



## CSI Conversation Starters – Form A

By Lana Low, Ph.D.

### Developmental Based Advising

Instructions: You may choose one or more of the questions below to open the dialogue with the student regarding his or her score on each scale. Generally it is not necessary to ask all questions. Feel free to add your own questions.

#### Academic Motivation

##### Study Habits

1. How did you study when you were in high school?
2. Do you prefer to study with someone or alone?
3. Do you like to study in a quiet place or do you prefer to have music or TV in the background?
4. Describe how you would normally prepare for a test.

##### Reading Interests

1. Do you like to read?
2. What's the latest book you have read?
3. Do you enjoy surfing the Internet?
4. What kinds of information do you find most intriguing on the Internet?

##### Academic Confidence

1. What were your best or worst subjects in high school?
2. Was it easy to maintain your grades in high school?
3. What did you do in high school when you found areas that were more challenging than you had anticipated?
4. Are there any areas you anticipate will be challenging to you in college?

##### Commitment to College

1. When did you decide that you wanted to go to college?
2. When did you start making applications to colleges?
3. Did you ever consider doing something other than going to college?
4. What do you hope to do when you finish college?

### Interactions with Previous Teachers

1. Who was your favorite teacher in high school? Why?
2. Did your teachers challenge you intellectually?
3. Did you get to know the administrators in your high school very well?
4. Would you say that, in general, the teachers and administrators were supportive of the students?

### Social Motivation

#### Self-Reliance

1. You said earlier that you decided to come to college (early, late, other).
2. Did your parents influence your decision to attend college?
3. Did your parents play a role in your choosing this college?
4. What are the things they like about this college?

#### Social Engagement

1. What are the social activities you enjoyed most in high school?
2. Are any of your friends from high school enrolled here?
3. What did you enjoy most about orientation?
4. Are there clubs or organizations you want to become a part of this year?

#### Leadership

1. Would your friends describe you as a leader?
2. Did you participate in any leadership activities in high school?
3. What is your most memorable leadership experience?
4. Do you see yourself getting (more) involved in leadership activities here?

### General Coping Scales

#### Ease of Transition

1. Did you visit many college campuses for academic events, social activities or sporting events during high school?
2. When you thought about attending college, what was the greatest adjustment you thought you'd have to make this year (academic, social, other)?
3. Did you work in high school? Will you work while you're here?
4. Will your class/work schedule present any problem for you?

### Family Support

1. We just talked about your transition to college; what kind of transition has it been for your parents to have a college student? Or do you have older brothers and sisters who have attended college?
2. What are the greatest challenges you think your parents will face with you in college – distance from home, different schedule, missing you, other?
3. Did they want you to go to a college close to home?
4. Do your parents want you to live on campus (if close enough to live at home)?

### Capacity for Tolerance

1. Do you have the same political and/or religious views as your parents?
2. Does this ever cause a problem for you?
3. Do you have definite thoughts about global warming (or other issues)?
4. Were there issues you encountered in your high school classes that challenged your own points of view?

### Career Plans

1. Have you thought about your academic major at this point?
2. How did you choose this major?
3. What do you hope to be able to do with this major when you graduate?
4. Are there other areas you have thought about exploring?

### Financial Security

1. Are you finding college to be more or less expensive than you thought?
2. Were there any expenses you had not anticipated in planning for your college education?
3. Have you and your parents been working with our financial aid office?
4. Are you working or do you plan to work while you're in college?

## Receptivity Scales

### Academic Assistance

1. Have you ever encountered assignments that you found difficult or even “impossible” to complete?
2. Where did you go for help with these assignments in high school?
3. Did your high school offer tutoring services to students who had difficulty with their coursework? Did you use those services?
4. Would you seek tutoring if you encountered difficulty in your classes here or would you seek help from a classmate first?

### Personal Counseling

1. When you encountered problems with your friends and classmates in high school, where did you go for help in resolving the problems?
2. Did your high school offer personal counseling services? And what did these services consist of?
3. Did your friends and classmates use these services?
4. Are you aware of the services we have available here should you or your friends ever need the services?

#### Social Engagement

1. Have you met a lot of people since you arrived?
2. Do you plan to stay in close contact with your friends from home?
3. Would you like to learn about ways to meet more students here?
4. Would you like someone to contact you about getting involved in more social activities here at the college?

#### Career Guidance

1. Did your high school counselor meet with you to talk about your career choices?
2. Have you ever taken any aptitude tests to find out what careers you're best suited for?
3. Are you aware of the career services we have here?
4. Would you like to have someone from that office contact you this semester?

#### Initial Impression Scale

1. What did your friends think about your college choice?
2. What are the things you like most about this college?
3. What are the things you wish were available to you here?
4. Has your impression of the college changed since you enrolled?

#### Final Questions

1. Does this profile describe you accurately?
2. Does it "look" like you?
3. Are the recommendations helpful?
4. Are there changes you would make in this profile?

