

# PCC's Virtual Suggestion Box

## Suggestions & Responses

### 2022-2023

(Archived suggestions and responses can be found on the T-Drive:  
Executive Council Meeting Minutes: Suggestion Box Archives)

#### **Suggestion Box Comment 6 (12/19/22)**

Throughout the Fall 2022 semester several students, parents, and community stakeholders have brought forth a number of questions and concerns regarding math offerings at Piedmont Community College (PCC). Some of the questions/concerns pertain to student success rates, interventions that are taking place to provide additional support for students, and what PCC is doing both inside and outside the classroom to ensure students are successful.

Response:

As we recognize the questions and concerns regarding PCC math offerings, the College would like to share some of the many actions that have and are taking place to address these concerns and to support math students. PCC has developed a 21-item action plan, a comprehensive list of the many strategies that have and will take place in the future to address our students' current challenges with math and some of the questions/concerns we have received this Fall. Some of the major items on the action plan include the following:

- Hiring an addition full-time math instructor
- Expanding face-to-face and online tutoring options for students
- Creating new spaces and opportunities for tutoring (i.e. Easy a Pie tutoring three days per week, which has a professional tutor along with several peer tutors to help students with math questions)
- Requiring Career and College Promise (CCP) students to attend tutoring in math if their grade falls below a "C" (70%) until their grade improves
- Increasing communication with high school stakeholders (i.e. parent meetings with PCC deans and CCP staff, sharing what improvements are being made and what resources are available, etc.)
- Holding a math summit where PCC math instructors and math instructors at the high schools can meet to discuss math curricula, challenges, and opportunities for collaboration
- Standardizing and restructuring course weights/assignments (so that students across all sections of a course have the same grading criteria)
- Developing and implementing diagnostic assessments with Person Early College for Innovation and Leadership (PECIL) and other CCP students (to better ascertain what skills have been mastered and what challenges may exist)
- Offering math boot camps in the summer of 2023 to help students prior to entering their math courses

These are some of the many strategies/initiatives that are happening in our math classes. For more information on the 21-item action plan, please contact Dr. David Townsend, Dean of University Transfer and General Education, and he would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have.

#### **Suggestion Box Comment 5 (11/18/22)**

This is in response to the web comments from last month. Webadvisor is still being referenced but it is no longer supported by the system office and can go offline at any given time.

#### **Response:**

Thank you for your comment.

As of fall 2021, PCC migrated from Web Advisor to Self-Service in response to the NC Community College System Office (NCCCS) notifications about Web Advisor's end-of-life status. The workflows that were available in Web Advisor for students and employees are fully functional in Self-Service.

Currently, Web Advisor has a feature that allows students to search for their student identification number, which is not available in Self-Service. PCC's IT department is currently working with NCCCS to find ways to add this search function to Self-Service. As soon as this occurs, Web Advisor will be removed from our website.

All employees and students should use Self-Service for their academic and employment needs.

#### **Suggestion Box Comment 4 (10/29/22)**

This question concerns contractual obligations of PCC employees, in particular faculty. While it is obviously the job of every PCC employee to represent the college at all times, there seems to be a real difference in expectations when it comes to recruitment and retention. Throughout the year, PCC takes part in many public events. Some of these include Personality, Hoedown, Open Houses at both campuses, Welcome Back Weekend, etc..... All are very good venues for "getting the word out" and being visible. However, it has become blatantly clear that required attendance at all these events has now fallen on a select few. Since all faculty contracts (appt letters) contain the same verbiage, why is this the case? Why are some faculty reminded that recruitment is part of their job, while others it is never mentioned? There seems to be a wide discrepancy in the application of expectations when it comes to official recruitment activities. Why?

#### **Response:**

Thank you for this question. All faculty understand that recruitment and engagement are important components of their job, and we ask them to help in various ways, including but not limited to:

- Communicate and re-engage students (current and former) via phone, text, email, and mail
- Assist with tutoring initiatives
- Attend special PCC events
- Recruit at high school events
- Participate in special community events

We have developed a new strategic enrollment management plan that drills down into each discipline. Dr. Buchanan began the discussion at recent faculty roundtables and individual deans will continue sharing and working on this plan with their team. There are clear strategies and activities outlined in detail within this plan and everyone has a part to play in our success as an institution.

While we want every faculty (and staff) member to play an important role in recruitment and retention, please keep in mind that outreach efforts may be slightly different from colleagues in other disciplines.

- In-person community events: PCC's Career & Technical programs have the potential to attract event goers – especially if they offer hands-on engagement! An example is the portable welding simulator. This is exciting for prospective students to experiment with and could trigger an interest in enrollment.
- Beyond community outreach: Many faculty members go above and beyond their regular office hours and spend extra time working one on one with students to ensure their success. This often translates into retention.

