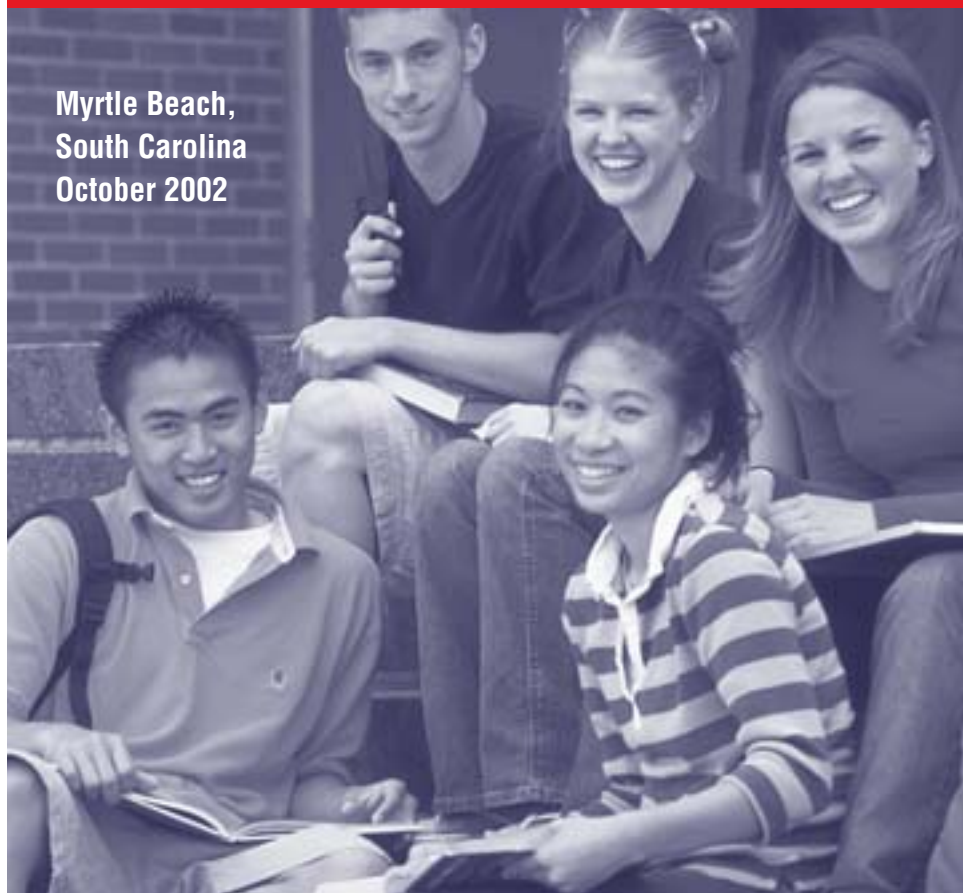


# New Directions

in Student Development

Myrtle Beach,  
South Carolina  
October 2002



Summary Report of the Fourth Annual Conference  
of the **National Council on Student Development**

Edited by Evelyn Clements & Charlene Dukes

**ncsd** NATIONAL COUNCIL  
ON STUDENT DEVELOPMENT  
an affiliate council of the american association of community colleges

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**Evelyn Clements**  
**Charlene Dukes**





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# Acknowledgments

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DAVID PIERCE

Executive Director, National Office  
National Council on Student Development

The National Council on Student Development (NCSO) is pleased to record the success of its 2002 national conference held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. There were 135 delegates who participated in this annual gathering of student development professionals, which provides an excellent opportunity for professionals in student development to hear the very best in innovative practices from community colleges nationwide. The success of this conference is a tribute to the efforts of many individuals and organizations that NCSO wishes to thank profusely.

NCSO extends much gratitude to Dr. Jim Hudgins, Executive Director of the South Carolina Technical College System, who addressed the opening plenary, and to Rod Risley, Executive Director of Phi Theta Kappa, who enlightened the audience about the work of that important organization, as well as to each of the individuals and groups who made their presentations in the workshops at the conference and competed for the Shared Journey Award.

We acknowledge the important contribution of our conference hosts, the South Carolina Technical College System and Horry-Georgetown Technical College, which assumed responsibility for local arrangements. Our gratitude is extended to Becky McIntosh, conference site coordinator from Piedmont Technical College, and to Rennie Lansbery from Horry-Georgetown Technical College, who oversaw local arrangements. These two individuals, with assistance from numerous staff throughout the South Carolina system, were responsible for the myriad logistics that made this conference such a success. We appreciate all your help and hospitality.

Special thanks go to our corporate sponsors who supplied much needed conference materials and resources. These sponsors include: The Chauncey Group International; the ACT East Regional Office; The League for Innovation in the Community College; Noel-Levitz; SCT; Phi Theta Kappa; and the South Carolina Technical College System.

The Board of Directors of NCSO wishes to express again its heartfelt gratitude to John Roth, Ken Kekke, Liz Belgarde, and everyone else at ACT who assisted with the production and publication of this monograph. Without the assistance and sponsorship of ACT, this record of the conference proceedings would not exist.

Much appreciation also goes to each of the authors who contributed the material for this monograph. By following a standard format, we hope that the salient details of their presentations are easily accessible to readers. We thank the authors for taking the extra time and energy to communicate the content of their presentations in this written form.

Last, but perhaps most important, we thank all of the other conference participants for attending the conference, providing vigorous conversations, and raising thought-provoking issues for our profession to consider. Such enthusiastic participation makes a conference thrive. We look forward to seeing you again next year in St. Louis, Missouri.

Current members of NCSD receive copies of this publication free of charge. Others may purchase additional copies from:

Dr. Debra Bragg  
Director, National Office  
National Council on Student Development (NCSD)  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Children's Research Center  
51 Gerty Dr., Room 129  
Champaign, IL 61820  
Phone: 217-244-9390  
Fax: 217-244-0851  
Email: [dbragg@uiuc.edu](mailto:dbragg@uiuc.edu)

# Introduction

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EVELYN CLEMENTS

Middlesex Community College (MA)

CHARLENE DUKES

Prince George's Community College (MD)

The fourth annual conference of the National Council on Student Development (NCS D) was held at the Crown Reef at South Beach Resort in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, from October 27–29, 2002. The beauty of the ocean and the gracious hospitality of our hosts from the South Carolina Technical College system helped to make the conference stimulating and thought-provoking for all who attended.

During the opening session, participants were treated to an inspiring soloist, Kimberly Britt, from Horry-Georgetown Technical College, followed by the keynote address from Dr. Jim Hudgins, Executive Director, South Carolina Technical College System, who spoke on the role of student development in the new millennium. Dr. David Pierce, Executive Director of the National Council on Student Development, responded to Dr. Hudgins' remarks, and then participants broke into networking discussion groups. The groups included a session on Revitalization of Self, led by Dr. Rosemary Woolley; Preparing Future Leaders on our Campuses, led by Dr. Deborah Garrett and Dr. Dick Richardson; Pathway to the Presidency, led by Dr. Drew Matonak; and Research Breakthroughs in Student Development, led by Dr. Debra Bragg. These networking sessions provided the opportunity for colleagues to meet and share ideas in a relaxed and informal setting.

The remainder of the conference included a series of concurrent presentations that competed for the Fourth Annual Shared Journey Award, in honor of Terry O'Banion, past president of the League for Innovation and a strong supporter of NCS D and its mission. These presenters are selected from among sessions previously given at recent meetings of the League, NASPA, AACC, and ACPA, among others, including NCS D regional conferences and the NCS D Exemplary Practice Awards. From these finalists, three winners are chosen by a panel of judges drawn from the NCS D Board of Directors.

Presentations from finalists in the competition were made by 25 presenters representing 14 community colleges from across the United States. The Shared Journey third place award went to Kristina Banos of Daytona Beach Community College (FL) for the LearnerNet Project *Online Student Services—Comprehensive Access*. Second place was awarded to Shirley Jennings, Ph.D., Mary Retterer, Ph.D., and Anna Richards of Pima Community College for the program *The National Conference of Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) Project—Student Teaming and Development Through Service*. First place in the Terry O'Banion Shared Journey Award went to Daniel Herbst, Associate Dean of Enrollment Services, and Sharon Connors, Director of Admissions of Kaskaskia College (IL) for the program *Core Values 101: Students Teaching Students*.

As part of the closing general session, Rod Risley, Executive Director of Phi Theta Kappa, summarized the activities and opportunities for community college students who are high achievers academically and are eligible to join Phi Theta Kappa. Following the NCSD business meeting, participants had the opportunity to tour Horry-Georgetown Technical College and experience a gourmet meal presented by the college's Culinary Arts Department. Over 100 conference participants experienced a substantive and informative program of events and presentations that focused on student development in community colleges. This conference remains the only one devoted exclusively to an audience of people who work in the student development field in community colleges.

# Opening Plenary: The Role of Student Development Services in the New Millennium?

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## Keynote Speaker

DR. JIM HUDGINS

Executive Director

South Carolina Technical College System

## Response

DR. DAVID PIERCE

Executive Director

National Council on Student Development

Good afternoon to student development professionals from across America. Welcome to Myrtle Beach. Given the state of the South Carolina economy we needed your modest infusion of capital. As a former Chief Student Development officer, I was honored to be asked to welcome you to this conference. The initial invitation evolved into being a co-presenter with Dr. David Pierce. The final version is that I am alone in the speaker box with the big guy critiquing my remarks. Boy, do I feel the pressure!!

Finding myself outgunned, I called in the reinforcements. I wrote to several presidents who began their career as student development officers to seek their perspective on the future role of student development and its leader. Several responded and their remarks will be integrated into my comments: Chuck Dassance, Chuck Spence, Bob Keys, Donna Thigpen, Jimmie Williamson, and Ken Atwater. Every one of these colleagues asked me to extend their regards and best wishes.

Are any of you old enough to remember the “good old days” when we worked in a business that was reasonably predictable? For example, student development professionals in senior colleges could review the cohorts of high school graduates and reasonably project enrollment. Their counterparts in community colleges could anticipate enrollment cycles that paralleled the ups and downs of the economy.

Surely you would agree that the future of higher education and the role of student development is much less predictable in the new millennium. The use of the Internet to deploy instruction, the phenomenal growth of corporate and proprietary institutions, and the increasing entry of adults and minorities into higher education—all are examples of change and progress. This led Peter Drucker to write in *Forbes* magazine: “In thirty years the traditional university will be a relic. There will be as great a change as with the first printed book.” While Dr. Drucker overstated the results of change, he got our attention and made us think.

A Westinghouse executive, who could just as well been a community college president, began a strategic planning conference with these observations about the future:

- It cannot be precisely predicted.
- It will be dramatically different from our estimate.
- The rate of change will be greater than we anticipated.

G. B. Leonard observed, “Anyone who tries to draw the future in hard lines and vivid hues is a fool. It will come around a corner we never noticed and take us by surprise.” In view of this wise counsel, I will attempt with a light touch and pastel shades to paint a picture of the future of the student development function and its leaders in this new millennium.

### **Thus, my topic: “The Role of Student Development in the New Millennium?”**

Unfortunately, you will be disappointed that projections include more questions than answers. They are designed to make you speculate about the future and act on your conclusions.

### **Question One: What does the future hold for the student development function?**

My topic—“The Role of Student Development in the New Millennium?”—is followed by a question mark because the future of student development is an open question. As Martha Stewart might say, “And that’s a good thing.” You and I can help to shape and secure that future and ensure that student development will play an even more essential role in the community college.

Admittedly we are the “new kid in town” in the higher education community, and the faculty is not likely to let us forget it. Faculty, in contrast, has been around since the peripatetic leaders of the medieval guilds roamed the countryside of Europe, ultimately evolving into the medieval universities. Student development was born in the last century and has been evolving ever since. Terry O’Banion reported that one of the initial roles of the student development division was to help the president regulate student behavior. Chuck Dassance makes the point that from our inception there has been an artificial separation between student development and academic affairs. George Baker argues that student development over time has become overly specialized, standardized, and formalized in a narrow band of responsibilities. Others argue that student development has become so identified as a student advocate that it has been set in opposition to faculty. We have been tabbed the “civil liberties” organization of higher education.

We have moved through a variety of titles in attempting to define our role within community colleges. In fact, a survey of this audience would likely reveal, even today, a variety of titles and reporting relationships among our participants. Some of you are vice presidents answering directly to the president; others are associate vice presidents or deans of students answering to the academic vice president, while still others carry the title of vice president for academic and student development. Enough to make one schizophrenic!

In contrast, the role of faculty is well established, and I might add, non-negotiable in most community colleges. By their position, as much as by performance, they are given a position of honor in our colleges. They control, for the most part, the college's curriculum and the class schedule. In some colleges student development personnel fill vacuums left by faculty or accomplish roles assigned by the president. We have made significant progress as a profession in carving out a unique and indispensable role in higher education. Student development has led the way in assessment, learning styles, and retention; however, the progress is not consistent across higher education. Thus, we must continue to reaffirm our role and reputation every day. In our melancholy moments we sometimes refer to ourselves as the "Rodney Dangerfields of higher education."

