set by appointments and others were intercepted from Barsema’s Atrium. We’re glad that all respondents were able to come and we first started the focus group by thanking everyone for coming. Once all the staff introduced themselves and made the participants feel comfortable the moderator explained the purpose of the meeting. I informed the group to feel free to be honest and open when responding to questions and all information will be confidential. Then each respondent signed a consent form acknowledging their involvement in the research. We also, collected each respondents follow up information such as, name, and email address. Most respondents were assertiveness and seemed a little restless and uncomfortable at first, then they started to open up and feel more comfortable as the focus group took place, however, the focus group was a success!!

Aim one was how to promote a literate society; the probing question was how they felt that they could access various, information in the real world once they graduated. Most respondents at first seemed to be confused by the question. With the help of probing the answer we found that most respondents felt that they could contribute to a literate society. Participants felt that their previous classes gave them leadership skills, and real world life experiences. Also, with the communication skills they earned in class it will be beneficial to promote a literate society. *Matt, who is a Marketing sales major, felt NIU had tougher classes and real world experience, being in groups has taught him research skills and how to access information.* While most participants agreed one respondent felt different and said he feels that on a broader perspective NIU has taught him how to promote a literate society but not on a local level being a finance major he stated he has not learned those skills needed to promote a literate society.

Aim two asked how respondents were able to contribute to a democratic society. Many respondents said they haven’t learned of any political issues in class. There were some who said that they learned by taking the ethics exam, however, most felt they learned about politics either through personnel experience or by watching TV not in their classroom*. Dan, an accounting major said that going to school during the election he has seen more Obama supporters versus John McCain supporters, so he noticed that most students at NIU were democratic and very less republican supporters.* One respondent who is a special education major had to take political and history classes so she felt strong about learning politics at NIU. After analyzing each individual answer we concluded that NIU does not help students to promote to a democratic society.

Aim 3 asked respondents how they understood the natural world and most respondents said that they were able to view the natural world because NIU reinforces the value of a dollar and the strong academic challenge improves time management skills, which, all will be needed in the real world. Most respondents felt they were getting a good education to help them view and understand the real world through class experience.

Aim 4 wanted to get a feel about how students felt about NIU diversity. Respondents had mixed reviews about the subject but we found out that students felt you learned how to adapt on your own because being in the real world there will be diversity and the business courses helped in promoting diversity with group work. Neal, felt that if there were no diversity then everything will be the same and to have a diverse opinion will help make better business decisions in the real world. Other respondents felt that NIU was so diverse that it’s hard to avoid. If you want to be diverse then the opportunity is there for your challenge, but nothing particular in the class room has taught diversity. You can learn diversity through several of student organizations but not on an academic level. One respondent who is chemistry major said that in his class you’re either white or Indian so in chemistry there wasn’t much diversity of other races.

Aim 5 wanted to know how they felt about learning about the world and themselves. Most respondents felt NIU has helped in this area by learning decision making skills that will impact their life; also, they have learned how to be more accepted to change. NIU has also taught how to make good choices, and how the world is changing globally. Most respondents felt strong about NIU teaching them how to adapt to change and adjust to different situations. “*NIU has taught me more about international things but not so practical. I know what is out there but I do most learning on my own. I feel that NIU needs more study abroad.”Brandon”, finance major.*

Aim 6 asked respondents how they feel they can create, transfer, and preserve knowledge. Most respondents felt that NIU provides them with the skills because of management 346 teaches students how to transfer messages so that the receiver can decode it into meaningful information. Presentations have helped students be creative, and show the knowledge to the teachers and other students that is a benefit for obtaining information. Shelly feels in her field it’s all about learning and applying the applications to real world examples. NIU has helped her in hands on experience as well as in the classroom. *“You learn what you’re taught then you apply it to real world situations “Shelly special education major.* Chris, who is chemistry major, feels different in his classes he feels it’s just this is what you need to know and come back and take a test. There are no internships or hands on experience that will help him pertain or pass on his knowledge. He feels if he had a job right now he wouldn’t be able to transfer the knowledge because he’s lacking hands on experience*.”I wish in my major that we had job opportunities. Being close to Chicago, and Wisconsin, provides students with an excellent source of resources but NIU doesn’t provide me with hands on experience. So no, I wouldn’t be able to transfer knowledge*, *“Chris, chemistry major*. Even though, Chris, may feel his major hasn’t taught him how to preserve knowledge he thought that the college of business is a great school and most students who attend have good knowledge.

Recommendations

1. NIU need to promote more diversity in majors that aren’t so diverse; For example, recruit more African Americans and Hispanics for chemistry majors. Respondents feel that their classes weren’t diverse enough for non business majors.
2. Offer internships and job opportunities for non business majors. Respondents felt there wasn’t; enough hands on experience.
3. Offer more diversity in classrooms and don’t make it an individual level. Respondents felt that diversity was on an individual basis and not taught in classrooms.
4. Offer more culture study abroad programs on a global level. Respondents felt that there was not enough study abroad for Black Americans and other cultures.
5. Rely more on real world experience versus text books. Respondents thought that text books and test don’t help to retain knowledge but having hands on does.
6. Provide non business majors with more student resources. Respondents felt that business majors had more opportunities than them and they hoped there would be the same resources for other majors.

The research was concluded at 12:30 pm where respondents were thanked once again for their participation. It was a long discussion some respondents felt restless and ready to go. The moderator made respondents feel comfortable by letting participants know during the focus group how many questions were left to answer. The respondents said that the questions were hard and had trouble understanding them. The moderator had to probe and explain each question to respondents because they had trouble understanding. Appointments were set for some of the respondents and the rest were surveyed through intercept. At first we had a lot of appointments canceled, however, the intercept in Barsema for the replacements was a success. Now we would like to conclude the market research on April 14, 2009 and thank all participants and colleagues for attending and participating in Market Research study.