



YOUR VOICE IS BEING HEARD!

In an effort to learn more about the needs and desires of our students, Student Affairs conducts focus groups with student volunteers. The information gained from these focus groups is used to improve the quality of services and programs at Ashford University.

The Quarter 3, 2011 group's focus was to understand how the Ashford University experience impacts student self confidence. The feedback provided helped the University identify additional opportunities for supporting students and developing their self-confidence.

The questions asked were delineated under six content areas: 1) Perspective of Self Confidence; 2) Social Impact; 3) Future Impact; 4) Student Conduct; 5) Advisor Relationships; and 6) Academics. Students were also given the opportunity to discuss the ways Ashford supports student self confidence and offer ideas for the future.

Results indicated the following areas as strengths regarding the Ashford University experience:

- A common theme identified across all focus group sessions was that the instructors have a large impact on students' self confidence. Many participating students report that this impact is greatest when instructors consistently provide feedback and are fully engaged in the course. However, numerous participants indicate that there is inconsistency in instructor feedback and course engagement.

Your positive input is sincerely appreciated!

The focus groups identified areas of opportunity for Ashford University to enhance the student experience. Several of the suggestions and concerns that students have voiced centered on a lack of recognition for academic excellence, and requesting additional resources for academic success.

HOW DOES YOUR VOICE MATTER? HERE'S HOW!

PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY

Student Affairs is pleased to announce the University's fourth honor society. Ashford University's Beta Tau Chi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa!

Phi Theta Kappa is an international honor society for two-year/Associate's degree-granting institutions. Phi Theta Kappa's mission is twofold: to recognize and encourage the academic achievement of two-year college students, and provide opportunities for individual growth and development through participation in honors, leadership, service, and fellowship programs.

Membership is by invitation only. Active Associate's degree-seeking students with at least 12 completed credits of coursework and a minimum of a 3.7 cumulative GPA will be invited to join.

For more information, you can visit Ashford University's website at http://ashford.edu/student_services/phi_theta_kappa.htm or Phi Theta Kappa headquarters website at www.ptk.org/.

LIBRARY SERVICES

In recent library surveys and focus groups, Ashford students have asked for additional materials to help them navigate the Ashford library. In response, the Library team has created numerous tutorials, including:

- "Searching for Articles" (6-minute video)
- "Choosing a Database" (3-minute video)
- "Finding an Article When You Have the Citation" (4-minute video)
- "Finding Full Text Articles" (PDF)
- "So, You Think You Can Google?" (PDF)

In addition to these resources, the librarians have created a Research Tutorial that introduces you to the Ashford Library, and takes you step-

by-step through the research process. It covers important topics such as developing an idea, search techniques, accessing journals and ebooks, citing your sources according to APA standards, searching for/evaluating credible websites, and much more. These are great resources you can utilize as you compose your first research paper, or to get a refresher when writing future papers. This Research Tutorial, along with the other tutorials mentioned above, can be found on the Library's webpage, under the "Tutorials" section.

The Ashford Library has been busy adding journal and ebook content to our electronic collection. If you need business and economics information for your courses, EconLit (available through EBSCO) may be helpful. The Credo ebooks collection has been expanded, and it now includes over 500 subject-specific encyclopedias, dictionaries, biographical sources, quotation books, and more. One of the more popular additions to the collection has been a tool called RefWorks. RefWorks allows you to gather, store and organize citations, create bibliographies, and share citations with others.

New library resources and services will be announced on Ashford's Facebook page, via Twitter and through direct email, so keep an eye out for these announcements.

You have told us that you want more ways to communicate with librarians, so chat messaging and a dedicated library phone line will be rolled out for online students in early 2012. The library email address (library@ashford.edu) will still be maintained, but soon students will be able to interact with librarians in real time as well.

Finally, a totally revamped Ashford Library website will be rolled out in early 2012. This website will make it much easier to find the databases you need to do research for your courses. It will also make it easier for you to get in touch with a librarian when you need help using the library's resources.

As a reminder, the librarians at Ashford are here to help you. Please contact library@ashford.edu if you need assistance with library resources.

CAREER SERVICES

As Ashford University has grown over the years, the needs of our students and graduates have grown more diverse, including the need for additional career planning resources. While many adult learners at Ashford are already employed, many students are seeking to better their quality of life, whether it is through a promotion at their existing employer, or to pursue other career opportunities. Therefore, Ashford University launched an online job search and resume building tool in May 2011, and continues to develop a comprehensive online career resource center to be launched at a future date.

The goal of Career Services is not to place students in predefined roles or careers, but to empower students to be effective and successful in their own career planning process. Career Services offers a variety of tools and resources geared to help students and alumni achieve their career potential. Students and alumni of Ashford University can access career resources via the Student Portal by selecting the options in the Career Services portlet. In addition, student and graduate employers can post career opportunities for Ashford students and graduates by visiting www.hireachamp.com and creating an employer profile. Students and alumni should check www.hireachamp.com if they are a job seeker, need to write a resume, or if they have employment opportunities.

ALUMNI RELATIONS

Ashford University has a rich history of alumni, and continues to grow programs and services for our graduates. In the past year, Ashford has updated the Student Portal so that graduating students can maintain access to it. This access enables alumni to obtain copies of their unofficial transcript, order copies of their official transcripts, and access the Career Services portlet. Alumni can also access

an array of discounts via the website at www.ashford.edu/alumni, or via the Student Portal under Popular Links.

Alumni play a critical role for any university by helping the institution build relationships with past graduates, future students, industry, and the communities they serve. Ashford University hosts regional alumni and student networking events each month to connect existing and past students, as well as online faculty, from around the country. Alumni are encouraged to attend and enjoy these functions to help them network and build a greater relationship with other students and alumni. Alumni can play a major role in helping current students make connections and learn tips for success, since they have already gone through a similar experience.

For a list of events over the next few months, visit www.ashford.edu/networkevents. In addition, be sure that you use the “Keep In Touch” form on the alumni web page to keep us up-to-date on your current contact information, and so you can continue to receive important mailings throughout the year. If you have a success to share or a unique story to tell, please use the form or email yourstory@ashford.edu. You just might be featured in an upcoming issue of AU Connections or be featured on the University website.

Your feedback is an important component of helping Ashford University continue to improve the student experience. Thank you.