The role and reputation of student development is often dependent on three factors:

- The president
- The faculty
- The student development services leader—you!

The role and reputation of the student development leader is a significant factor in the role of the division within the institution. Admittedly we swim upstream in the academic environment, and a weak, non-respected leader will be swept away by the current of competition.

### **Question Two: What do community college writers and practitioners anticipate for the future of student development?**

Arthur Cohen of UCLA virtually excludes student development in his projections of the future community college because he does not appear to see the unit having a significant impact on curriculum and instruction—which Cohen views as central to the community college of the future. George Baker concludes that the functions referred to as student development must be restructured and realigned with instructional services if the collective efforts are to have a greater impact on instructional services and subsequently on student success.

Lest you despair over these less than inspiring remarks by colleagues, allow me to suggest that the changing nature of higher education places student development in a favorable position. Other than our values related to student success, we do not have traditions to protect. As you know from your own institution, senior colleges more than community colleges value higher education traditions and struggle with the new student demands and the implications of technology. Some faculty members are having difficulties with these change strategies. Speed and agility are not their finest qualities. When a General Motors executive was asked why his company did not enter into partnerships with colleges and universities he replied, "Their speed is deceptive; they are slower than they look."

Thus, in a change-oriented environment, our proven capacity to change and adapt will be an advantage. Futurist Joel Barker noted, "In a new paradigm, everybody goes back to zero."

Student development personnel have been modifying not only student behavior but also our own role over time. Perhaps these experiences will help us find our most effective niche in this new environment. Chuck Dassance notes, “The research shows that colleges impact students in much broader ways than what happens in the classroom.” He goes on to observe that the greatest opportunity for student development is to become “brokers” in facilitating “student engagement” and to be experts in collaborative learning.

### **Jimmie Williamson**

“As community colleges become more of a ‘one-stop’ center, student development will occupy a unique seat within the organization. The student development function witnesses the coming together of academic, noncredit, and financial sides of the institution. Thus, student development can help integrate the impact of these disparate parts on the student.”

### **Bob Keys**

“Many of today’s critical college-wide issues have their genesis in student development: student access, assessment, outcome measures, academic course placement, developmental education, enrollment management, and commitment to diversity.... Student development professionals have the necessary experience and perspective to provide institutional leadership in addressing these issues.”

### **Question Three: What is the future option for expanded leadership roles for student development professionals?**

The sky is the limit. The barrier to the presidency has not been removed, but the bar has been lowered substantially.

Most of you are aware of the research of George Vaughn that documents the road to the presidency running through the office of academic vice president (50% academic vs. 7.8% from student development). But, on a positive note, 50% do not come through the academic office. The percentage of women presidents has increased from 11% to 28%. Unfortunately, the percentage of minorities has remained low and stable.

According to an AACC Research Brief and the August/September edition of the *Community College Journal*, we face a potential crisis in filling expected presidential vacancies between now and 2010. At the present time we have nearly 130 vacancies each year, and that number will increase. Between now and 2007, 45% of presidents are expected to retire, and 80% will retire by 2012. Historically, sitting presidents (30%) have filled presidential vacancies. But because of retirement trends, the percentage will decline. Historically, sitting presidents rose to the position from chief academic officer. However, the CAO average age is almost as high as the president. Observers report that fewer faculty types are moving into academic leadership. Thus, the door is opened for nontraditional candidates.

George Boggs observed, “The student development route, for example, does not produce many presidents; yet the type of leadership attributes generally found in this area are particularly well suited for the new role of the community college president. In addition, women and minorities who remain underrepresented in community

college presidencies are more often found in administrative positions in the student development area.”

In the 1980s and early '90s, colleges received 100 applications or more for a presidential vacancy. Now the number is closer to 50. A *Chronicle* article described searches with fewer than 25 applicants.

### **The views of presidents who are former student development personnel:**

#### **Chuck Spence**

“When your entire focus is the success of students, you tend to be a better listener and coach. People want a CEO who listens. They also handle conflict better—realizing that the resolution of differences brings a great strength. We also know how to process better than many academic types.”

#### **Chuck Dassance**

“Many of the skills required of chief student development officers match up well with those required for presidents. There is no reason a student development leader should not think and act like an instructional leader.”

#### **Donna Thigpen**

“Collaborative leadership will be more than ever important in the future. Student development has the unique professional skills to lead diverse groups toward common goals. Student development also tends to be more accepting of change.”

#### **Ken Atwater**

“To be an effective leader, one must be visionary, responsible, and motivational. History has shown that effective leaders are dreamers and visionaries. They look beyond the confines of space and time and use influence and various leadership styles to transcend the traditional boundaries of their organizations.”

[Ken went on to point out that many individuals with these qualities can be found in student development.]

The picture I have just painted from the research and from the hearts of several community college presidents agrees with my introductory observation—*the sky is the limit*. The opportunities for nontraditional candidates are increasing, the qualifications are changing, and student development professionals match the profile. Do you have the confidence and persistence to achieve the presidency?

What are the qualities of the serious applicant?

- Possesses an earned doctorate
- Has a horizontal and global view of the institution
- Understands theories of learning curriculum, continuing education, corporate training, and applications of technology, funding, finance and admissions
- Has developed and nurtured a network of other administrators in these areas and takes time to learn their work and their challenges
- Demonstrates a depth and breadth of experience
- Often has a president as a mentor
- Possesses broad leadership skills
- Demonstrates the persistence to persevere and achieve your goal

Bob Keys asked me to remind you of the words of Abraham Lincoln, "I will study and prepare myself and then my chance will come."

The bottom line is that the position of president is so different from any other position in the college that no single position provides adequate preparation for it. It is more a career change than a promotion.

**David Pierce**

"A college president is not simply a problem solver. The president is also expected to meet a governing board's need for impartial and expert counsel, inspire faculty and staff in matters pertaining to curriculum and instruction, serve as model of ethical behavior, and provide, as conditions warrant, vision for the entire community. The president is the spiritual leader of the college's learning philosophy, the sculptor of campus climate, the role model for ethical behavior, the builder of bridges and arbiter of budgets, and the link between the college and the community. The president must be able to articulate a vision as well as read a profit-and-loss statement, must be as comfortable at a student barbecue as in a corporate board room, and must believe in the community college as if it were a mission from God."

A Robert Frost poem offers an analogy for student development professionals.

Frost begins:

*"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood  
And sorry I could not travel both"*

And concludes:

*"Two roads diverged in a wood and I,  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference."*

The road to the presidency has been the one less traveled by student development leaders. If you prepare, develop personal and leadership skills, and pursue opportunity vigorously, it will make all the difference.

In the film "The Dead Poets Society," the professor challenges his students by saying, "Seize the day and write your own life poems."

## Shared Journey First Place Award

### **Core Values 101: Students Teaching Students**

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#### **Kaskaskia College (IL)**

SHARON CONNERS

DAN HERBST

Kaskaskia College has dedicated time and effort over the past five years to educating faculty, staff, and administrators regarding the importance of ethical decision-making practices. To that end, Kaskaskia College has adopted as its basic core values *compassion, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility*. In 1999, Kaskaskia College received a grant from the Illinois Community College Board to begin a Leadership and Core Values Student Education Program to train student leaders in values exploration and ethical decision-making practices and to have these leaders provide programs to other students and members of the campus community. The project, entitled *Core Values 101: Students Teaching Students*, is a participant interactive, theater-based educational program.

Today, *Core Values 101* is an active group of volunteer students at Kaskaskia College who have created a unique interactive training program that teaches ethical decision-making. Through *Core Values 101* student leaders have received training in values exploration, ethical decision-making practices, and public speaking. These students have put in many long hours in developing and rehearsing the programs that are presented to other students, members of the campus community and the public. Each one of the scenes used in the presentations has been developed entirely by students and addresses ethical dilemmas students face daily.

In 2001–2002, the students added another component to the program. In addition to presenting scenarios that depict true “right vs. right” dilemmas, the students also developed and implemented small group discussions to enhance the teaching aspect of the program. *Core Values 101* developed a handout that assists participants in understanding the different dilemmas and allows them to take the concepts with them. The discussion sessions increased audience participation in the program and provided participants an opportunity to demonstrate that they had learned the concepts presented.

As in previous years, the students have provided *Core Values 101* at a number of on-campus and off-campus locations. In 2001–2002, the program was presented at Kaskaskia College, at Lake Land Community College in Mattoon, Illinois, and at various high schools and civic groups. The students wrote and performed a special script to address racism as part of a cultural diversity program at Kaskaskia College. In July, the students presented at a national conference in Chicago, the Community College Institute on Leadership and Core Values.

*Core Values 101*, developed to be replicated on other campuses, will provide copies of handouts, scripts, and, if possible, will work one on one with other campus groups to assist other colleges in developing their own programs. An indication of the success of *Core Values 101* is the number of requests from other campuses for assistance in starting a similar program.

In 2002, the Illinois Community College Board recognized the students of *Core Values 101: Students Teaching Students* with the “Award for Excellence in Leadership and Core Values.”

### **Contact for More Information**

Sharon Conners, Director of Admissions

Dan Herbst, Associate Dean of Enrollment Services

Kaskaskia College

27210 College Road

Centralia, IL 62801

Phone: 618-545-3066

Email: [dherbst@kaskaskia.edu](mailto:dherbst@kaskaskia.edu) or [sconners@kaskaskia.edu](mailto:sconners@kaskaskia.edu)

## A Synopsis of the Pima Community College NCORE Project

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### Pima Community College (AZ)

SHIRLEY JENNINGS  
MARY RETTERER  
ANNA RICHARDS

#### **Purpose**

The Pima Community College (PCC) District cited the NCORE initiative as outstanding upon the completion of a diversity and leadership pilot project in 1999, and in the Fall 2000 semester the program was institutionalized. The program was designed around three philosophical tenets from leaders in student development in concert with the PCC East Campus Student Development Mission Statement:

1. “The learning college places learning first and provides educational experiences for learners anyway, anyplace, anytime”—*A Learning College for the 21st Century* (Terry O’Banion, 1998).
2. “Participating in service during the undergraduate years substantially enhances the student’s academic development, life skill development, and sense of civic responsibility”—*Journal of College Student Development* (Alexander Astin and Linda Sax, 1998).
3. “Our diversity is a unique advantage in the global economy...to meet that need, we must have diverse workers, with the college education”—*Crossing the Great Divide: Can We Achieve Equity When Generation Y Goes to College?* (Anthony Carnevale and Richard Fry, 2000).
4. Mission Statement: “The Student Development Division recognizes that learning can occur outside of the classroom. We help students help themselves to become self-sufficient learners. The division seeks innovative ways of providing teachable moments” (2000).

The NCORE project started with limited internal funds but now includes external funding because the community embraced the program to send students to a national conference and enhance leadership, communication, and planning skills. PCC students competed with graduate students from very prestigious universities to present at NCORE and were the *only* community college student group chosen to present.

#### **Need**

PCC seeks to provide more understanding of diversity through the sponsoring of diversity celebrations. Unfortunately, because the audiences tend to be only those interested, the events usually become a “preaching to the choir” forum. The NCORE project goes beyond celebration and provides a learning opportunity for students who will some day be expected to compete in a global economy.

## **Organization**

Fifty students competed to represent PCC at NCORE. The ten students chosen were required to attend a workshop entitled “It’s Time to Talk,” write a theme paper, and develop a speech. Internal supporters and external partnerships include: PCC faculty, YWCA, Tucson Urban League, and the PCC Foundation, which has made the NCORE project such a success.

## **Impact**

The NCORE Project has several immediate and long-term effects and will grow each year at Pima Community College. In 2003 plans include offering a linked credit course to the noncredit component. Student leaders will participate with the YWCA diversity project in addition to teaching K–12 students. As each student leader graduates, the community inherits a true advocate for diversity. The program provides opportunities for staff, community members, and faculty to collaborate with one another.

## **Advice to Others**

The NCORE Project can be replicated at any college that has well-defined learning outcomes and a learner-centered mission statement. Other key components include links between student development and instruction as well as to external organizations.

