

**UWB Academic Services User Needs Committee, 2005-06 and 2006-07
Processes, tasks, and timeline for running and completing focus groups**

This report was authored by the Academic Services User Needs Committee members including Tami Garrard, Nicole Hoover, Amanda Hornby, Julie Planchon Wolf and Betsy Tippens.

*For recommendations about running focus groups, please see the
[User Needs Committee recommendations document](#)*

Timeline and tasks for Cascadia Community College Student/Faculty Focus Groups

[STAGE 1](#) | [STAGE 2](#) | [STAGE 3](#) | [STAGE 4](#) | [STAGE 5](#) | [Acknowledgements](#)

STAGE 1: Pre-focus group work, October 2005 –August 2006

- Initial Meeting of Committee
- Meet with Director for clarification of Committee's charge
- Work with stakeholders to create a clear vision for the focus group
 - We recommend that key stakeholders are part of the Committee
 - Ensure that all stakeholders agree about what kind of information they want to gather from the focus group and what the student/faculty populations you are seeking opinions from are, and in what format the data should be
- Information Gathering: Research and readings
 - See: [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Focus Group Research](#)
- Gather information on the UW Human Subjects review process and Cascadia Community College and/or University of Washington Bothell Human Subjects review process
 - See: [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Human Subjects Dept - UWS](#)
 - [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Human Participants - CCC](#)
- Based on the clear vision your group has for the focus group, brainstorm focus group questions
- Interviews with key Library & Media Center staff and administrators
- Interviews with CCC/UWB administrators and key staff
- Interviews with qualitative research experts, faculty
- Determine which focus group populations you wish to question.
- Finalize composition of CCC/UWB student and faculty focus group populations
- Draft focus group questions
- Review of focus group questions for students and faculty
- Finalize focus group questions for students and faculty
 - See: [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Focus Group Questions](#)
- Request to Director of Academic Services (Cynthia) for funding needs
 - Think about including staff time and resources, and transcription and moderator costs, in addition to the cost of focus group food, premiums/gift certificates
 - In our experience, the following UWB units (full-time staff) put in considerable time: Library Administration staff; Librarians; Media Center staff; Academic

Services staff (note takers) and User Needs Committee Members;
Publicity/Marketing Committee

- Create flyer to recruit faculty for focus groups
- Create flyer to recruit students for focus groups
- Devise letters to recruit faculty and students for focus groups
 - Determine if the flyers/letters need to be approved as part of the UW/CCC/UWB Human Subjects review process.
 - When creating the focus group recruiting materials, be sure to advertise how participant involvement “makes a difference” and is “important and valuable” to us. This strategy is a stronger motivator than gifts or food.
 - An effective tactic to recruit students is to work with faculty to promote focus groups in class and/or give students extra credit for participation
 - For final flyers, see: [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Marketing and Publicity](#)
- Complete UW Human Subject Review Committee Application
 - The current Human Subjects approval is good through 2011, and the User Needs Committee received a Certificate of Exemption (an expedited HS review process). The approval number is: #06-1630-E/C 01. The approved Human Subjects application allows the Library and Media Center – with Cynthia Fugate as Primary Investigator – to conduct student and faculty focus groups with Cascadia and UWB populations (over age 18); Focus group questions on non-invasive/exploratory topics about the CLMC have been approved, as has the ability to publish official data from the focus groups and to audio record focus groups. We recommend that future User Needs Committees consult with Human Subjects for any new focus group, even if it falls under the approved HS review form.
 - See: [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Human Subjects Dept - UWS](#)
- Complete Cascadia Community College Human Subjects Review Application
 - See: [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Human Participants - CCC](#)
- Decide on focus group facilitator, and include facilitator in appropriate meetings, appropriate review of focus group questions, etc.
We contracted with Mary McGuire, UWB Institutional Researcher (and faculty)

STAGE 2: Pilot Focus Group Tasks, September 2006 - January 2007

- Meet with focus group facilitator
- Run a pilot focus group to ensure focus group questions are effective, to determine work flow and what tasks need to be accomplished that you may not have thought of, and to work out any kinks in focus group processes.
 - See: [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Focus Group Planning and Scheduling](#)
- Determine when you will hold the pilot focus group, and with which population you will run the pilot focus group.
 - A good strategy to determine dates of focus groups is to time focus groups either before or after specific classes
- Decide on note takers (two needed per focus group)
 - UWB Academic Services team are good note takers, ensure that Administration supports staff time to take notes; Consider bias and influence

when determining note takers; We recommend not using student workers as note takers.

