Dr. Hartleb and Ms. Glover presented the tenets of Achieving the Dream to more than 30 student representatives from our various programs of study. There were multiple representatives from two programs (DHY, HRT). At the conclusion of the presentation about the history of ATD and ATC’s goals for involvement in the program, the presenters engaged students by asking multiple questions about their experiences at Athens Technical College. The following comments were captured as a result of the forum.

1. **What are the things you like best about Athens Technical College?**
   - The faculty care
   - Tutoring and academic support
   - (From a 4-yr/UGA graduate) All the professors are better instructors and teachers than he had at UGA—they are here to teach
   - Ratio of students:faculty
   - Support of faculty and staff members
   - Small classes (there are classes with 50-80 in attendance elsewhere)
   - (From an older student) Other students reach out to help; it is a friendly campus; she is telling others to come back to school and to come to ATC
   - Access to resources; here you find a practical, hands-on approach and good knowledge of the career field
   - (From an older PLS student) The community thinks highly of the PLS program
   - (From an Elbert Co. student) You are not just a number at ATC; people know who you are and that goes many miles

2. **When asked about the semester calendar v. the quarter calendar, most students thought it was too early to tell whether it will be better for them.**

3. **When asked if they had one wish for ATC, what would it be, students replied as follows:**
   - More parking
   - More respect from USG type institutions
   - DMS students should have reserved parking for their clients just like DHY does
   - More transportation options
   - Student loans
   - Offer an associate degree with more offerings to be able to transfer to a four-year college or university
   - More classes at night
   - Daycare/nighcare for students’ children
   - Financial Aid take more time to help with complicated matters
4. In emphasizing the need for the college to analyze both qualitative and quantitative data, Rhonda asked students why they think their friends and fellow students have dropped out or plan to drop out. Reasons offered include the following:
   - They didn’t get into the nursing program as hoped
   - The nursing program is more concerned about admitting non-ATC students than it is ATC students
   - It is purely a numbers game for admissions
   - The cost of the kit for the Interior Design program ($300) is prohibitive to some students—perhaps ATC could offer some assistance in paying for the kit
   - Life circumstances
   - Conflict with job hours
   - Background issues (sometimes misdemeanors can cause someone to be ineligible for clinical or practicum experiences that are required in programs)
   - Have to work
   - Children
   - Dropped out because they are illegal and facing higher costs
   - Changing mind on what they want to do
   - Classes get filled up quickly and students can’t always attend classes on other campuses that might be open due to transportation issues

5. What advice would students give to others who are entering ATC?
   - Get your finances in order
   - Be prepared to work hard
   - Look at what the program requires
   - Be flexible
   - Do research on job prospects in field
   - Take COLL 099 – it is very helpful and would have even been good to take before entering college
   - Do something you love (don’t waste your financial aid on a program you’re not sure about and then have to pay out of pocket later for what you do want)
   - Don’t transfer – it wastes time/effort
   - Focus on your goal
   - Financial Aid is not good – people in the office act like they are just occupying their desk.
   - Don’t be afraid to go to a technical college
   - Don’t let your age hold you back
   - Come in with a positive attitude
   - Get involved in the college activities (PTK)

6. When asked what is most challenging about ATC, what they are struggling with, students responded as follows:
   - Just coming back, period
   - You’re not living here (disconnect with college and fellow students since they do not live on campus)
• Hard to work around work/school schedule
• Came in as a transient student and advising office advised him (poorly)
• Entrance process is "rough" – advisement could be plainer
• Some classes offered only once/year
• Work v. school
• Advisement
• Financial Aid holdup (didn’t let her know in time for Pell)
• In nursing, getting a C is doing well; this is counterintuitive to what they have learned and strived for in the past even in being able to be admitted to the program
• ENGL, MATH are hard.
• Where do I go to ask for help?