## **Contact for More Information**

Mary E. Retterer, Ph.D.  
President  
Pima Community College  
East Campus  
8181 E. Irvington Road  
Tucson, AZ 85709-4000  
Phone: 520-206-7619  
Email: [mary.retterer@pima.edu](mailto:mary.retterer@pima.edu)

Shirley Y. Jennings, Ph.D.  
Dean of Student Development  
Pima Community College  
East Campus  
8181 E. Irvington Road  
Tucson, AZ 85709-4000  
Phone: 520-206-7666  
Email: [shirley.jennings@pima.edu](mailto:shirley.jennings@pima.edu)

Anna Richards  
Career Information & Job Placement Specialist  
Pima Community College  
East Campus  
8181 E. Irvington Road  
Tucson, AZ 85709-4000  
Phone: 520-206-7625  
Email: [anna.richards@pima.edu](mailto:anna.richards@pima.edu)

## **LearnerNet Project**

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### **Daytona Beach Community College (FL)**

KRISSY BANOS

#### **Purpose**

The LearnerNet Project was funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE) in 1998. The primary objectives of the project were to:

- Develop and implement comprehensive Web-based student services
- Provide greater and improved access to student services via optional and alternative delivery systems
- Enable distance education students to access student services without the requirement of coming to campus

#### **Need**

Distance education was the primary impetus for the project. Initial offerings of courses utilizing distance education methodologies were limited. To prepare for expansion of these courses, the FIPSE grant was written to obtain additional funding for initiatives including various student services to support the anticipated growth of online learners.

#### **Organization**

The LearnerNet Project Director coordinated all efforts from the basic inception of what services should be offered and the key contacts that needed to be involved to bring the concept to fruition. The Webmaster and web programmer from Information Services did all work “inhouse.” Minimum specifications included maximum interactivity for the end user and user interface between the Web programs and student database. The intent was to minimize duplication of effort and to capture Web-entered information directly to the database. This would minimize staff data entry efforts and allow students to move from one application to another without delay or the need for an on-campus visit.

#### **Impact**

A comprehensive evaluation was conducted examining student use of distance education and online student services. The results of this study suggest that distance education course enrollment has increased modestly, but steadily. In addition, the percent of distance education courses comprising students’ total course loads has increased substantially among those who have taken at least one distance education course. Other DBCC online services are also proving to be useful to students. Uses of online application procedures, online orientation, and Web registration have shown steady increases from inception. Rich persistence, demographic, and enrollment information was collected and analyzed, which will be used to plan recruitment and outreach efforts to underrepresented groups.

**Advice on Implementation**

A great deal of research was conducted prior to writing the LearnerNet Project. This included an internal needs assessment, investigation of exemplary programs to emulate, conversations with experts about realistic cost and human resource projections, and internal college dialogues with stakeholders. This is imperative to the success of a comprehensive project such as LearnerNet. This background information allowed the anticipation of potential problems in addition to creating benchmarks and standards for the Project. Ongoing evaluation of the process and its components also is essential to ensure that the project is moving forward according to established timeframes and within budgetary constraints. And finally, those exploring an endeavor such as this should maintain regular communication with colleagues from other institutions with similar programs and projects. Support groups can keep you motivated, inspired, challenged, and competitive.

**Contact for More Information**

Krissy Banos  
Coordinator, Advising & Orientation  
FIPSE LearnerNet Project Director  
Daytona Beach Community College  
Daytona Beach, FL  
Phone: 386-947-5490  
Fax: 386-947-3150  
Email: banosk@dbcc.edu

# An Institutional Commitment to Student Outcomes Assessment

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## Blackhawk Technical College (WI)

JEANNE WILLIAMS

### **Purpose**

In March 2000, Blackhawk Technical College (BTC) completed an on-site review for accreditation renewal purposes. As a result of this visit and the report that was completed, the college began working on initiatives addressed in the self-study and the on-site visit recommendations made by the Higher Learning Commission—BTC's accrediting body.

### **Need**

The accrediting agency requested an update on the institution's progress in moving forward with the Student Outcomes Assessment (SOA) Plan due July 2002. The leaders of the institution continue to move the initiative to integrate student outcomes assessment into the culture of the college ahead, while communicating and defining the college's expectations for student outcomes. This effort is made with the knowledge and understanding that a critical gap has existed in the rank-and-file's understanding of the components of SOA and the need for providing ongoing support for this area of the college.

### **Organization**

BTC has incorporated the Levels of Implementation as a tool to assist the institution in strengthening the process of continual improvement of the teacher-student learning process. The process that has been developed for addressing and organizing the effort, and work on the Student Outcomes Assessment Plan, has focused on the use of the Program Matrix. The Matrix is a central tool used for the collection of the data used for improving the learning-teaching process. The Program Matrices have been developed to communicate the correlation of each course within the program to the program outcomes. The tool further enhances this process by correlating the General Education Outcomes and Core Abilities to the courses as well. These tools will be further enhanced with a Web-based system, TracDat, which will be used to organize and manage this large volume of data.

### **Impact**

Using quality improvement processes to enhance the teaching and learning process has benefited the organization and, thus, the students. Faculty at BTC use the Student Outcomes Assessment process to work collaboratively with students to assess whether they have accomplished the intended learning outcomes and, if not, to work together to ask and explore questions regarding what can be done differently to enhance the learning process.

**Advice to Others**

Provide faculty with enhancements and tools that will help them manage and “get their arms around” the large volume of information generated in the Student Outcomes Assessment process. Provide institutional support for improving the teaching and learning process by developing a sound plan and strategy for data collection.

**Contact for More Information**

Jeanne Williams  
Curriculum/Alternative Delivery Specialist  
Learning Services  
Blackhawk Technical College  
6004 Prairie Road  
Janesville, WI 53547  
Phone: 608-743-4450  
Email: [jwilliams@blackhawk.edu](mailto:jwilliams@blackhawk.edu)

# A Prescription for Student Development: Communication, Collaboration, Commitment, Caring

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**Brevard Community College (FL)**

CONSTANCE BOBIK

## **Purpose**

The Associate Degree Nursing Program is a two-year program designed to prepare graduates to be competent health care providers, responsible community members, and lifelong learners in an ever-changing world. Through communication, collaboration, commitment and caring, faculty develop experiences and strategies that promote critical thinking, professional competency, appropriate decision making, and effective communication. The primary purpose for the initiative of a curricula change was to create an environment that was conducive to the learning needs of the student.

## **Need**

The driving forces for change were a diverse student population and the impact of technology on our daily lives, education, and health care. Were we providing a learning environment that was conducive to meeting the needs of today's students? Our student population was becoming diversified. Many students maintain full- or part-time jobs and have family responsibilities. Many are single parents seeking an education to better themselves and their children. Some are middle-age students fulfilling a career they aspired to years ago, and some are individuals who are pursuing a second career. The focus needed to shift from "what" we were teaching to "whom" we were teaching within the framework of a dynamic health care system.

## **Organization**

The focal point of the initiative was the students and how we could best facilitate and support their learning. The approach was to design/incorporate a variety of methods to achieve a student-centered learning environment. A national nursing entrance test was used to assess learning styles, testing abilities, coping skills, and other data that assisted faculty in choosing/creating learning strategies. The test continues to be administered to newly admitted students to obtain class profiles.

Following are some of the strategies designed to create a student-centered environment. These strategies could not have been developed without *teamwork*—collaboration of faculty, students, health care affiliates, and other resources.

**"Interactive" Labs**—a combination of the traditional psychomotor skills lab with an infusion of critical thinking scenarios, group decision making/collaborative activities, Internet research, and individualized experiences. Together with the Human Patient Simulator (HPS), which simulates "realistic" responses to student interventions, students are able to practice and gain confidence in a nonthreatening environment without fear of causing a patient harm. There is collaborative learning with other disciplines utilizing the HPS as well. Self-assessment of videotaped skills is an

effective tool for students in identifying skill competency. Faculty and students working together also create inexpensive tools for skills practice and learning activities.

**“Nurse Awareness Day”**—a day during which students invite faculty/staff from the college to the Nursing Department to share and demonstrate how they apply what they learned in their support courses to their clinical experiences.

**Service Learning**—a collaborative effort with the Service Learning Department to promote community awareness. Students choose a health care related project, maintain a journal, and write a reflective essay. Community service is re-enforced at all levels of the program through student-selected activities as part of the curriculum objectives.

**Preceptorship**—a collaborative effort with the health care facilities to assist students in the transition to the workplace. Students establish outcomes for their experience and are mentored by facility nurses. Faculty are on 24-hour call during a student’s preceptorship.

**Mentoring/Retention Plan**—collaboration with the Learning Lab as well as one-on-one mentoring by faculty, tutoring by students/faculty and on-line tutoring programs. Pre-entry advisement by an Allied Health advisor is scheduled for applying students.

**Student Nurses Organization**—pre-professional organization providing experience in professional and political processes as well as community service; students participate in local, state and national chapters as part of their professional development.

**Articulation Agreements**—agreements with secondary schools and university systems to provide seamless articulation in nursing fields; transition programs for LPNs, Paramedics and Respiratory Therapists to RN.

**Committees**—input from health care representatives and the public through an Advisory Committee and from students in a Faculty-Student Curriculum Committee. Recommendations regarding workforce competencies, learning needs and strategies are integrated into curriculum planning.

The program is a continuous “work in progress.” Evaluation of student outcomes and program strategies is ongoing. New ideas and directions emerge, are implemented, and evaluated for effectiveness. The program is designed to incorporate the best practices and programs from within, and from the multitude of resources available for packaging a student learning environment. It is a tribute to all who develop and introduce new projects for student development.

### **Impact**

With the implementation of these initiatives, the outcomes related to graduate performance and employability have remained approximately the same with an increase in employer satisfaction regarding graduate competencies. There is a marked increase in community and professional involvement. Many graduates plan to continue their education.

The graduates are taking on leadership roles, mentoring students in the program, assisting them in their studies, nurturing them when they are in the clinical sites, and assuming preceptorship roles.

### **Advice to Others**

No project or initiative is effective until it is implemented. Implementation depends on people, people committed to exploring new ideas together outside their “comfort zone.”

Explore the strengths of colleagues, manage by example, be patient and caring. The rewards will reflect a win-win situation for students and faculty/staff alike.

### **Contact for More Information**

Constance Bobik, RN, BSN, MSN

Chair, Department of Nursing

Brevard Community College

Cocoa Campus

1519 Clearlake Road

Cocoa, FL 32922

Phone: 321-632-1111, ext. 64182

Fax: 321-634-3731

Email: [Bobik@brevardcc.edu](mailto:Bobik@brevardcc.edu)

# Student Success—A Shared Responsibility

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## Central Piedmont Community College (NC)

EMMA W. BROWN

### **Purpose**

In the 21st century, institutions will have to deal with increasingly complex educational missions in an era of dramatically reduced resources. As students prepare for a changing world of work, their need for appropriate advising places a renewed responsibility on college personnel. The use of faculty, counselors, professional advisors, peer-advisors, and information technology makes for a well-integrated advising system. The Integrated Counseling and Advisement Network (ICAN) model at Central Piedmont Community College has structured its advisement system to involve its employees and technological resources in collaborative ways to enhance student success and provide services at precise points of need.

### **Need**

Central Piedmont Community College began with a dual system with advising and counseling services provided by the instructional and student services units of the college. There was inadequate communication and coordination between these areas, and resources that could maximize the quality of advising services were fragmented at best. It quickly became apparent that if the college hoped to address the needs of an ever-changing diverse population of students, major paradigm shifts in reference to enhancing our advisement process and student success were required. The first step was to view advising as an institution-wide system. In addition, the college had to address the issue of achieving transformation in academic advising through the use of information technology.

### **Organization**

As students at Central Piedmont Community College prepared for the world of work, their need for help placed a renewed responsibility on the college to provide the best counseling and advising services possible. It was in this milieu that a task force was appointed in 1998 and charged with the responsibility to review, evaluate, and make recommendations for developing the most effective advising system possible for our students.

After one year, upon the recommendations of the task force, a new collaborative system of advisement was implemented. The ICAN model is based on a matrix of policies, procedures, personnel, services, and publications that are coordinated on a college-wide basis by an advisement management team (a team of college personnel from the academic, student services, administrative, and technological communities).

To maximize use of technology and to meet the growing needs of our students, a comprehensive online interactive advisement component intended to supplement student/advisor relationships and assist with educational planning was developed. In addition, faculty and staff are able to utilize the system for help in addressing specific

advising issues, and receive training in how to use the advisement screens when working with students. For more detailed information, visit the ICAN website at [www.cpcc.edu/ican](http://www.cpcc.edu/ican).

### **Impact**

The one thing that most community college students lack is a sense of “community.” Having students work with an integrated team of advisors enables advising relationships to develop. These relationships become the “connectors” for students to the total college community. In addition, learning experiences are provided that prove invaluable to students, not only during college but also for a lifetime.

### **Advice to Others**

Since community college students bring with them a constellation of needs, we must have a developmental approach to advising services. We can no longer depend on certain units of the college to produce learning or to provide quality advising services for students. We must have a “total” college collaborative effort to ensure student success. The focus then can shift from “Whose job is it?” to “How can we do it better?”

### **Contact for More Information**

Emma W. Brown  
Dean, Retention Services  
Central Piedmont Community College  
West Campus  
3210 CPCC West Campus Dr.  
Charlotte, NC 28235  
Phone: 704-330-4649  
Fax: 704-330-4620  
Email: [Emma.Brown@cpcc.edu](mailto:Emma.Brown@cpcc.edu)

# **Fundamentals of Speech Communication and Career Development: A Student Development/Faculty Initiative to Incorporate Career Planning in a General Education Course**

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## **The Community College of Baltimore County– Essex Campus (MD)**

JAMES R. ROJAHN

### **Purpose**

As a learning-centered college, Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) is committed to getting students more involved actively in the learning process. The Career Development and Speech departments at CCBC, Essex Campus, responded by creating an interdisciplinary learning experience that focused students' attention on an important life decision.

