Student Mentoring in Community Colleges

EUGENIA PAULUS
NHCC Student Profile

- 57% women
- 66% underrepresented minorities
- 44% people of color
- 46% low income
- 61% first generation
- 72% part-time (≤ 6 cr)
- 43% returning adults (age > 27 years)
- Average age = 27 years
The real key to economic opportunity and advancement of the student depends not only on whether a student possesses a credential, but also on whether that student actually leaves college with a rich portfolio of learning that employers seek, higher education values, and society needs.
The goal of education is not to prepare students to fit into today’s world.

The **goal of education is to prepare students to create the future world.**
Education is...

• Knowledge
• Critical thinking and problem solving
• Communication
• Computer literacy
• Data analysis
• Dealing with big data
• Community involvement
• Interpersonal skills
• Personal responsibility
Education is…

• All that AND
• Ownership
• Adaptability
• “Emergent” leadership
• Loving to learn and re-learn
• Global perspectives
“Learning Outcomes for the 21st Century” provided by the League of Innovation in the Community College

• the 21st Century Skills required by community college students include the “hard” skills of literacy, numeracy, and information technology literacy, in addition to the appropriate academic competencies; as well as the “soft” skills of teamwork, communication, problem solving, and the ability to work in diverse groups. Further, the League acknowledges that success in the workforce or in higher education depends on the acquisition of these skills. It would be impossible to find an individual who could personally provide a mentee with all these skills. A mentor is an individual who can relate to the student, who can evaluate the skills that the student needs, who is accepted by the student, who can personally help the student develop the skill or who can connect the mentee with the resources to acquire the necessary core skills. The ten community colleges in the focus group at the League of Innovation in the Community College identified the eight core skills to be:
• Communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening)
• Computation skills (understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning, analyzing and using numerical data)
• Community skills (citizenship; diversity/pluralism; local, community, global, environmental awareness)
• Critical thinking and problem-solving skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, decision making, creative thinking)
• Information management skills (collecting, analyzing, and organizing information from a variety of sources)
• Interpersonal skills (teamwork, relationship management, conflict resolution, workplace skills)
• Personal skills (ability to understand and manage self, management of change, learning to learn, personal responsibility, aesthetic responsiveness, wellness)
• Technology skills (computer literacy, Internet skills, retrieving and managing information via technology) (3).

These eight core skills are equally important for every student, whether they transfer to a four-year college or university or pursue a career path after leaving the community college.
According to the article titled “Women of Color in STEM” in the summer 2011 issue of the *Harvard Educational Review*, the patterns of participation in postsecondary education are very much shaped by race and sex; underrepresented minorities and women are more heavily concentrated in community colleges.
Lorelle Espinosa, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives at the Institute for Higher Education Policy and a regular contributor to *Diversity Brief*, in her article on STEM persistence, highlights the crucial role of undergraduate institutional faculty interactions and peer interactions in STEM persistence among women and underrepresented minorities.
In a **Gallup-Purdue Index Report** (May 2014), of 30,000 college students across the U.S., that provides insight into the relationship between students and their college experience, **students who felt supported because they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams, a professor who excited them about learning, and whom they felt cared about them as a person, are thriving in all areas of their well-being.**
Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.

Theodore Roosevelt
“The original Mentor is a character in Homer’s poem *The Odyssey*. When Odysseus went to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted his son to Mentor who serves as his tutor and guardian. Mentor was not just responsible for the boy’s education, but also for the shaping of his character, the wisdom of his decisions and the clarity of his life’s purpose.”
Who is a mentor?

• Advisor?
• Coach?
• Sponsor?

ALL of these and MORE!

A mentor is a leader in the education profession, committed to student success through structured dialogue and reflection with the student; someone whose hindsight can become the student’s foresight; not necessarily someone the student knows well, but someone the student can learn a lot from; a confidential advocate for the student; an individual who has an awesome opportunity to transform the lives of students.
Who is a Mentor?

• A Mentor empowers students to make good choices, to make decisions after careful consideration of outcomes and repercussions
• A Mentor encourages students to take ownership in their learning, to seek challenging tasks and push themselves to develop new skills
• A Mentor helps students develop life skills, set attainable goals, overcome challenges
• A Mentor guides students to develop core values of responsibility, perseverance, courtesy, respect, confidence, integrity, ......
• A Mentor demonstrates techniques to strengthen interpersonal skills and peer relationships by modeling behaviors that appreciate diversity and show respect for peers and superiors
Role of a mentor

• Help students define plan A and plan B
• Aid in conducting feasibility studies
• Help construct roadmaps, timelines
• Assist in resume building
• Identify skills they are lacking
• Help develop marketable skills
• Chart future plans
• Assess progress
• Assist in networking
• Periodically review timelines
• Develop interview and presentation skills
• Document and credential prior learning
Why should students have a mentor?