## Strength-Based Advising Focus

Instructions: These questions are designed for advisors who want to use a strengths-based approach to guide the student interview. Questions 1-3 focus on the strengths the student brings to the interview, based on his/her responses to the CSI items. Question 4 focuses on how to get students to capitalize on their strengths as they engage in their college experience. Feel free to add your own questions.

### Academic Motivation

#### Study Habits

1. How did you study when you were in high school?
2. How did you develop an approach to studying that worked for you?
3. Can you share some examples of how this approach has helped you keep up with your studies?
4. How will you adapt this approach to help you study effectively in college?

#### Reading Interests

1. What type of reading do you enjoy most?
2. Who influenced you most in developing an interest in reading?
3. Has the Internet increased your interest in seeking out new information? If so, how?
4. How will your interest in reading and “inquiring mind” benefit you in college?

#### Academic Confidence

1. What were your favorite subjects in high school?
2. How did you develop an interest in these subjects?
3. Which academic interests will you continue to pursue?
4. How important is it for you to engage in co-curricular activities that support your academic interests?

#### Commitment to College

1. When did you start thinking about going to college?
2. What made you decide that going to college was “right” for you?
3. What program(s) or area(s) of study are of greatest interest to you?
4. Have you thought about how you use your strengths in your life after college?

#### Interactions with Previous Teachers

1. How would you describe your favorite teacher(s) in high school?
2. How do you think good teachers influence students’ attitudes toward school?
3. Did administrators at your school have special ways of showing their support for students?
4. Have these positive experiences made it easier for you to interact with faculty and administrators here?

## Social Motivation

### Self-Reliance

1. You said earlier that you decided to come to college (early, late, other).
2. What were you looking for in a college?
3. Who influenced your decision to attend this college?
4. What are the things you and your family like most about this college?

### Social Engagement

1. What were your favorite social activities in high school?
2. How many of your friends are here?
3. What did you enjoy most about orientation?
4. What social activities or organizations are you looking forward to this year?

### Leadership

1. What is your most memorable leadership experience from high school?
2. What have you learned about yourself from your leadership role(s)?
3. Are there leaders (family, locally, nationally) who have had a special influence on you?
4. Have you thought about how you can continue to use your leadership skills here?

## General Coping Scales

### Ease of Transition

1. What made you feel comfortable with college from the beginning?
2. What aspects of starting college have been more positive than you expected?
3. Are there new opportunities you have learned about since you enrolled (social, academic, work, other)?
4. Now that you're off to a good start, how will you keep your positive outlook?

### Family Support

1. How would you describe your family's involvement in your education?
2. Do you have family members who attended this college (or another college)? If yes, what helpful advice did they offer?
3. How has your family's support made the transition to college easier?
4. In what ways do you anticipate that your family will be involved in your education now that you're in college?

### Capacity for Tolerance

1. When you were growing up, did you and your family ever find yourselves on opposite sides of important issues (like politics or religion)?

2. How did your family encourage you to develop your own opinions and thoughts about controversial issues (global warming, capital punishment, abortion, etc.)?
3. How did you handle issues in your classes that challenged your points of view?
4. Are you looking forward to college classes that will lead you to challenge your current views?

#### Career Plans

1. What academic major or area of interest are you considering?
2. What intrigues you most about this major/area?
3. What kind of career advice have you received thus far (from family, friends, teachers, etc.)?
4. How will you make your decision on major or career?

#### Financial Security

1. When you decided to go to college, how important was it to feel financially prepared?
2. Who provided the help you needed to decide how to pay for college?
3. What kind of jobs would you consider if you decide to work while you're in college?
4. Where will you go for help with your questions about personal finances while you're here?

### Receptivity Scales

#### Academic Assistance

1. How did you approach assignments that appeared difficult or “impossible” to complete in high school?
2. How did you go about finding the help you needed at the time?
3. What type of help was most beneficial to you in tackling tough assignments?
4. If you encounter a seemingly “impossible” assignment here, have you determined how to get the help you need?

#### Personal Counseling

1. How were you able to deal successfully with friend and/or family problems in high school?
2. What types of personal counseling services were available to students in your high school?
3. To what extent did students use these services?
4. How familiar are you with the counseling services available here should you or your friends ever need the services?

#### Social Engagement

1. What are some of the opportunities you have had to interact with other students here?
2. How do you stay connected with your friends from home?
3. What types of social activities would you enjoy being a part of while you're here?
4. Are you open to receiving information about opportunities to participate in various social activities in the college community?

Career Guidance

1. Did you have an opportunity to explore your career interests with a high school counselor?
2. Did your counselor(s) use aptitude tests to identify careers you're best suited for?
3. What additional information would you consider helpful as you explore your career options?
4. Would you like to be contacted by our career services office this term?

Initial Impression Scale

1. What were the positive things you heard about this college that made you want to enroll?
2. Did the positive reactions of your friends help you to make the decision to enroll?
3. In what ways have your impressions become even more favorable since you enrolled?
4. If you were recommending this school to a friend, what would you tell them?

Final Questions

1. Does this profile describe you accurately?
2. Were you surprised by any of the strengths revealed in this report?
3. How can you use these strengths to your advantage?
4. Are there changes you would make in this profile?