The goal was a learning experience that met four criteria: (1) relevancy to the lives of students; (2) a methodology that ensured their active involvement; (3) consistency with the established curriculum in Fundamentals of Communication (SPCM 101); and (4) conforming to the career development needs of students.

### **Need**

Survey research has shown over the years that approximately one-half of new CCBC students are undecided about choice of major and career. Another group changes college major several times throughout enrollment.

A small career development staff had struggled to meet this demand through traditional career planning services (individual career counseling and assessments, theme-based workshops, career/life planning courses, etc). The services never seemed to meet the need.

Consequently, the staff looked for an innovative way to expand its reach. At the same time, the speech faculty was looking for a way to improve the quality of the required research speech in SPCM 101.

### **Organization**

The unique student services/faculty partnership that subsequently emerged and solved both of the aforementioned problems grew out of a conversation between the director of career development and a member of the speech department faculty. The plan for the infusion project began to take shape around two fundamental requirements of the speech curriculum: the research speech and informational interview.

The conversation soon included the speech department chair, full-time faculty, and career development staff. Within months, the departments agreed to test pilot a project in five SPCM 101 sections. The project required one week of the fourteen-week semester and included the following components: (1) classroom lecture by career development; (2) occupational assessment of students; (3) career library visit;

(4) an individualized report profiling occupational interests; (5) supervised research; (6) completion of an informational interview; and (7) completion of the research speech.

### **Impact**

Since the 1998 spring semester inception, over 2,000 students have taken SPCM 101 and completed the project. The impact on students is best represented in the results of the data collected from the evaluative instrument. Over the life span of the project, 46.2% of participants felt that “the experience produced a change in their career decision” and 95% felt they had “gained new knowledge that would be pivotal in facilitating their career decision-making.”

### **Advice to Others**

- Commit to the efficacy of a student services/faculty partnership.
- Support need with literature review and empirical data.
- Do your homework; understand the needs and discipline base of your partner.
- Begin modestly with small pilot project.
- Take risks, make mistakes.
- Overestimate effort needed to sustain the project.
- Address student needs as they surface.
- Commit to evaluation and follow-up.

### **Contact for More Information**

James R. Rojahn  
The Community College of Baltimore County  
Essex Campus, E-261  
7201 Rossville Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21237  
Phone: 410-780-6450  
Fax: 410-780-6161  
Email: [jrojahn@ccbc.cc.md.us](mailto:jrojahn@ccbc.cc.md.us)

# Mentoring Project

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## Durham Technical Community College (NC)

TOM JAYNES  
NAN DERNAR

### **Purpose**

The goal of Durham Technical Community College's Mentoring Project was to create a student development program that offered a participation incentive, fostered a positive relationship with a mentor, encouraged the development of essential success skills, and, ultimately, effectively promoted the students' retention.

### **Need**

Over the past decade, the Counseling and Student Development Department at Durham Technical Community College has piloted several student support programs. These programs have had limited success due to the difficulty in attracting commuter students to attend student development activities that are not required. Although each program was free, offered at convenient times, had excellent evaluations, and provided a strong base of success information (study skills, time management, etc.), the programs had low attendance and an insignificant impact on retention. However, the students who attended these programs and developed a personal relationship with a tutor, teacher, or other staff at the college had a much higher retention rate. Thus, it appeared that the more important ingredient for student success was the connection that a student made with the college and not just the content of the programs.

### **Organization**

The Mentoring Project design is relatively simple. It includes many aspects from previous student development programs but adds two essential components—a significant financial incentive and a connection with a mentor. Using a full tuition scholarship, students who have demonstrated success at Durham Tech are recruited to become mentors. New mentors get a two-day “basic training” and go into classes during the first weeks of the semester to recruit student “mentees.” These students are promised that if they complete the requirements for the project they will be given a \$100 book voucher for next semester's classes. Fortunately, due to this financial incentive, the mentors have no difficulty attracting students. Mentees are required to fulfill four basic requirements: meet with an assigned mentor once a week for ten consecutive weeks; attend six Student Success Workshops; attend monthly meetings with all of the other project students and mentors; and keep a journal, which is not collected or read, but simply checked on a weekly basis.

### **Program Impact**

The Mentoring Project has been a great success. The Project encourages a positive relationship with a support person on campus, requires students to learn success skills when normally the student would unlikely make time to develop skills, and

informally encourages the development of essential writing skills through a journal. The project offers an incentive that is both immediate and meaningful to a nontraditional student. Most important, the project effectively reduces the student dropout rate.

### **Advice on Implementation**

Other community colleges that have an interest in replicating this project would benefit by ensuring that a variety of funding sources are used. At Durham Tech, we used combined funding from Durham Tech's Foundation, Carl Perkins, and various other grants. In addition, to ensure the success of this project, coordinators should take time to ensure that each mentor is selected with great care. Mentors can make or break a project.

### **Contact for More Information**

Tom Jaynes, Associate Dean  
Counseling & Student Development  
Durham Technical Community College  
White Building, Room 23  
1637 Lawson St.  
Durham, NC 27703  
Phone: 919-686-3606  
Email: JaynesT@gwmail.dtcc.cc.nc.us

Nan Derner  
Counselor/Retention Specialist  
Counseling & Student Development  
Durham Technical Community College  
White Building, Room 27  
1637 Lawson St.  
Durham, NC 27703  
Phone: 919-686-3385  
Email: DernerN@gwmail.dtcc.cc.nc.us

# Project ALIVE Program

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## Frederick Community College (MD)

SANDRA CAVALIER

### **Purpose**

The Project ALIVE program is a partnership between Frederick Community College and the Housing Authority of the city of Frederick. The partnership was formed to provide families who live in public housing, or have City Section 8 vouchers, with opportunities to continue their education and increase their employability. Both the Project Forward Step program in the Office of Adult Services at Frederick Community College and the Housing Authority offered services designed to assist families achieve self-sufficiency. The two programs working together result in expansion and enhancement of services for public housing residents.

### **Need**

The Housing Authority had partnerships with other educational organizations to provide services to its residents who wanted a GED or needed assistance with basic computer skills, but it needed a formal working relationship with a higher education institution that would provide opportunities for families living in public housing to increase their marketable skills. The college needed to increase its outreach to underserved populations within the community.

### **Organization**

Under the partnership agreement, the Housing Authority agrees to provide intake, referrals, and funding for scholarships for public housing and City Section 8 residents attending Frederick Community College. The Office of Adult Services at Frederick Community College agrees to provide intake, referrals, counseling, advising, support, and management of the scholarship funds. The primary goal of the partnership is to assist families residing in public housing to develop and achieve educational and employment goals in order to become self-sufficient.

This goal is achieved through the following objectives:

1. Assist families with setting and achieving their educational and employment goals by providing career counseling, academic advising, referrals, and support.
2. Remove barriers to beginning or continuing education and training by providing families with financial assistance to pay for tuition, books, child care and transportation.

### **Program Design**

The Director of the Office of Adult Services and the Project ALIVE coordinator designed the program. During planning meetings, the policies, procedures, and eligibility criteria were developed and a financial agreement was created and signed by the Vice President of Administration, Frederick Community College, and the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the city of Frederick.

## **Program Operation**

Both the Office of Adult Services and the Housing Authority identify potential program participants. Eligible participants are scheduled to meet with a counselor at the Office of Adult Services for an intake interview. With the participants' permission, intake information is shared with both organizations—the Housing Authority and Frederick Community College. Services are provided and subsequent appointments are scheduled based upon the results of the intake interview. At the Office of Adult Services, participants receive career counseling (individually or in groups), attend workshops, take tests designed to assess basic skills, receive academic advising, and apply for a variety of financial aid resources, including the Project ALIVE scholarships. Participants' progress is monitored throughout the academic year. Services through Project ALIVE continue as long as participants maintain their eligibility by satisfactorily completing their educational goals.

## **Program Impact**

The Project ALIVE partnership has provided the means for students who might never attend college to begin, or continue, their education. The program combines community outreach and direct student support to an underrepresented population of students, thus increasing their access to education and training. Students include husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, and single parents with young children. Since November 2000 when the partnership began, 67 individuals have been served. Some of them are in the process of completing their GED and will be making plans to attend Frederick Community College in the future. Others are enrolled in developmental coursework that will enhance their basic skills in reading, writing and math; some are registered for credit or Continuing Education courses that will increase their marketable skills or lead to a degree. One single mother graduated in May with an associate degree in Human Services.

The Project ALIVE scholarship awards can be used for tuition, books, materials, child care, and transportation. Tuition awards have been made to 29 students totaling \$21,456; 29 students received \$4,606 in awards to purchase books; 10 students were awarded \$3,876 in child care; and 11 students were reimbursed \$818 for transportation expenses. Making education affordable and accessible is vital to the program's success.

## **Advice on Implementation**

Colleges interested in community outreach to provide services to underserved populations could implement this program easily. The key to developing these partnerships is to identify organizations within the community that serve a population that is underrepresented on campus and share similar, compatible goals with your institution. Another important strategy is to plan together what each organization will bring to the partnership and, finally, to put those responsibilities and partnership procedures into a formal agreement.

**Contact for More Information**

Sandra Cavalier, Director  
Office of Adult Services  
Frederick Community College  
7932 Opossumtown Pike  
Frederick, MD 21702  
Phone: 301-846-2485  
Email: [scavalier@frederick.edu](mailto:scavalier@frederick.edu)

# Computer Connections

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## John Wood Community College (IL)

SUSAN DEEGE

Computer Connections was designed to bridge the digital divide that seriously impairs students and community members in the predominately rural district of John Wood Community College. First and foremost, the goal of Computer Connections is to break down the fear that many students have about using the computer. We want to give access to hands-on, user-friendly instruction to those without access.

Although the college has offered computer literacy and software classes for decades, there was still a “skills gap” recognized by the Career Services staff and various lab assistants. Even those with years of work experience, which often included working with company-specific computer programs, could not prepare a resume for a job search.

The program had an opportunity to specialize and specifically prepare participants for jobs when a new telecommunications company moved to Quincy. The Customer Service Representative position requires a great deal of computer skills, particularly being able to navigate the Internet and cut and paste information from one data base to another.

The program is administered through the Career Services Office where staff works with large numbers of job seekers lacking basic computer skills. Funded by Welfare to Work funds, this free program also markets itself to other community members through referrals from public housing, DHS, the women’s shelter, the Salvation Army, the parole board, and the Workforce Investment Board.

In August of 2002 the program received \$12,500 from the SBC Exceleator Grant funds to expand the program. This will replace other state funding which has been reduced.

Students are given a pre-class survey to determine any special requirements. Both day and evening classes are scheduled. There are six sessions, two hours each. Each *Computer Connections* session has specific competency-based objectives, and repetition is built in to reinforce student confidence.

Teacher selection has been a major component for our success. Patience, a nonjudgmental attitude, a sense of humor, and the ability to adapt to a varied class are essential.

We have served almost 300 students since May 2001. Approximately 30% have enrolled in other college classes, and 25% of the customer service students have found jobs. (The economy has affected the placement rate.)

Margaret Wagner, now a telephone service representative, offers her success story.

“I had worked in manufacturing for 12 years and retail about 5 years, and had never really had a reason to do anything on a computer. When I lost my job I realized it was time to catch up with the times, and all the jobs are pointing in that direction now, too. I’m getting too old to stand on my feet for eight hours a day. With this training I was able to get a good job.”

Careful planning and careful selection of instructors have made this program successful. Easy-to-read and -understand lessons, taught with a sense of humor and gracious attitude, are also required. Class size should be kept to about 15 based on our experience. With a student-oriented focus, any college could duplicate this program and provide employability skills to a wide range of participants.

**Contact for More Information**

Susan Deege, Ph.D.

Director of Workforce Programs

John Wood Community College

1301 South 48th St.

Quincy, IL 62305

Phone: 217-641-4360

Email: SDeege@jwcc.edu

# The Lake Land College Mystery

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## LAKE LAND COLLEGE (IL)

TARA HUBSCHMITT

MATT MADIGAN

### **Purpose**

The mystery was developed to:

- motivate students to learn in an exciting and creative environment
- teach critical thinking skills
- foster a sense of community between students, faculty, and staff
- bridge the gap between disciplines
- involve students at a higher level of engagement
- develop students' real-world skills for now and the future
- foster effective teamwork among the students
- invite creativity and new ways to approach learning
- teach students that school and life are not easily broken down into right and wrong answers, but better and worse choices (there are no easy answers)
- teach research
- teach students to trust their judgment
- teach students that what they learn in one discipline can be carried to another
- teach students how to develop and present an argument
- exercise students' interpersonal skills
- use technology
- have fun

### **Need**

The program was originally designed to creatively teach students critical thinking skills and to engage students more in their schoolwork. A goal that grew out of the initial program's success was to demonstrate how the gap between humanities and math/science disciplines can be successfully bridged.

