

OPEN FORUM RAISES DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

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The Recorder

A handful of students demanded answers from CCSU faculty, concerned with the many roadblocks on their journeys to graduation.

The Student Government Association held an open forum this week they titled the "Barriers to Graduation" and the students involved did not hold back. The chilly hall was home to a heated debate over issues like transfer students missing transcripts, certain majors offering summer courses over other programs and students wondering why graduation in four years seems nearly impossible.

Students did not even need to attend the meeting to voice a concern; a magnitude of "anonymous" emails were written in hope of the advisors being able to clear the air. Questions were detailed, subject-specific and left little to no room for the panel to back out.

A recent CCSU drop-out submitted a four-page letter about their dissatisfaction with the administration for their lack of responsibility towards students who feel obliged to withdraw from the university. The former student felt as though the school's administration as a whole neglects the many difficulties students face while attempting to complete their program.

The panel was silent after such an introduction to the forum. Dr. James Mulrooney, chairman of the Department of Molecular Sciences, took control over the blunt email and encouraged the Academic Affairs staff to email him with the contact information of the student so that he could speak to them personally. The remainder of the panel was silent.

Concerns about why courses like math and sciences were offered

during the summer but other courses were not gave ample opportunity to the panel to discuss their views.

"I'm sure the sheer numbers of students needing help with elementary level courses are of higher demand," said Mary Horan, assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences.

When asked why transfer students receive less information about the program they're entering, Mary Pat Bigley shared that CCSU aims to treat all programs of study equally.

"I personally meet with the transfer students (of the Nursing department)..there are students who want to be apart of that major, but are not sure what they want to study. Admissions office makes it very clear what is required in the field," Bigley said.

Tension between the panel and the crowd slowly rose as the questions became more personal. A transfer student from Manchester Community College felt like he was misguided by CCSU when told how easy it would be to transfer his credits from one school to the next. He learned quickly that getting credits mailed and evaluated was complicated.

Larry Hall, Director of Admissions, defended that the timeliness of transcript evaluation correlated directly with how soon the school receives the transcript. He revealed to everyone a not-so-fun fact that most students are not aware of: community colleges like MCC mail transcripts once a week versus everyday which causes a processing time that may leave students impatient. That in no way reflects CCSU's prominence, according to Hall.

The questions and concerns continued rolling in, whether over a microphone or anonymously through email. Issues like why tutoring was offered for classes like Algebra but not more difficult



Panel of CCSU faculty answer questions on road blocks to graduation.

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courses such as Statistics or Calculus were simply answered.

"There is power in knowing who some of the brighter students are in a class, and getting to know them," Hall suggested.

Yet, there were topics that through the panel for a loop such as why faculty members do not override students into a full class that they need in order to graduate or why certain instructors mislead students during registration causing them to enroll in courses that they may not need. All led to decent conversation, but many questions went completely unanswered.

Students exited SGA's event with mixed reviews. Some felt as though the answers provided were clear, genuine and helpful. Others, however, left just as confused as they were upon entering the forum. Many hope for another open discussion, next time including an alternative panel including Registrar and Financial Aid officials.

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