- See: [..\Focus Group Planning and Scheduling>Note takers](#) and [..\Focus Group Planning and Scheduling>Note taking advice](#)
- For the pre- and post- focus group tasks, such as distributing screening forms, reserving rooms, posting flyers, etc., we recommend creating a sub-group within the Committee to project manage and accomplish these small but time-consuming tasks
- Create screening form to determine student (or faculty) eligibility for participation in focus group, see: [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Focus Group Planning and Scheduling\Forms for Focus Groups](#)
- Reserve potential meeting rooms
- Promote the focus groups to your focus group populations through flyers, letters, invitations, posters, sandwich boards, etc. In our experience, you will need permission to hang up flyers, and there is a daily need to distribute and replenish flyers; create sandwich board advertisements, hang a poster in the Library walkway, and/or determine other ways of promoting the focus groups.
- Send out/post recruitment flyers to students
 - Distribute and replenish flyers; Receive permission to hang up flyers (final week before focus groups, daily updates were made); create sandwich board advertisements
- Send out recruitment letters to faculty
 - For all flyers and letters, see: [\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Marketing and Publicity](#)
- Before the pilot focus group, try and pre-screen interested participants by having them call a designated contact and fill out a participant screening form. This will help determine the number of participants, the student/faculty program area, age, etc.
 - In our experience, students often “show up” the day of focus groups, so rather than arranging for participants to call ahead, you should have participant screening forms ready to fill out over the phone and on the day of focus group
- Coordinate Media Center staff to record focus group session
- Create student consent form, to be distributed during the focus group session and signed by students after the focus group session is held
- The day of the pilot focus group: inform all staff about the focus group; have staff stationed to help guide students/faculty to the focus group location; coordinate with appropriate administrative team to ensure food and gift premiums and signature sheets are ready; have all participants read and fill out consent form before the focus group; make photocopies of the consent forms and slide the copies under the door to be re-distributed to the participants; finally, at the end of the focus group have the facilitator pass around the signature sheet for proof that the participants received a gift premium and distribute the gift.
- Run pilot focus group with Cascadia Community College students
- Contact transcription company to transcribe the focus group session
- Post-pilot focus group, we recommend holding a debriefing session with focus group facilitator, note-takers, and other stakeholders about the process, focus group questions and responses, etc.
- Compile notes & anonymous transcripts
- Report out
- Consult with stakeholders after the pilot focus group to ensure that the focus group questions and responses provide the type of information desired; Confirm that this

meets the goals of the “clear vision” for focus groups before running the official focus groups.

- For transcripts and notes from the pilot, see: <\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Focus Group Transcripts and Notes\Pilot 12-5-06 with students>

STAGE 3: Run Focus Groups, January 2007 – March 2007

- Follow the steps taken during the pilot focus group to run successful student and faculty focus groups. To accomplish all of the small and time-consuming focus group processes and tasks, we recommend coordinating with a team of staff, and utilizing the User Needs Committee’s project management sub-group.
- Tasks include: determining focus group dates (often based on class schedules, availability, etc.), screening participants, reserve meeting rooms, coordinate with the Campus Media Center about recording equipment and staff needed, order and provide food and gift certificates, marketing the focus groups, and coordinating with multiple administrative teams and divisions.
- Run focus group sessions for faculty and students, ensuring that Committee members communicate session dates with Library staff, take notes on the focus group processes and be prepared to adjust or change tasks depending on changing or emerging needs.
- We held seven focus group sessions in Winter quarter for faculty and students, including:
 - Three Integrated Studies student focus groups
 - See: <..\Focus Group Transcripts and Notes\focus groups in 2007\Student Groups\Integrated Studies>
 - One English as a Second Language student focus group
 - See: <..\Focus Group Transcripts and Notes\focus groups in 2007\Student Groups\English as a Second Language>
 - One Business and Information Technology student focus group
 - See: <..\Focus Group Transcripts and Notes\focus groups in 2007\Student Groups\Business and Information Technology>
 - Two faculty focus groups
 - See: <..\Focus Group Transcripts and Notes\focus groups in 2007\Faculty Groups>
- For recorded focus group sessions, consult with the Campus Media Center and the transcription company what type of format is required; coordinate with Library Administration or the party who is going to coordinate payment with the transcription service; coordinate with the transcription company to receive transcriptions; coordination with the two note-takers for each focus group session is also necessary.
- For transcripts and notes from the student and faculty focus groups, see: <\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Focus Group Transcripts and Notes\focus groups in 2007>

STAGE 4: Post-focus group, March 2007 – September 2007

- After the focus group sessions are held, hold a debriefing meeting with User Needs Committee, Cynthia, and Mary McGuire about the focus groups, focus group process, and begin to discuss how best to analyze the qualitative focus group data.
- Receive notes from note-takers, receive typed up and anonymous transcripts

- Compile notes and anonymous transcripts
- Read the notes and transcripts
- With input from stakeholders and focus group literature, determine the best format for sharing focus group data; also determine the various audiences for the data by consulting stakeholders
- We recommend that the Committee hold a series of meetings to read all of the focus group transcripts and notes
- Committee collaborates on creating several documents that summarize focus group results/findings for different audiences
- Create a summary report of focus group results
- Create a report/recommendation that summarizes the focus group process
- See: <\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Focus Group Reports>

STAGE 5: Final steps, ongoing through 2008

- Present and publish findings to Cascadia Community College, Campus Library, UW Libraries, and to broader audiences
- In compliance with UW Human Subjects approval, by 6/2008 the Committee will destroy student and faculty contact information and transcripts to protect data against disclosure to the public

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 - Nicole Hoover
 - Becky Reed Rosenberg
 - Robyn Smidley
 - Betsy Tippens
 - Stephanie Wright

All documents relating to the User Needs Committee can be accessed at:

<\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm>

For recommendations about running focus groups, please see:

<\\Mercury\collaboration\Academic Services\User Needs Comm\Focus Group Reports\Recommendations for running and completing focus groups.doc>