



Student Experience Focus Groups
Summary Report
October 3, 2023

Researchers from the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium conducted focus groups on campus September 25th through September 27th. They spoke with 39 undergraduate students about their sense of belonging and community at the college. Participants were given a \$10 Amazon Gift Card as a thank you for their time and insights.

The goal of the focus group conversations was to develop a better understanding of the ways students see themselves as connected with and belonging to the Lewis & Clark community. Participants were asked the following questions:

- What do you like most about being a student at Lewis & Clark?
- What makes you feel like you are part of the Lewis & Clark community?
- What, if anything, makes you feel like you are not part of the Lewis & Clark community?
- Have you ever considered leaving Lewis & Clark, either to go to another college or to take a break from college? If so, what led you to think about leaving? Why did you decide to stay at L&C?
- What can Lewis & Clark do to better support you and increase your sense of belonging to the L&C community?

A summary of themes follows. Please note that the intention of the summary is to capture what participants said, not to generalize to all students or student experiences at LC. Staff across campus have completed an initial review of the data and are looking forward to working with students to make informed decisions and, where warranted, improvements.

Overarching themes:

- Participants viewed LC as welcoming and inclusive
- Most participants “found their people” shortly after arriving on campus, however students who did not attend New Student Trips or visit the SEE Fair, were challenged to make connections to peers and/or student organizations and feel left out.
- Participants were very happy with the beauty of the campus, but frustrated by the quality of some facilities and Covid resources.
- Students are happy with the people at the college, but get frustrated with some of the processes as well as having to navigate multiple systems/technological tools, a perceived lack of communication about activities, and tangible items such as food quality and/or availability
- Overall students are happy with the resources at LC such as Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement, the Platteau, International Students and Scholars, and the Writing Center
- Students are aware of and challenged in the significant differences between the personal finances available to some students versus other students

Results from this project, coupled with surveys administered last spring (about housing and dining, student engagement, and living expenses) will help inform future initiatives, programming, and resources.

Once again, thank you to all of our participants - your voice is heard!