

October 4, 2005

Editor
News-Gazette
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To the editor:

Research shows that students who interact in positive ways with their teachers gain essential skills and competencies they would not otherwise achieve.

Parkland College's dedication to student support and to engaging students in and out of the classroom was reflected in its recognition as a "High Performing College" in a recent national survey. Parkland was one of 11 Illinois colleges that participated in the Community College Student Survey of Engagement (CCSSE), which focuses on teaching, learning, and retention in technical and community colleges. The national survey is part of a project housed within the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin.

The entire campus was involved in administering the CCSSE and examining its results. Faculty administered the survey to students in the spring 2005 semester, and staff and faculty meetings early this fall have shared the overall results. The college exhibited exemplary performance in the CCSSE benchmark, "Student-Faculty Interaction." Parkland students gave high marks to their instructors and advisors with regards to e-mail communication; discussion of grades and assignments; talks about career plans; exchange of ideas outside of class; receiving prompt written or oral feedback on performance; and assistance on activities other than coursework.

This score is not surprising; Parkland's effective instructors are well-known for giving students full attention, using humor, making learning meaningful, and incorporating classroom assessment techniques to provide a complete human dimension. With the development of our online learning courses, faculty/student interaction through email is increasing, providing supplemental course information and feedback to students.

Identifying what students do in and out of the classroom, knowing their goals, and understanding their external responsibilities help create an environment that enhances student development. This recent recognition illustrates Parkland's unending commitment to student retention, the community, and excellence in teaching and learning.

Sincerely,

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