### **Organization**

The program was originally organized by Tara Hubschmitt, English instructor, for a Composition II course. In an endeavor to expand, following the success of the first mystery assignment, Hubschmitt collaborated with Matt Madigan, Math/Science Division Chair, and developed the second "crime." Participants were given character profiles, along with fellow characters they were to exonerate or incriminate within the mystery. In addition, Hubschmitt and Madigan created an accompanying web site (<http://webclass.lakeland.cc.il.us/mystery>) to assist participants.

### **Impact**

Students learned research and critical thinking skills in a refreshing manner. The level of student, faculty, and staff involvement in this project has been astounding. Students were so excited during the mystery assignment they involved friends and

family members. Furthermore, students frequently commented they thought about the assignment regardless of what else they were doing, proving the assignment transcended the walls of the classroom and college. Despite the fact that the mystery assignment ended early in the semester, the students' enthusiasm for learning remained strong throughout the semester. Currently, the mystery project has such an outstanding reputation that students look forward to enrolling in one of the participating courses so they can work on the project. These classes fill up very quickly during registration because students are so eager to participate in the mystery.

### **Advice to Others**

The mystery project can easily be adapted by any discipline for any course. The best advice is to be as creative as possible and to allow students to do the same. It seems to work best if students can prove one of a few solutions, so easily mapping out one single answer is not likely to be successful. Also, don't overlook the personalities of colleagues that will be involved as suspects; they should be as adaptable and creative as your school has to offer.

### **Contact for More Information**

Tara Hubschmitt  
Lake Land College  
5001 Lake Land Blvd.  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
Phone: 217-234-5321  
Email: [thubschm@lakeland.cc.il.us](mailto:thubschm@lakeland.cc.il.us)

Matthew Madigan  
Lake Land College  
5001 Lake Land Blvd.  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
Phone: 217-234-5309  
Email: [mmadigan@lakeland.cc.il.us](mailto:mmadigan@lakeland.cc.il.us)

# Orientation Program

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## Northern Essex Community College (MA)

NITA M. LAMBORGHINI

DINA L. BROWN

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Northern Essex Community College Orientation Program is to assist students with their transition to college by giving them the resources they need to succeed in the earliest stages of their college career.

### **Goals**

- Communicate vital information critical for the first stages of enrollment
- Insure consistency in the content and delivery of information
- Communicate information in progressive steps to reduce “information overload” and facilitate understanding
- Make students feel welcome
- Foster connections with other students, faculty and staff
- Assist students in developing a “tool kit” of resources (skills and knowledge) that contributes to student success

### **Need**

The Northern Essex Orientation Program was developed in 1999 because no program existed at the college. Intermittent efforts at different forms of orientation, sponsored by different departments throughout the years, made clear that a more comprehensive, sustained orientation program was both necessary and desired by students, faculty, and staff. In addition, the general lack of knowledge among students about how to negotiate the first stages on their entry to the college lead to long lines and dissatisfied students in many service areas. The college was in need of a single orientation process that would give students the information they need when they need it; make them feel welcomed, and foster connections with faculty, staff and other students.

### **Organization**

After extensive research and discussion involving the campus community, funds were allocated to create an Orientation Department. From there the framework for a “process oriented” program with four separate components was developed. The development of each component involved extensive discussion and consultation with other departments from across the campus including the Financial Aid Department, the Career Development Center, the Student Health Services Office, the Registrar’s Office and Bursar, as well as the Office of Admission. The One-Stop Orientation registrations evolved through several iterations and were the product of a collaborative effort with the Process of Enrollment and Admission Group or “PEA.”

The Orientation Program at Northern Essex is coordinated by the Coordinator of Student Activities and Orientation. It is staffed by a group known as the

“Orientation Team,” a group of twenty staff members from different departments within the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Services as well as Presidential Student Ambassadors.

The four major components of the orientation process at Northern Essex Community College are:

1. Pre-Enrollment Orientation: A PowerPoint Presentation
2. One-Stop Registration/Orientation Program
3. Welcome Week
4. Student Success Seminar Series

### **Impact**

The Orientation Program has had a tremendous impact on Northern Essex students and the college community. The program has received campuswide approval and support, and it has achieved many of its primary objectives. First and foremost, we now have a comprehensive program with distinct parts; each part has a unique purpose, and each can be evaluated and amended as needed. In short, there is a system and the system has controls. Program outcomes have been evaluated through student surveys and by carefully tracking student participation.

### **Program Outcomes**

- Participation in Pre-Enrollment Orientations grew from 692 in 1999–00 to 2,637 in 2001–02.
- In the first year of operation, 354 new students attended One-Stop Orientation/Registrations; two years later the number had increased to 1,043.
- Folders distributed at PowerPoint presentations and One-Stop Orientation Registrations ensure consistency in the content and delivery of information, giving students only what they need when they need it.
- A survey of the One-Stop Orientation/Registration process showed the following:
  - 88% of students said they knew more about programs and services after completing the program.
  - 95% of students surveyed said they felt welcomed, and 94% said the advisors were helpful.
  - 90% of students said the process helped them to feel more familiar with the college.
- Students consistently report feeling welcomed to the college:
  - “Everyone was helpful and took time to answer all my questions. Wonderful staff.”
  - “Everyone was nice and helpful. I give you an A+.”
- 1,758 students attended the Welcome Week activities in 2001, making connections with club and organization advisors, faculty, and student services staff.
- 82% of students who participated in Pre-Enrollment Orientation for fall 2001 returned to school for the spring semester.

**Advice on Implementation**

This program can be replicated easily by other colleges. The most important factor in the program's success has been the ability to pull together staff from across the division to form the Orientation Team. The members of the Orientation Team collaborate to implement the first two phases of the orientation process (Pre-Enrollment Orientation and the One-Stop Orientation/Registrations). Those interested in trying this approach are encouraged to get feedback from other departments as to their willingness to collaborate in the effort.

It has also been critical to have support from the highest levels at the college, in this case, the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Services. For a collaborative effort like this to succeed there must be a mandate from above. A mandate from above can reinforce the idea that orientation is everyone's responsibility and help ensure continued effort and involvement from across the division. Finally, those interested in trying this approach are encouraged to begin by piloting each of the different phases and to make adjustments based on feedback from students, staff, and the college community.

**Contact for More Information**

Dr. Nita M. Lamborghini  
Assistant Dean of College Life & Healthy Living  
Northern Essex Community College  
100 Elliott St.  
Haverhill, MA 02129  
Phone: 978-556-3818  
Email: [nlamborghini@necc.mass.edu](mailto:nlamborghini@necc.mass.edu)

# Establishing a Student Advancement Program That Reflects the Community College Mission

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## Northeast State Technical Community College (TN)

GREGORY N. WALTERS

### **Purpose**

The mission of the Northeast State Student Ambassadors is to represent the college in a professional and responsible manner at all times while working in direct partnership with the college's personnel to improve the quality of services offered by Northeast State. The Ambassadors serve as an institutional advancement and public relations support team by encouraging student, alumni, and community involvement in the mission of the college.

### **Need**

Northeast State's commitment to build a comprehensive student advancement program began in 1991. Sixteen members were selected and were able to assist with 38 events. In its 12th year, the Student Ambassadors organization boasts an active membership of 23 enrolled students and 214 alumni members. Since the team's founding, Ambassadors have represented Northeast State at more than 1,300 events.

Northeast State's small-college atmosphere promotes a feeling of family among its 4,600 students, faculty, staff, and community. This familial spirit produces fierce loyalty and support for the college and its programs. There is a tremendous sense of mutual encouragement, shared achievement (everyone wants everyone else to succeed), and a willingness to help the individual and the institution meet their goals.

The Student Ambassadors recognize their responsibility to be advocates of the entire institution, not just one specific area or office. The organization's constitution was written to reflect the College's mission. Northeast State prides itself on being a customer-focused institution that believes every person is significant and contributes to the advancement of the college.

### **Organization**

Prospective Ambassadors are nominated by faculty, staff, or current members and must have at least a 3.0 GPA. The number of active members at any one time remains between a minimum of 10 and a maximum not to exceed one percent of the total student enrollment. Upon selection, all members attend an intensive three-day orientation that includes certified peer mentor training, leadership skills workshops, team development exercises, and an in-depth review of the history and mission of Northeast State. Ambassador officers also complete an additional one-day training session. The active membership has been comprised not only of students majoring in the college's technical and transfer programs, but also of those seeking skills upgrading or job retraining. Active members have ranged in age from 17 to 53 with an average GPA of 3.6.

## **Impact**

Year after year, the Ambassadors have continued to support one another with a sincere and honest concern, building those links that ultimately become an unbreakable bond with each other and with the college. Northeast State and the Student Ambassadors have developed a mutual admiration society based upon loyalty and commitment. Data compiled through the 2002 summer semester show that 197 Ambassadors have graduated or successfully transferred to another college or university, 147 have been inducted into Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, and 108 have been listed in *Who's Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges*. Since 1999, 15 members have served various terms on the College's National Alumni Association Advisory Council.

## **Advice to Others**

Institutions must make a commitment to fund and support student advancement programs of this intensity. Trained advisors who have the assignment written into their job descriptions and who can devote large blocks of time to supervising the program are needed. Structured training and follow-up for the membership are also encouraged. Detailed information on the Northeast State Student Ambassadors can be found at [www.NortheastState.edu/nssa/](http://www.NortheastState.edu/nssa/).

## **Contact for More Information**

Gregory N. Walters  
Coordinator of Student Development & Activities  
Northeast State Technical Community College  
2425 Hwy. 75  
Blountville, TN 37617  
Phone: 423-354-2474  
Email: [GNWALTERS@NortheastState.edu](mailto:GNWALTERS@NortheastState.edu)

# Discovery Programs

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## Rogue Community College (OR)

SERENA OTA ST. CLAIR

### **Purpose**

Discovery Programs offer first-time students to the college an opportunity to experience and develop the peer support and sense of belonging, which develops in a learning community/cohort structure, while taking classes with a cluster of teachers and advisors specifically assigned to these students. Discovery Programs serve special populations, people in transition in their lives with multiple barriers to success, such as displaced homemakers, single parents, teen parents, and Hispanic women and men.

### **Need**

All of the Discovery Programs are a significant entry point for people in transition. The majority of our students are dealing with divorce, separation, widowhood, or single parenting, and have the need to access community and college services when they enter our programs. They want to create a new and better life for themselves and their families and have chosen education as a pathway. Moving On and Bright Futures both house student centers where all Discovery Program students have an opportunity to create a community of support among their peers and our staff. Students often comment on the Discovery Programs as being their lifeline. Because of the focus on self-respect, living up to one's potential, and guiding students through a process of learning that is creative and supportive, all of our students have been helped as they moved through difficult life transitions into more fulfilling lives and careers. Several student development theorists support our model; for example, Arthur Chickering's "Seven Vectors" outlines the foundation for our basic curriculum.

### **Organization**

Moving On and Bright Futures are the two primary Discovery programs for single parents, displaced homemakers, and people in transition. Moving On is on the Grants Pass campus and Bright Futures is housed at the downtown Medford campus. Both programs were established at RCC in 1985–86. The focus of these Discovery Programs is to provide a gentle, guided entry into college for students who are uncertain about their life and career goals, concerned about their ability to be successful in college, and who may have many barriers to being in school. Their ages range from 17–60. Moving On and Bright Futures offer a two-term sequence of courses designed to assist a new student in building self-confidence, exploring a wide range of career possibilities, and learning the ropes of being a college student. Through career and personal finance exploration, the curriculum assists students in identifying living-wage jobs and making realistic future plans based on budget needs. We offer a strong emphasis on nontraditional jobs for women, with a particular focus on technical and trades careers. By identifying life and work barriers and approaching them with self-advocacy and problem-solving skills, our students gain a stronger

foundation. The programs are funded by the college and a series of grants, which also pay for student support in the form of child care, transportation, and tuition.

Transiciones is the Discovery Program, developed in 1993–94, dedicated to welcoming Hispanic students to Rogue Community College. The target population is women and men who have never been to college before and likely have not completed a high school education in their country of origin. Transiciones is taught in both Spanish and English and focuses on orienting new students to the American workplace culture, the local community, and the college institution. By facilitating a series of speakers on topics specific to student needs and interests, whole families come and join in on learning about living in our country and accessing resources of the college and the community. Free child care is provided on site. At the end of the class, each student is assigned a bilingual advisor to assist in carrying out the personally developed goal plan for incorporating education/training into the student's career path.

