

**Deliberative Polling Project:
Student Success at
Austin Peay State University**

Background

- concern regarding student success at APSU, as measured by fall-to-fall retention rates and six-year graduation rates

for example, the six-year graduation for the 2001 cohort was 27% and the yearly retention rate since 2002 has averaged between 61% and 66%

APSU is consistently ranked at or near the bottom when compared to other four-year THEC institutions

Goals

- involve currently-enrolled full-time students in a process that encourages and values their informed participation
- identify actionable policy recommendations for improving retention and graduation rates

Deliberative Polling

Theoretical underpinnings:

- criticisms of conventional polling
- discerning or approximating “genuine” public interest in specific issue areas
- faith in ability of individuals to make informed, intelligent decisions on matters which affect them directly when certain conditions are met
- address purported weaknesses and deficiencies in our democracy today

Major Steps of Deliberative Polling

1. “conventional poll” conducted as initial survey
2. background materials
 - role of advisory group
3. deliberative poll event (04-17-2009)
 - small-group and plenary sessions
 - role of expert panel
 - moderators and observers
4. exit survey
5. analysis, evaluation, and presentation

Uses of Deliberative Polling

- promote informed deliberation and discussion
- strengthen democratic citizenship skills
- provide decision-makers with more accurate indicators of constituents' policy preferences

Questions?

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