

# Big Bend Community College

## MAPA Focus Group Spring 2010

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The purpose of the focus group was to get students' input on MAPA, discover what was helping students accomplish their academic goals, and to learn what students believe will improve students' success and progress to achieve their goals at BBCC. Big Bend's Achieving the Dream Coach and Data Facilitator facilitated a MAPA Focus Group with current MAPA students.

The nine BBCC students who attended our focus group were pursuing the following degrees or certificates: transfer degree for healthcare, nursing degree, teaching certificate, AA&S transfer to Eastern, medical assistant program, transferring to Central for counseling degree, transfer degree to University of Washington

Students were informed about MAPA through several different means including: letters in the mail, students word of mouth, email, and MariAnne Zavala-Lopez, BBCC counselor.

Students suggested several ways to recruit new MAPA students; emails, flyers, t-shirts, changing the meeting time, training MAPA students to be mentors, and having a central information board in each building.

MAPA offers a variety of services. Students emphasized mentoring as one of the most beneficial. One student said they do not have a mentor at home so having someone on campus was very helpful. Some of the other services include a friendly place to do homework, tutoring, financial aid advice, a safe place to discuss academic goals, and tools to talk to instructors. Students liked listening to the mentors' personal experiences and struggles, "One Mentor told the story of how her scholarship money literally came from potatoes, corn and any other vegetable from the back of their car". The one other thing that MAPA does is help students with struggling language barriers. One student said, "These are the students that should be recognized more frequently, they not only have academic barriers but also language barriers".

Some things that students thought would be helpful to know before they started BBCC was, knowing about MAPA and knowing they could take alternative classes that they may struggle with. As one student put it, "We don't always know where to go, and we as Mexicans get left off the bus"!

When relating MAPA to other clubs at BBCC such as MEChA, SSS, and ASB, students felt that MAPA had better organization. They hope to make an example of its club and style to encourage other clubs to follow in their lead. The students seemed split on if MAPA should have officers. But if they did have officers they would like to implement the following; meetings should be mandatory for anyone running for office, and only second year students can run for office. The only thing students would like to change to MAPA that the other clubs have is to include field trips. The primary focus of the fieldtrips should be on universities and students must earn the trip by putting in time and effort. Students also recommended that rules of clubs should be reviewed and standardized.

MAPA's main focus is for the students. Students said they need more clubs that positively influence students and give useful information to BBCC students.