### **Impact on Learners**

Moving On has been noted as a “model program” by a third party state evaluator (RMC Research Corporation—Portland, Oregon) for almost a decade of annual evaluations. “The Moving On program at Rogue Community College continues to be a model for other single parent and displaced homemaker programs. The program offers several innovative class topics, provides many student support activities, exposes students to nontraditional careers, and is led by a committed, experienced staff.” (p. 20, 1996-97 Evaluation Report). Our college has adapted a version and menu of our classes into a Human Development series. Many of the classes and curriculum Discovery Programs taught to our cohorts are now offered as stand-alone courses to the general RCC student. This is a reflection of the significance of the learning community developed in our programs and the college's desire to provide opportunity to all of the students to work on personal and professional growth.

Discovery Programs serve an average of 180 students each year. All of our programs combined have served several thousand students since 1985. We conduct a follow-up survey with each student for five years after they complete our programs. Almost every student reports an increase in self-esteem, and high percentages report current employment and job satisfaction. The real “proof” is in the testimonials we receive from our students at graduation, exit interview, or informal contact. They are positive, heartwarming, some tear-jerking, and all genuine.

### **Advice to Others**

- Funding is a challenge in this budget climate. Renewed funding after three generations of Carl Perkins Vocational Educational Act (since 1985) is being reviewed in 2004. The issue of gender equity/access/nontraditional jobs is losing its salience, as is any kind of categorical funding.
- Due to the more intensive level of service in this limited-entry program (meaning it requires an intake interview to be enrolled), it is considered an expensive program (cost per student). During this lean budget forecast, keeping a high profile with student success stories and contact with our board of education

and other community groups and the media are important strategies to ensure continued support for these programs.

- Learning Communities are an exciting current trend in higher education and especially in community colleges. Discovery Programs are recognized as leaders in the cohort concept at our college. We experience notable success because our students are nurtured to become self-advocates and knowledgeable about systems.

**Contact for More Information**

Serena Ota St. Clair  
Discovery Programs Coordinator  
Rogue Community College  
3345 Redwood Hwy.  
Grants Pass, OR 97527  
Phone: 541-956-7323  
Email: sstclair@rogucecc.edu

## **NCS D Conference Participants, 2002**

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John Aldrich  
Job Placement  
Tech College of the Low Country  
PO Box 1288  
Beaufort, SC 29901  
Phone: 843-525-8224  
Fax: 843-525-8330  
Email: jaldrich@tcl.edu

Helton (Hep) Aldridge, Jr.  
Dean, Educational Services  
Brevard Community College–Palm Bay  
Campus  
250 Community College Pkwy.  
Palm Bay, FL 32909  
Phone: 321-632-1111, ext. 22015  
Fax: 321-634-3729  
Email: aldridgeh@brevardcc.edu

Frank Babcock  
Dean, Student Services  
Hillsborough Community College  
4001 Tampa Bay Blvd., PO Box 30030  
Tampa, FL 33630-3030  
Phone: 813-253-7311  
Fax: 813-259-6060  
Email: fbabcock@hccfl.edu

Barbara Baker  
Vice President of Administrative &  
Support Services  
Durham Technical Community College  
1637 Lawson St.  
Durham, NC 27703  
Phone: 919-686-3505  
Fax: 919-686-3506  
Email: bakerb@gwmail.dtcc.cc.nc.us

Carolyn Banner  
Director, Student Services  
Tech College of the Low Country  
PO Box 1288  
Beaufort, SC 29901  
Phone: 843-525-8218  
Fax: 843-525-8285  
Email: cbanner@tcl.edu

Kristina (Krissy) Banos  
Coordinator, Advising & Orientation  
Daytona Beach Community College  
1200 International Speedway Blvd.  
Daytona Beach, FL 32120-2811  
Phone: 386-947-5490  
Fax: 386-947-3150  
Email: banosk@dbcc.edu

Martha Barnette  
Associate Dean, Enrollment Services  
Piedmont Technical College  
PO Box 1467  
Greenwood, SC 29648  
Phone: 864-941-8357  
Fax: 864-941-8566  
Email: barnette.m@ptc.edu

Nancy E. Been  
Counselor  
Florida Community College at  
Jacksonville  
3939 Roosevelt Blvd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32205  
Phone: 904-381-3611  
Fax: 904-381-3462  
Email: nbeen@fccj.edu

Judith Bilsky  
Associate Vice President, Educational  
Services  
Brevard Community College–Cocoa  
Campus  
1519 Clearlake Road  
Cocoa, FL 32922  
Phone: 321-632-1111, ext. 64701  
Fax: 321-633-4565  
Email: bilskyj@brevardcc.edu

Constance Bobik  
Assistant Professor, Department Chair  
Brevard Community College  
1519 Clearlake Road  
Cocoa, FL 32922  
Phone: 321-632-1111, ext. 64182  
Fax: 321-634-3731  
Email: bobikc@brevardcc.edu

Virginia L. (Ginny) Borell  
Retention Coordinator  
York Technical College  
452 South Anderson Road  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
Phone: 803-981-7137  
Fax: 803-981-7237  
Email: borell@yorktech.com

Lisa Bracken  
Program Manager/Admissions Counselor  
Central Carolina Technical College  
506 N. Guignard Dr.  
Sumter, SC 29150  
Phone: 803-499-4171  
Fax: 803-499-3045  
Email: brackenlm@sum.tec.sc.us

Debra Bragg  
Director, NCSD and Professor, UIUC  
NCSD, University of Illinois  
51 Gerty Dr., 129 CRC  
Champaign, IL 61820  
Phone: 217-333-9230  
Fax: 217-244-0851  
Email: dbragg@uiuc.edu

Geraldine Brantley  
Director of Counseling  
Aiken Technical College  
PO Drawer 696  
Aiken, SC 29802  
Phone: 803-593-9231  
Fax: 803-593-5753  
Email: gbrantley@atc.edu

Les Brediger  
Director, Admissions  
Tech College of the Low Country  
PO Box 1288  
Beaufort, SC 29901  
Phone: 843-525-8207  
Fax: 843-525-8285  
Email: lbrediger@tcl.edu

Eleanor Brown  
Assistant Vice Chancellor  
Pima County Community College  
District  
4905 East Broadway  
Tucson, AZ 85709-1100  
Phone: 520-206-4973  
Fax: 520-206-4788  
Email: Eleanor.Brown@pima.edu

Dina Brown  
Coordinator, Student Activities &  
Orientation  
Northern Essex Community College  
100 Elliott Way  
Haverhill, MA 01830  
Phone: 978-556-3732  
Fax: 978-556-3740  
Email: dbrown@necc.edu

Jack Brown  
Professor, Speech & Theater  
Community College of Baltimore  
County–Essex  
7201 Rossville Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21237  
Phone: 410-780-6523  
Fax: 410-780-6161  
Email: jbrown@ccebcmd.edu

Emma W. Brown  
Dean, Retention Services  
Central Piedmont Community College  
PO Box 35009  
Charlotte, NC 28235  
Phone: 704-330-4649  
Fax: 704-330-4620  
Email: emma.brown@cpcc.edu

Russ Bumba  
Sr. Manager, Student Development  
South Carolina Technical College  
System  
111 Executive Center Dr.  
Columbia, SC 29210  
Phone: 803-896-5367  
Fax: 803-896-5663  
Email: bumba@sctechsystem.com

Rachel Campbell  
Director, Admissions & Counseling  
Tri-County Technical College  
PO Box 587  
Pendleton, SC 29670  
Phone: 864-646-1559  
Fax: 864-646-1890  
Email: rcampbell@tricitytec.sc.us

Jerry Cash  
Vice President Student Services  
North Arkansas College  
1515 Pioneer Dr.  
Harrison, AR 72601  
Phone: 870-391-3239  
Fax: 870-391-3339  
Email: [jcash@northark.edu](mailto:jcash@northark.edu)

LaKeysha Catron  
Admissions Counselor  
Central Carolina Technical College  
506 N. Guignard Dr.  
Sumter, SC 29150  
Phone: 803-778-6606  
Fax: 803-778-6696  
Email: [catronlr@sum.tec.sc.us](mailto:catronlr@sum.tec.sc.us)

Sandra Cavalier  
Director, Office of Adult Services  
Frederick Community College  
7932 Opossumtown Pike  
Frederick, MD 21702  
Phone: 301-846-2485  
Fax: 301-846-2599  
Email: [scavalier@frederick.edu](mailto:scavalier@frederick.edu)

Daniel R. (Dan) Chacon  
Dean, Student Development &  
Educational Services  
Tarrant County College  
5301 Campus Dr.  
Fort Worth, TX 76119  
Phone: 817-515-4504  
Fax: 817-515-4028  
Email: [dan.chacon@tccd.net](mailto:dan.chacon@tccd.net)

Bob Chiles  
Admissions Counselor  
Tri-County Technical College  
PO Box 587  
Pendleton, SC 29670  
Phone: 864-646-1566  
Fax: 864-646-1890  
Email: [bchiles@tricitycounty.tec.sc.us](mailto:bchiles@tricitycounty.tec.sc.us)

Evelyn Clements  
Vice President, Student Development  
Middlesex Community College  
591 Springs Road  
Bedford, MA 01730  
Phone: 781-280-3524  
Fax: 781-275-0741  
Email: [clementse@middlesex.cc.ma.us](mailto:clementse@middlesex.cc.ma.us)

Sharon Conners  
Director of Admissions  
Kaskaskia College  
27210 College Road  
Centralia, IL 62801  
Phone: 618-545-3065  
Fax: 618-532-1990  
Email: [sconners@kc.cc.il.us](mailto:sconners@kc.cc.il.us)

Warren Cook  
Director, START Center & Student  
Activities  
York Technical College  
452 South Anderson Road  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
Phone: 803-981-7055  
Fax: 803-981-7237  
Email: [wcook@yorktech.com](mailto:wcook@yorktech.com)

Seleah Crosland  
Associate Vice President  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
PO Box 261966  
Conway, SC 29528-6066  
Phone: 843-349-5258  
Fax: 843-349-7548  
Email: [seleah.crosland@hgtc.edu](mailto:seleah.crosland@hgtc.edu)

Sharon Davis  
Assistant Dean, Student Development  
Cincinnati State Technical &  
Community College  
3520 Central Pkwy.  
Cincinnati, OH 45240  
Phone: 513-569-1475  
Fax: 513-569-1562  
Email: [sharon.davis@cincinnatiastate.edu](mailto:sharon.davis@cincinnatiastate.edu)

Kevin Davis  
Assistant to Director, College Discovery  
Bronx Community College  
University Ave. & West 181st St.,  
Loew Hall 401  
Bronx, NY 10453-3102  
Phone: 718-289-5100, ext. 5041  
Fax: 718-289-6498  
Email: [kevin.davis@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:kevin.davis@bcc.cuny.edu)

Susan Deege  
Director of Workforce Programs  
John Wood Community College  
1301 South 48th St.  
Quincy, IL 62305  
Phone: 217-641-4360  
Fax: 217-641-4192  
Email: sdeege@jwcc.edu

Nan Dernar  
Counselor  
Durham Technical Community College  
1637 Lawson St.  
Durham, NC 27703  
Phone: 919-686-3385  
Fax: 919-686-3672  
Email: dernarn@gwmail.dtcc.cc.nc.us

Debbie Derr  
Executive Dean of Student Development  
& Success  
Madison Area Technical College  
3550 Anderson St.  
Madison, WI 53704-2599  
Phone: 608-246-6091  
Fax: 608-246-6079  
Email: dderr@matcmadison.edu

Carlyle Dixon  
Director, Minority Student Success &  
Academic Support  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
PO Box 261966  
Conway, SC 29528-6066  
Phone: 843-349-5376  
Fax: 843-358-3241  
Email: dixon@hor.tec.sc.us

Charlene Dukes  
Vice President, Student Services  
Prince George's Community College  
301 Largo Road  
Largo, MD 20774  
Phone: 301-322-0412  
Fax: 301-808-0960  
Email: dukescm@pg.cc.md.us

Denise Ellis  
Articulation Coordinator  
Metropolitan Community College  
PO Box 3777  
Omaha, NE 68103  
Phone: 402-457-2678  
Fax: 402-457-2788  
Email: dellis@metropo.mccneb.edu

Karla Eubanks  
Associate Vice President, Student  
Services  
Altamaha Technical College  
1777 West Cherry St.  
Jesup, GA 31545  
Phone: 912-427-5899  
Fax: 912-427-1901  
Email: keubanks@altamahatech.org

Felicia Evans  
Enrollment Advisor  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
2050 Hwy. 501 East  
Conway, SC 29526  
Phone: 843-349-7509  
Fax: 843-349-7501  
Email: felicia.evans@hgtc.edu

Amy Fendley  
Job Placement Coordinator  
Tri-County Technical College  
PO Box 587  
Pendleton, SC 29670  
Phone: 864-646-1557  
Fax: 864-646-1893  
Email: afendley@tricitytec.sc.us

Kathryn Fowler  
Director, Student Life and Transition  
Programs  
Aiken Technical College  
PO Drawer 696  
Aiken, SC 29802  
Phone: 803-593-9231, ext. 1604  
Fax: 803-593-6526  
Email: fowlerkf@atc.edu