- 75% of successful students in the United States have been mentored to reach their goals
- Complete their education
- Highly likely to mentor others
STUDENT COMMENTS ON MENTORING

• “Mentoring informs me about current “hot areas”, newly developing employment opportunities.”
• “Mentoring teaches me shortcut methods of doing things; sometimes helps prevent making the same mistakes.”
• “Mentoring may dispel misconceptions and biases.”
• “Mentoring helps acquire the necessary credentials for where I want to be.”
• “Mentoring helps to develop career direction and timing.”
• “Mentoring provides a role model.”
• “Mentoring helps me create opportunities for others (volunteering).”
• “Mentoring tells me when to take strategic risks.”
• “Mentoring helps me go beyond my comfort zone.”
• “Mentoring gives me direction, helps me know which direction to go.”
• “Mentoring gives me feedback.”
• “Mentoring helped me develop the skills sets I need.”
• “Mentoring helps me prepare for the future.”
• “Mentoring helps me focus my efforts in the most productive direction.”
• “Mentoring helps me believe that I CAN do it.”
Why should we mentor?

• **Personal fulfillment** for mentor
• Opportunity to translate values into actions
• Expansion of **networking**
• Increased influence on next generation
• **Job satisfaction**
• For institution positively impact retention
• **Uncover talent**
• Leverage talent across organization
• Increase communication in organization leading to **strong vibrant community**
Results of using mentoring strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year*</th>
<th>Total no of students*</th>
<th>Gender Ratio in class M:F</th>
<th>No of URM*</th>
<th>No of Mentees</th>
<th>Gender Ratio in mentees M:F</th>
<th>No of mentees not advancing</th>
<th>Percentage of mentees advancing</th>
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<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12:13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4:6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5:4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, North Hennepin Community College.

The classification of URM is as defined by the federal government.

Note: 1. Not all the mentees are URM
2. Advancing means completing the course and moving on to higher education or employment, as outlined by the student at the start of the mentoring process.
When does mentoring start?

- On **Day One** of the course
- Progresses after Exam 1
- Moves into Stage 1: **Creating academic plans**
- Plan A and Plan B
- Feasibility studies
- **Road map and timeline**
Day 1

• Complete formalities
• Introduce alumni mentor, a former student, during the last five minutes
• Allow the students to interact
Alumni Mentors

- Starts on Day 1
- Role Models
- Shadowing
- Help with timeline interviews, strategies
- Referrals, Introductions
After Exam 1

• This class is not the end of the journey, everyone is using this class to get somewhere.
• Where are you hoping to go? Can I help you?
• Action Item 1: Lets Make a Plan
My plan

Don’t think about your fears, instead think about your hopes and dreams. Do not think about frustrations, think about your unfulfilled potential. Don’t think about what you tried and failed, rather think about what it is still possible for you to do.

I want to be a ................ OR ........................ OR complete my BS/BA in ...........
Timeline

BIOMEDICAL ENGINEER

TEACHER

• STEP 6:

STEP 5:

STEP 4:

STEP 3:

STEP 2:

STEP 1:
All things are difficult before they are easy.

- Thomas Fuller
Sample Timeline/Introspection

• STEP 1: Earn an A in Organic Chemistry I and II
• STEP 2: Identify the classes I need for the program I want and do my best in them
• STEP 3: Do I need volunteer time?
• STEP 4: Do I need extracurriculars?
• STEP 5: Do I need Undergraduate Research?
• STEP 6: Should I cultivate faculty, my supervisors, ....... for references?
• STEP 7: Will networking help me?
• STEP 8: Talk to successful students –
• STEP 9: DO I have a strong resume? Cover letter?
• STEP 10: Do I have to take a pre professional exam? How do I prepare?
Peer Mentors

- Who are my peers?
- Individuals with a common characteristic
- Already on the path to success
Networking for success

• Essential for academic and professional success
• Most challenging for URM
• Information session for training
• Packet – reference cards
  cards holder/box,
  your questions
• Where? – science salon,
• ACS meetings,
• MAS meetings,
• science fairs,
• local academic institutions
Networking

• ACS, MAS, ....

• Reference Cards, box

• State Science Fair, as volunteers

• Mary Tate, Director, Minority Affairs and Diversity conducts “Empowering Multicultural Students for Careers in Medicine Seminar” that guides students as they prepare for the Medical School admissions process.
Building Resumes

• At the end of semester 1
• Information session on resumes
• Write your own resume
• Comparison with successful student resumes
• Identify strengths and weaknesses
• Work in progress
Developing presentation and interview skills

• Present lab reports
• Videotape presentation
• Peer critique
• Interview questions
Periodic Review

• Review of timeline
• Roadmap check
• Resume progress
Practice with pre-professional exams
• Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible, suddenly you are doing the impossible.

• Reprogram Your Mind For Success So It Becomes Second Nature For You To Think And Act The Way Healthy, Wealthy, And Happy People Do.
References


YOU can do better next time!

Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.

Og Mandino
I believe in you
You will do better next time

The past cannot be changed.
The future is yet in your power.

Unknown
Chemistry needs its daily dozen

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.

Joseph Addison
I know you can do it
Just a little more hard work

It always seems impossible until its done.

Nelson Mandela
All things are difficult before they are easy.

THOMAS FULLER
One that would have the fruit must climb the tree.

Thomas Fuller
Only I can change my life. No one can do it for me.

Carol Burnett
The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr.
Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.

Helen Keller
I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.

Jimmy Dean
It always seems impossible until its done.

Nelson Mandela
Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.

Winston Churchill
A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.

Colin Powell
Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.

Og Mandino
Believe you can and you're halfway there.

Theodore Roosevelt
Patience, persistence and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success.

Napoleon Hill
Dedicated to my first mentors
My Parents