

# JAM STUDENT FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Fall 2017

## Introduction

Focus groups were conducted with first year pathway students to get feedback regarding their Jam experiences. Coaches recruited students via email and a total of 21 students indicated they wanted to participate in the focus groups. Ultimately, two focus groups were conducted with a total 14 students. The focus groups lasted approximately 45 minutes and were facilitated by Patty Quiñones, Research Analyst, and Emily Bangham, Student Success Lead Coach.

## Results

### Jam

#### **What did you think Jam was before you attended it?**

- *Students had a general sense that Jam was some kind of orientation to the college and that it would involve working with other students, but had no idea as to the structure or activities involved.*

#### **Now that it's over, what do you think is the purpose of Jam?**

- *To become familiar with the resources on campus*
- *Get to know other students with similar majors and make friends*
- *Understand what college will be like.*

#### **What is the one thing that you learned during Jam? Did Jam prepare you for the 1<sup>st</sup> week of school? College?**

- *Overall students indicated that Jam prepared them for their 1<sup>st</sup> week of class because they knew how to navigate the campus (i.e., find their classes, how to purchase textbooks online).*
- *For the students who said that Jam prepared them for college, they all indicated that the credit card activity provided them with knowledge that they would be able to use in their academic and everyday lives.*

#### **What was your favorite part of Jam?**

- *Jammy Video Activity - students enjoyed collaborating with others, and indicated that they learned about careers in a fun way, that it didn't feel like work.*  
*"Making the video, I had a blast."*
- *Scavenger Hunt – Liked that it was interactive and a physical activity where they got to walk around campus.*
- *Other activities students enjoyed included the Values Option activity and "Jam workbook sheets" but did not elaborate on why other than the activities were "fun."*

#### **What is your least favorite part of Jam?**

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- *The general consensus was that there was too much of a time gap between activities. Students felt that they were playing games simply to pass the time between activities.*
- *A few students indicated that 4 days a week from 9:00 to 5:00 pm was too long and wished they had the option of leaving early on the last day.*

### **What is the one thing we could do to improve Jam?**

- *Reduce the time in between activities by either having more activities or reducing the number of Jam days.*
- *Incorporate more lessons like the Credit Card Activity, students felt the activity provided them with important life skills/knowledge.*

## Jam Leads

### **What do you think was the job of the Jam Lead?**

- *To create a welcoming/supportive environment*
- *Help students familiarize themselves with the campus*
- *Help students connect with other students*
- *Facilitate Jam sessions/classes*

*Note: At least one student indicated that their Jam Lead was not welcoming and supportive. One student said "Our Jam leader was so unenthusiastic, dull, and almost mad that he had to be there."*

### **Do you think your Jam Lead was well prepared? Helpful? Friendly?**

- *Results to this question varied by focus group - students in focus group A indicated that their Jam Leads were very prepared and very friendly and welcoming.*
- *Students in focus group B indicated that they felt their Jam Lead(s) were not well prepared. One student said, "Jam Leader yelled at us for getting into class early." Still, students indicated that their Jam lead was helpful.*

## Coaches

### **What do you think was the job of the coaches?**

- *To provide academic and personal support*
- *Oversee and monitor Jam Leads*
- *Send students announcements regarding various opportunities on campus and reminders to scheduled appointments to meet.*

*Students indicated the coaches were not as visible during Jam, "Did not see the often."*

### **Do you think the coaches were well prepared? Helpful? Friendly?**

- *Overall students said their coaches were well prepared – had lesson plans and seemed to know what they were doing.*

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- Overall students said their coaches were helpful and friendly – they helped students complete the Jammy video, and were attentive and friendly when meeting with students.

### Do you think your coaches and Jam Lead worked well together?

- Students were generally confused by this question and asked, “What is the difference between a Coach and a Jam Lead?”, and “Are the Lead and the Coach the same thing?” Students said they rarely saw their Jam Lead and Coach interact.

## Content

### What did you think of the activities? Did you like them? Find them useful?

| Activity                                   | Key Points   |
|--|--|
| Skills squad activity                      | For some students this activity was not memorable, and some students chose not to participate.   |
| Values Auction activity                    | Overall, students said this activity was fun, however not particularly useful.   |
| Video (Drive)                              | Some students indicated they didn’t remember this activity. Other students said they really liked this activity and wished they could have seen this video earlier in life (in H.S.)   |
| Motivation: Extrinsic and Intrinsic labels | Overall students liked this activity and found it useful because they were provided with real world situations. Students enjoyed working in groups and working on the poster.  |
| Designing the perfect classroom            | Overall students liked the activity, however some students indicated it got out of hand sometimes and felt it didn’t portray real classrooms.  |
| Credit Card Activity                       | Students really liked this activity, they found it informative, useful, and for many of them it was the first time they were educated on this topic. Students referenced this activity throughout the focus group as an activity that provided them with life lessons. One recommendation to improve this activity was to provide students with credit card statements and show them what to look for. |
| Canvas and Portfolio training              | Students learned to appreciate this activity after Jam, when their classes started. At the time, however, students didn’t think the activity was “fun.”  |
| Scavenger Hunt                             | Students enjoyed this activity because it was useful (know where to find various offices/services) and active (got to get out of the classroom and walk around).   |
| Jammy videos                               | Students really liked this activity because they had fun learning about a career. This activity provided the opportunity for students to study a career in depth and display that knowledge in a fun way (video). Students liked seeing everyone else’s films but at times that took a little too long.  |
| Board game: Extreme road trip              | Students had mixed feelings about this game. Although they said it was fun initially, they felt like they played it too many times, and the rules were not clear.  |

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## Structure

### **Did you have any problems signing up for Jam?**

- *Students in focus group A indicated that they signed up for Jam, on their own, and that process was easy. However, at least one student in focus group B indicated that coaches signed them up for Jam and that caused some confusion (Athletes?)*
- *A few other students said that while it was easy for them to sign up for Jam, there were asked attend a later Jam session for arriving 10 minutes late to the Jam session they had initially signed up for.*

### **Did you feel prepared to attend your first day of Jam? Did you know where to go, what to bring, etc.?**

- *Again, students' opinions on this question differed based on focus group. Group A indicated they knew exactly where to go and what to bring. Students in group B said that they didn't know where to go and what to bring (perhaps a consequence of not signing up for Jam on their own?)*

### **Did you think four days was enough? Too much?**

- *Overall, students thought that there was too much down time between activities. As a result, they felt that Jam could be reduced by a day or two by eliminating the down time. Another solution was to add activities so that there isn't so much down time, or have shorter days.*

### **Final comments?**

- *Students that provided final comments said that overall, Jam was fun and Pathways is really helpful. They believe that Jam will benefit future students. They recommended that Jam include more real world activities (e.g., credit card activity) that will help students academically and with life outside of college.*