Deborah Garrett  
Dean of Student Affairs  
Ivy Tech State College  
3501 First Ave.  
Evansville, IN 47710-3398  
Phone: 812-429-1387  
Fax: 812-429-9878  
Email: degarret@ivytech.edu

Diane Gibson  
Vice President, Student Services  
Florence-Darlington Technical College  
PO Box 100548  
Florence, SC 29501-0548  
Phone: 843-661-8111  
Fax: 843-661-2484  
Email: diane.gibson@fdtc.edu

Gary Golden  
Vice President, Student Services  
San Juan College  
4601 College Blvd.  
Farmington, NM 87402  
Phone: 505-566-3318  
Fax: 505-566-3500  
Email: golden@sjc.cc.nm.us

Diane Gortney  
Assistant to the Registrar  
Piedmont Technical College  
PO Box 1467  
Greenwood, SC 29648  
Phone: 864-941-8364  
Fax: 864-941-8566  
Email: gortney.d@ptc.edu

Abby Grainger  
Counselor  
Florence-Darlington Technical College  
PO Box 100548  
Florence, SC 29501-0548  
Phone: 843-661-8026  
Fax: 843-661-8041  
Email: abby.grainger@fdtc.edu

Gladys Grant  
Job Placement Coordinator  
Central Carolina Technical College  
506 N. Guignard Dr.  
Sumter, SC 29150  
Phone: 803-778-6611  
Fax: 803-778-6696  
Email: grantgm@sum.tec.sc.us

Melissa Green  
Vice President, Enrollment Services  
Rhodes State College  
4240 Campus Dr.  
Lima, OH 45804  
Phone: 419-995-8439  
Fax: 419-995-8099  
Email: greenm@lrc.tec.oh.us

Connie Haire  
Vice President, Student and Institutional  
Development  
Southwestern Community College  
447 College Dr.  
Sylva, NC 28779  
Phone: 800-447-4091  
Fax: 828-586-3129  
Email: connie@southwest.cc.nc.us

Denise Harris  
Director, Student Life  
Lansing Community College  
1170 Student Life, PO Box 40010  
Lansing, MI 48901-7210  
Phone: 517-483-1287  
Fax: 517-483-1014  
Email: deharris@lcc.edu

Leigh Hawkins  
Acting Dean, Student Services  
Rockingham Community College  
PO Box 38  
Wentworth, NC 27375-0038  
Phone: 336-342-4161, ext. 2308  
Fax: 336-342-1809  
Email: hawkinsl@rockinghamcc.edu

Daniel Herbst  
Associate Dean of Enrollment Services  
Kaskaskia College  
27210 College Road  
Centralia, IL 62801  
Phone: 618-545-3066  
Fax: 618-532-1990  
Email: dherbst@kc.cc.il.us

Christine Hess  
Vocational Special Needs Counselor  
Metropolitan Community College  
PO Box 3777  
Omaha, NE 68103-0777  
Phone: 402-738-4099  
Fax: 402-738-4640  
Email: chess@metropo.mccneb.edu

Teresa Hilburn  
Associate Vice President for Enrollment  
Development  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
2050 Hwy. 501 East  
Conway, SC 29526  
Phone: 843-349-5238  
Fax: 843-349-7501  
Email: teresa.hilburn@hgtc.edu

Elaine Hodges  
Counselor  
Florence-Darlington Technical College  
PO Box 100548  
Florence, SC 29501-0548  
Phone: 843-661-8020  
Fax: 843-661-8535  
Email: elaine.hodges@fdtc.edu

Mary Holloway  
Director, Campus Life  
Midlands Technical College  
PO Box 2408  
Columbia, SC 29202  
Phone: 803-822-3528  
Fax: 803-822-3676  
Email: hollowaym@midlandstech.com

Tara Hubschmitt  
Humanities Instructor  
Lake Land College  
5001 Lake Land Blvd.  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
Phone: 217-234-5321  
Fax: 217-234-5533  
Email: thubschm@lakeland.cc.il.us

Marguerite Hunt-Evans  
Counselor  
Manatee Community College  
5840 26th St. West  
Bradenton, FL 34207  
Phone: 941-752-5423  
Fax: 941-727-6299  
Email: hunttevm@mccfl.edu

Murline Ingram  
Special Populations Coordinator  
Central Carolina Technical College  
506 N. Guignard Dr.  
Sumter, SC 29150  
Phone: 803-778-6631  
Fax: 803-778-6696  
Email: ingramms@sum.tec.sc.us

Ted James  
Dean, Student Development  
Douglas College  
PO Box 2503  
New Westminster, BC, Canada V3L 5B2  
Phone: 604-527-5321  
Fax: 604-527-5095  
Email: jamest@douglas.bc.ca

Tom Jaynes  
Associate Dean, Counseling & Student  
Development  
Durham Technical Community College  
1637 Lawson St.  
Durham, NC 27703  
Phone: 919-686-3606  
Fax: 919-686-3672  
Email: jaynest@gwmail.dtcc.cc.nc.us

Shirley Jennings  
Dean, Student Development  
Pima Community College—East Campus  
8181 East Irvington Road  
Tucson, AZ 85709-4000  
Phone: 520-206-7666  
Fax: 520-206-7614  
Email: Shirley.Jennings@pima.edu

Victoria Jensen  
Dean, Academic Support Services  
Highland Community College  
2998 Pearl City Road  
Freeport, IL 61103  
Phone: 815-599-3531  
Fax: 815-235-6130  
Email: vjensen@admin.highland.cc.il.us

Julie Keith  
Coordinator, Admissions Counseling  
Tri-County Technical College  
PO Box 587  
Pendleton, SC 29670  
Phone: 864-646-1555  
Fax: 864-646-1890  
Email: jkeith@tricity.tec.sc.us

Nichole Kennedy  
Director, Admissions  
Chattahoochee Tech College  
980 S. Cobb Dr.  
Marietta, GA 30060  
Phone: 770-528-4581  
Fax: 770-528-4580  
Email: nkennedy@chattcollege.com

Cindy Klauck  
Counselor  
Piedmont Technical College  
PO Box 1467  
Greenwood, SC 29648  
Phone: 864-941-8376  
Fax: 864-941-8709  
Email: klauck.c@ptc.edu

Craig Kolins  
Dean, Student Development  
Portland Community College  
PO Box 19000  
Portland, OR 97229  
Phone: 503-614-7249  
Fax: 503-614-7077  
Email: ckolins@pcc.edu

Nita Lamborghini  
Assistant Dean, College Life and  
Healthy Living  
Northern Essex Community College  
100 Elliott St.  
Haverhill, MA 02129  
Phone: 978-556-3818  
Fax: 978-556-3115  
Email: nlamborghini@necc.mass.edu

Rennie W. Lansberg  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
2050 Hwy. 501 East College  
Conway, SC 29528-6066  
Phone: 843-349-5247  
Fax: 843-347-2962  
Email: rennie.lansberg@hgtc.edu

Jen Lauer  
Student Service Tech  
Pima Community College  
8181 E. Irvington Road  
Tucson, AZ 85709-4000  
Phone: 520-206-7623  
Fax: 520-206-7875  
Email: jennifer.lauer@pima.edu

Melody Lawrence  
Financial Aid Coordinator  
Southwestern Community College  
447 College Dr.  
Sylva, NC 28779  
Phone: 800-447-4091  
Fax: 828-586-3129  
Email: mlawrence@southwest.cc.nc.us

Michael Lenhardt  
Dean of Student Services  
Bismarck State College  
1500 Edwards Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58506  
Phone: 701-224-5439  
Fax: 701-224-5643  
Email: mike.lenhardt@bsc.nodak.edu

Roy Lightfoot  
Coordinator, Civic Education and  
Student Leadership Development  
Central Florida Community College  
PO Box 1388  
Ocala, FL 34478-1388  
Phone: 352-351-8962  
Fax: 352-873-5828  
Email: lightfor@cf.edu

Matt Madigan  
Math/Science Division Chair  
Lake Land College  
5001 Lake Land Blvd.  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
Phone: 217-234-5309  
Fax: 217-234-5533  
Email: mmadigan@lakeland.cc.il.us

Donna Marquardt  
Student Services Specialist  
Palm Beach Community College  
3000 St. Lucie Ave.  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
Phone: 561-862-4318  
Fax: 561-862-4320  
Email: marquard@pbcc.edu

Robert (Bob) Marshall  
Vice President, Student Services  
Illinois Valley Community College  
815 N. Smith Ave.  
Oglesby, IL 61348  
Phone: 815-224-0434  
Fax: 517-224-0384  
Email: bob\_marshall@ivcc.edu

Barbara Martin  
Project Director, C.O.P.E.  
Bronx Community College  
University Ave. & West 181st St.  
Bronx, NY 10453-3102  
Phone: 718-289-5863  
Fax: 718-289-6487  
Email: copeishope@hotmail.com

Erlinda Martinez  
Vice President, Student Services  
Cerritos College  
11110 Alondra Blvd.  
Norwalk, CA 90650  
Phone: 562-860-2451, ext. 2236  
Fax: 562-467-5069  
Email: emartinez@cerritos.edu

Nilsa Martinez  
Student Services Specialist III  
Palm Beach Community College  
3000 St. Lucie Ave.  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
Phone: 561-862-4316  
Fax: 561-862-4320  
Email: martinen@pbcc.edu

John McCaughey  
Dean, Student Services  
Hillsborough Community College—Plant  
City Campus  
1206 North Park Road  
Plant City, FL 33566-2799  
Phone: 813-757-2108  
Fax: 813-757-2187  
Email: jmccaughey@hcc.cc.fl.us

Michelle McDowell  
Acting Dean of Students  
Denmark Technical College  
PO Box 327  
Denmark, SC 29042  
Phone: 803-793-5182  
Fax: 803-793-5942  
Email: jacksonm@den.tec.sc.us

Becky McIntosh  
Associate Vice President, Student  
Development  
Piedmont Technical College  
PO Box 1467  
Greenwood, SC 29648  
Phone: 864-941-8358  
Fax: 864-941-8555  
Email: mcintosh.b@ptc.edu

Maria Medina  
Assistant Dean, Student Affairs  
Passaic County Community College  
One College Blvd.  
Paterson, NJ 07505  
Phone: 973-684-5651  
Fax: 973-684-5843  
Email: mmedina@pccc.cc.nj.us

Epp Miller  
Counselor/Title III Activity Co-Director  
Manatee Community College  
5840 26th St. West  
Bradenton, FL 34207  
Phone: 941-752-5505  
Fax: 941-727-6018  
Email: millere@mccfl.edu

Rebecca (Becky) Milligan  
Financial Aid Counselor  
North Arkansas College  
1515 Pioneer Dr.  
Harrison, AR 72601  
Phone: 870-391-3266  
Fax: 870-391-3340  
Email: beckym@northark.edu

Lisa Morrison  
Admissions Counselor  
Central Carolina Technical College  
506 N. Guignard Dr.  
Sumter, SC 29150  
Phone: 803-778-6652  
Fax: 803-778-6696  
Email: morrisonlg@sum.tec.sc.us

G. Barry Munday  
Student Services Coordinator  
Chattahoochee Tech College  
2680 Gordy Pkwy.  
Marietta, GA 30066  
Phone: 770-509-6313  
Fax: 770-509-6345  
Email: bmunday@chattcollege.com

Roger Nienkamp  
Manager, Career & Employment  
Services  
St. Louis Community College—Forest  
Park  
5600 Oakland Ave.  
St. Louis, MO 63110-1393  
Phone: 314-644-9124  
Fax: 314-951-9424  
Email: rnienkamp@stlcc.edu

Blaine Nisson  
Vice President, Student Development  
Clark College  
1800 E. McLoughlin Blvd.  
Vancouver, WA 98661  
Phone: 360-992-2103  
Fax: 360-992-2876  
Email: bnisson@clark.edu

Sandi Oliver  
Vice President, Student Development  
Services  
Midlands Technical College  
PO Box 2408  
Columbia, SC 29202  
Phone: 803-738-7699  
Fax: 803-738-7883  
Email: olivers@midlandstech.com

Andy Omundson  
Dean, Student Life  
Piedmont Technical College  
PO Box 1467  
Greenwood, SC 29648  
Phone: 864-941-8376  
Fax: 864-941-8709  
Email: omundson.a@ptc.edu

Serena Ota St. Clair  
Discovery Programs Coordinator  
Rogue Community College  
3345 Redwood Hwy.  
Grants Pass, OR 97527  
Phone: 541-245-7538  
Fax: 541-471-3586  
Email: sstclair@rogucecc.edu

Carol Paguntalan  
Counselor, Enrollment Advisor  
Piedmont Technical College  
PO Box 1467  
Greenwood, SC 29648  
Phone: 864-941-8379  
Fax: 864-941-8709  
Email: paguntalan.c@ptc.edu