**New evaluation system:** Keep in mind that PCC's new evaluation system (section 2.1 of our Professional Development policy) notes that employees are "encouraged to collect a minimum of 10 professional development and/or community service points annually." Attending events for outreach will certainly be a way to ensure faculty (and staff) receive credit for these efforts. In addition, Theme 5 of the evaluation form outlines Professional Commitment and indicates the following:

The purpose of this theme is to ensure Faculty have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively perform the duties of their roles and support the culture of PCC. Frequently participates in pedagogical activities that promote the vision and goals of PCC; attends and sometimes facilitates college functions, student meetings and scholastic activities; engages in professional development activities, conferences, and meetings internal and/or external to the college; fosters continuous learning through participation in professional development or relevant research on related activities; involvement in activities and memberships in organizations in and outside the college that advance and advocate for the college, its students, and the community.

Our overall goal is to ensure that all PCC employees work together and maintain a commitment to our College's growth.

### **Suggestion Box Comment 3 (9/20/22)**

The PCC website needs help. Students have a VERY hard time locating course information and staff spend a lot of time trying to walk students through the process. They should not have to click multiple pages to get to the Programs of Study and then have to scroll and search for the course they are searching for. It should be a simple easy click at the top of the main page. The search engine doesn't work either. If the search engine would take students directly to the "course page" they are searching for, that would resolve issues as well. When you search, it pulls old information and old new releases. In addition, it would be helpful if all college faculty and staff knew their way around the website.

**Response:**

We are always looking for ways to improve our website and the information available to the public. If you have suggested solutions, please reach out to Sarah Barham or Beth Townsend – we love to get input and ideas! If this comment is referencing our specific courses/schedule, all curriculum courses are accessed through the student portal. Are you suggesting we have a link to <https://ss.piedmontcc.edu/Student/courses> on the website's main page/header

#### One Click Access:

Currently, visitors can access the program listing in one click by hovering over “Academics” and clicking “Programs of Study” from the dropdown menu. This page lists the 5 program areas and their individual programs. We have discussed grouping the curriculum and short-term training options in each program area section to provide better identification.

Based on a previous suggestion, we recently added “Academics Overview”, also found under the “Academics” dropdown menu. When you click this option, images and links to “Programs of Study”, “Workforce & Continuing Ed”, “Online Learning”, “High School Programs”, and a couple of other areas we thought might be helpful, are displayed.

#### Search Improvement

We agree that the search feature should be more intuitive. We are working to improve the capabilities with our vendor and will provide updates as they are available. It is also our hope that PCC employees will use the website to learn more about the College as a whole. During convocation we offered both a web training and branding session. Unfortunately, we didn't have the best turnout. If you have suggestions on what we should focus on to help employees learn how to better use the website, please let us know.

#### **Suggestion Box Comment 2 (8/18/22)**

Several months ago an equity salary study identified the majority of employees that were under paid. During multiple town halls Dr. Senegal stated repeatedly that current budgets lacked the funds available to accommodate any adjustments for those grossly underpaid hard working employees. Recently, the board approved a \$10,000 raise for Dr. Senegal which she gladly accepted. This has occurred multiple years in a row. All while knowing her employees were struggling to make minimum proposed salaries. She was not identified in this study as needing an adjustment. Please explain your actions as the President and as the Board for treating your valued employees with such blatant disrespect.

#### **Response:**

The community college president serves a unique role for the institution that includes tremendous responsibilities and accountability. The state recognizes this and therefore allows for a separate process by which compensation is determined. As such, the president's salary and benefits are covered with a direct allocation from the state and is outside of the funding that is assigned for all other employee salaries.

Additionally, the board of trustees conducts an annual review of the president, which is not only required by the state board of community colleges but is also a best practice for any executive position. The evaluation included a number of key performance metrics, of which they determined she met or exceeded in all categories. Furthermore, the board recognized her performance and felt it was entirely appropriate to ensure that her salary was in line with other peer institutions.

It's important to note that there was a market adjustment a year BEFORE the salary and equity study that moved the PCC president from being the lowest paid president in her peer group. The Board decided to award a one-time bonus for service this past year, which is allowed in her three-year contract.

I encourage you to join us in our efforts to find new ways to strengthen the college to live out its mission to transform lives, strengthen community and inspire individuals to excellence.

It's what we focus on every day, and it makes the work more rewarding.

#### **Suggestion Box Comment 1 (8/9/22)**

The laptop giveaway was a huge success for the college and a big WIN for the students. Please keep doing such meaningful things for our students.

#### **Response:**

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your thoughts with us.

As a result of a unanimous decision by PCC's Executive Council, our students received laptops this fall. Since the start of the pandemic access to reliable educational technology and other equipment has been a barrier for many students in our rural service areas.

Our senior leadership team strives to provide as many resources as possible to assist our students in achieving academic success and bridging the technology gap that so many in our community face. We were fortunate to receive additional federal funding that will allow us to continue providing laptops to students in the spring.