

PVCC Hosts Workshop on Self-Advocacy

Jude Bolick, staff writer

College can be overwhelming, and students will often run into a number of problems during their pursuit of a degree. Luckily, PVCC hosts a series of workshops meant to help students overcome a number of challenges they may face during their education by helping them develop the skills needed for academic success. In this particular event, Mastering Self-Advocacy: Be an Agent of Success, the subject focused on the art of standing up for yourself and seeking out help as needed.

Todd Parks, the director of academic support systems, organized the event and gave information about the other upcoming events before the workshop began. It was located in the Writing Center Lab (M627) and took place from noon to 1 p.m. on Feb. 10.

Free lunch was provided for the first twenty students to arrive at the event, which was pizza and cheese bread from Marco's. Five people came to the event, so there was plenty of food to go around.

The speaker for the event was Susan Hannifan, the disability services counselor at PVCC. The lecture was informal and encouraged discussion throughout. Hannifan started the workshop by defining the term self-advocacy using a colorful example.

"Imagine you are a student in a wheelchair," Hannifan said. "You arrive on your first day of class, and you see a huge flight of stairs leading up to your classroom. How do you react?"

She explained that there are several ways one might handle the situation. The student may just turn around and go home, or they may seek out someone for help finding a more accessible route to the class. The decision to not back down and seek out help as needed is what Hannifan defined as self-advocacy: speaking up for yourself and being an agent of your own success. She said that the student that gave up missed out on a number of things, like life experience and the information taught in the class they missed.

The rest of the workshop focused on what it means to advocate for oneself, mostly focusing on asking for help when needed before it is too late.

"New is always uncomfortable," Hannifan said. She encouraged students to break free of the

negative thoughts that often cloud a person's mind when dealing with unfamiliar territory and described the variety of resources available that would allow them to get the support they need. These resources include the student's professor and that professor's office hours, tutoring services like the First Quadrant Math Center and the Writing Center, and the librarians in the Betty Sue Jessup Library.

Hannifan stressed that finding adequate time to study is crucial to college success. She explained that for every hour spent in the classroom, two hours of homework is required to retain the information and build on it. Hannifan also described the 24 hour rule, which says that if a student does not review material within 24 hours of receiving it, studies show they will lose 80 percent of it.

Hannifan recommended students who struggle with finding this time to study visit an academic coach, who will help the student find a strategy for balancing school and personal life. She also said that the best way to learn is to completely overwhelm your senses with the information by hearing it, seeing it, and doing something physically along with it, be that exercising in the PVCC fitness room or taking notes on paper.

At the end of the workshop, Hannifan said that if there was only one takeaway from the lecture, it would be to ask for help before it is too late and to utilize the resources available.

Upcoming workshops: (all in Writing Center Classroom M627 Main Building)

Procrastination: It's not what you think

Sarah Surratt

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

12:30-1:30 p.m.

Rocking around the clock: 24 tips to better manage your time

Meg Foster

Monday, March 23, 2020

Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Get up! Get movin'! Get involved!

Shawn Anderson

Tuesday, March 31, 2020

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.