Van Parker  
Dean, Student Development and  
Educational Services  
Tarrant County College–NE  
828 Harwood  
Hurst, TX 76054  
Phone: 817-515-6203  
Fax: 817-515-6739  
Email: van.parker@tccd.net

Carol Patrick  
Administrative Dean, Counseling  
Cerritos College  
11110 Alondra Blvd.  
Norwalk, CA 90650-6298  
Phone: 562-860-2451, ext. 2128  
Fax: 562-467-5040  
Email: cpatrick@cerritos.edu

Earl Paul  
Office of Student Activities  
Hillsborough Community College  
10414 E. Columbus Dr.  
Tampa, FL 33619  
Phone: 813-253-7942  
Fax: 813-253-7969  
Email: epaul@hccfl.edu

Karen Pettus  
Director, Counseling  
Midlands Technical College  
PO Box 2408  
Columbia, SC 29202  
Phone: 803-822-3505  
Fax:  
Email: pettusk@midlandstech.com

David Pierce  
Executive Director  
NCS D  
51 Gerty Dr., 129 CRC  
Champaign, IL 61820  
Phone: 217-333-9230  
Fax: 217-244-0851  
Email: dpierce280@aol.com

Evelyn Pride-Patterson  
Director of Admissions and Records  
Aiken Technical College  
PO Drawer 696  
Aiken, SC 29802  
Phone: 803-593-6526  
Fax: 803-593-6526  
Email: epatterson@atc.edu

Maria Lourdes (Marlo) Rabuy  
Counselor/Student Activities Advisor  
Santa Monica College  
1900 Pico Blvd.  
Santa Monica, CA 90405  
Phone: 310-434-4750  
Fax: 310-434-8274  
Email: rabuy\_marlo@smc.edu

Laurie Ragsdale  
Manager, Career Planning & Placement  
Hillsborough Community College  
4001 N. Tamp Bay Blvd.  
Tampa, FL 33630  
Phone: 813-253-7275  
Fax: 813-259-6047  
Email: lragsdale@hcc.cc.fl.us

Scott Ranges  
Program Manager/Admissions Counselor  
Central Carolina Technical College  
1125 Little St.  
Camden, SC 29020  
Phone: 803-425-8388  
Fax: 803-432-8550  
Email: rangestr@sum.tec.sc.us

Betsy Regalado  
Dean, Access and Retention  
Los Angeles City College  
855 N. Vermont Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90029  
Phone: 323-953-4000, ext. 2300  
Fax: 323-953-4013  
Email: regalaba@email.lacc.cc.ca.us

Anna Richards  
Student Service Specialist  
Pima County Community College District  
8181 Irvington Road  
Tucson, AZ 85709-4000  
Phone: 520-206-7626  
Fax: 520-206-7614  
Email: anna.richards@pima.edu

Tonja Ringgold  
Executive Director of Student  
Development  
Baltimore City Community College  
2901 Liberty Heights Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21215-7893  
Phone: 410-462-8555  
Fax: 410-462-7418  
Email: tringgold@bccc.state.edu

Richard J. (Dick) Robertson  
Vice President, Student Services  
MiraCosta College  
One Barnard Dr.  
Oceanside, CA 92056  
Phone: 760-795-6898  
Fax: 760-757-8209  
Email: drobertson@miracosta.edu

James R. (Jim) Rojahn  
Director, Career Development and  
Student Employment  
Community College of Baltimore  
County–Essex, 7201 Rossville Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21237  
Phone: 410-780-6450  
Fax: 410-780-6161  
Email: jrojahn@ccbcmd.edu

Hank Safnauer  
Enrollment Advisor  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
PO Box 261966  
Conway, SC 29526  
Phone: 843-349-5217  
Fax: 843-349-7501  
Email: hank.safnauer@hgtc.edu

Carole Sarn  
Admissions Counselor  
York Technical College  
452 South Anderson Road  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
Phone: 803-981-7103  
Fax: 803-981-7237  
Email: sarn@yorktech.com

James Schmidt  
Vice President, Student Services  
Aiken Technical College  
PO Drawer 696  
Aiken, SC 29802  
Phone: 803-593-9231  
Fax: 803-593-6526  
Email: schmidt@atc.edu

Brenda A. Scranton  
Vice President, Student Development  
Bronx Community College  
University Ave. & West 181st St.  
Bronx, NY 10453-3102  
Phone: 718-289-5869  
Fax: 718-289-6347  
Email: brenda.scranton@bcc.cuny.edu

Lynn Selph  
Dean, Student Services  
Williamsburg Technical College  
601 MLK Jr. Ave.  
Kingstree, SC 29556  
Phone: 843-355-4170  
Fax: 843-355-4289  
Email: selphl@wiltech.edu

Ron Shade  
Dean, Student Services  
Kingwood College  
20000 Kingwood Dr.  
Kingwood, TX 77339  
Phone: 281-312-1535  
Fax: 281-312-1477  
Email: ron.d.shade@nhmccd.edu

Regina Shearin  
Dean of Students  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
2050 Hwy. 501 East College  
Conway, SC 29528-6066  
Phone: 843-477-2062  
Fax: 843-477-0775  
Email: regina.shearin@hgtc.edu

Claretha Singleton  
Financial Aid Director  
Tech College of the Low Country  
PO Box 1288  
Beaufort, SC 29901  
Phone: 843-525-8203  
Fax: 843-525-8285  
Email: csingleton@tcl.edu

Beverly Sowell  
Admissions Counselor  
Central Carolina Technical College  
506 N. Guignard Dr.  
Sumter, SC 29150  
Phone: 803-778-7844  
Fax: 803-778-6696  
Email: sowellbf@sum.tec.sc.us

Cynthia Spiers  
Dean of Enrollment Management  
Rhodes State College  
4240 Campus Dr.  
Lima, OH 45804  
Phone: 419-995-8331  
Fax: 419-995-8099  
Email: spiers.c@rhodesstate.edu

Rhonda R. Stone  
New Student Enrollment Advisor  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
PO Box 261966  
Conway, SC 29526  
Phone: 843-349-5344  
Fax: 843-349-7501  
Email: rhonda.stone@hgtc.edu

Constance Strickland  
Coordinator, Student Life  
Pima County Community College  
District  
8181 Irvington Road  
Tucson, AZ 85709-4000  
Phone: 520-206-7427  
Fax: 520-206-7823  
Email: constance.strickland@pima.edu

Bill Thallemer  
Dean, Student Affairs  
Jefferson Davis Community College  
PO Box 958  
Brewton, AL 36426  
Phone: 251-809-1592  
Fax: 251-809-1596  
Email: bill.thallemer@jdcc.edu

Melissa Tyler Todd  
Counselor  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
PO Box 261966  
Conway, SC 29528-6066  
Phone: 843-349-5249  
Fax: 843-349-7548  
Email: melissa.todd@hgtc.edu

Sherry Tomlinson  
Secretary-Student Services  
North Arkansas College  
1515 Pioneer Dr.  
Harrison, AR 72601  
Phone: 870-391-3235  
Fax: 870-391-3339  
Email: stomlins@northark.edu

Melanie Vick  
Director of Counseling  
Spartanburg Technical College  
PO Box 4386  
Spartanburg, SC 29305  
Phone: 864-591-3818  
Fax: 864-591-3916  
Email: vickm@stcsc.edu

Henry Villareal  
Dean, Admissions and Records  
College of San Mateo  
1700 West Hillsdale Blvd.  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
Phone: 650-574-6590  
Fax: 650-574-6506  
Email: villarealh@smccd.net

Evelyn Waiwairole  
Community College Survey of Student  
Engagement  
The University of Texas at Austin  
George I. Sanchez Building, Suite 350 A  
Austin, TX 78712-1293  
Phone: 512-475-6780  
Fax: 512-471-4209  
Email: waiwairole@ccsse.org

Gregory N. (Greg) Walters  
Coordinator, Student Development and  
Activities  
Northeast State Technical Community  
College  
PO Box 246  
Blountville, TN 37617-0246  
Phone: 423-354-2474  
Fax: 423-926-0400  
Email: gnwalters@northeaststate.edu

Lex D. (Lex) Walters  
President  
Piedmont Technical College  
PO Box 1467  
Greenwood, SC 29648  
Phone: 864-941-8301  
Fax: 864-941-8669  
Email: walters.l@ptc.edu

James A. (Jim) Watson  
Director, Student Development  
Programs  
Santa Fe Community College  
3000 NW 83rd St.  
Gainesville, FL 32606  
Phone: 352-395-4107  
Fax: 352-395-4475  
Email: jim.watson@sfcc.edu

Gail Williams  
Director, Enrollment Management  
Atlanta Technical College  
1560 Metropolitan Pkwy.  
Atlanta, GA 30310  
Phone: 404-756-3895  
Fax: 404-756-3878  
Email: gwilliam@admin1.atlanta.tec.ga.us

James Williams  
Dean of Students  
Tri-County Technical College  
PO Box 587  
Pendleton, SC 29670  
Phone: 864-646-1552  
Fax: 864-646-1893  
Email: jwilliams@tricounty.tec.sc.us

Jeanne Williams  
Blackhawk Technical College  
6004 Prairie Road  
Janesville, WI 53547  
Phone: 608-743-4450  
Fax: 608-757-7740  
Email: jwilliams@blackhawk.edu

Tom Woodle  
Counselor  
Horry-Georgetown Technical College  
PO Box 261966  
Conway, SC 29528-6066  
Phone: 843-349-5309  
Fax: 843-349-7548  
Email: tom.woodle@hgtc.edu

Elisabeth Woods  
Counselor  
Tri-County Technical College  
PO Box 587  
Pendleton, SC 29670  
Phone: 864-646-1565  
Fax: 864-646-1890  
Email: ewoods@tricounty.tec.sc.us

Rosemary Woolley  
Dean, Student Services  
St. Louis Community College–Forest  
Park  
5600 Oakland Ave.  
St. Louis, MO 63110-1393  
Phone: 314-644-9112  
Fax: 314-644-9945  
Email: rwoolley@stlcc.edu

Frank Zamora  
Supervisor, Student Services, Williams  
Campus  
Chandler-Gilbert Community College  
7360 E. Tahoe Ave.  
Mesa, AZ 85212  
Phone: 480-998-8101  
Fax: 480-988-8130  
Email:  
frank.zamora@cgcmail.maricopa.edu

# NCSD Board of Directors, 2002–2003

---

## Executive Board

### President

Frank Babcock  
Dean of Student Services  
Hillsborough Community College  
Dale Mabry Campus  
4011 N. Lois Ave., PO Box 30030  
Tampa, FL 33630-3030  
Phone: 813-253-7311  
Fax: 813-259-6060  
Email: fbabcock@hcc.cc.fl.us

### Past President

Deb Garrett  
Dean of Student Affairs  
Ivy Tech State College–Southwest  
3501 First Ave.  
Evansville, IN 47710  
Phone: 812-429-1387  
Fax: 812-429-9878  
Email: degarret@ivytech.edu

### Treasurer

Drew Matonak  
President  
Northwest Iowa Community College  
603 W. Park St.  
Sheldon, IA 51201  
Phone: 800-352-4907  
Fax: 712-324-4136  
Email: DMatonak@nwicc.edu

### Public Relations Coordinator

Eleanor Brown  
Assist. Vice-Chancellor for Student Dev.  
Pima Community College  
4905B E. Broadway Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85709-1100  
Phone: 520-206-4986  
Fax: 520-206-4788  
Email: Eleanor.Brown@pima.edu

### President Elect

Evelyn Clements  
Vice-President for Student Dev.  
Middlesex Community College  
Administration, Bldg 10  
591 Springs Road  
Bedford, MA 01730-1197  
Phone: 781-280-3524  
Fax: 781-275-0741  
Email: clementse@middlesex.cc.ma.us

### Secretary

Becky McIntosh  
Associate Vice-President, Student Dev.  
Piedmont Technical College  
PO Box 1467  
Greenwood, SC 29648-1467  
Phone: 864-941-8358  
Fax: 864-941-8555  
Email: mcintosh.b@ptc.edu

### Regional Coordinator

Blaine Nisson  
Vice-President, Student Dev.  
Clark College  
1800 E. McLoughlin Blvd.  
Vancouver, WA 98663-3598  
Phone: 360-992-2103  
Fax: 360-992-2878  
Email: bnisson@clark.edu

### National Office, NCSD

51 Gerty Dr., 129 CRC  
Champaign, IL 61820  
Phone: 217-333-9230  
Fax: 217-244-0851

David Pierce  
Executive Director  
Email: dpierce280@aol.com

Debra Bragg  
Director of the National Office  
Email: dbragg@uiuc.edu



# NCSD Regions and Regional Representatives, 2002–2003

---

## REGION 1

Connecticut      New Hampshire  
Maine              Rhode Island  
Massachusetts    Vermont

### Contact for More Information

Kevin Drumm  
Vice-President, Enrollment  
Management & Student Affairs  
Springfield Technical Community  
College  
One Armory Square  
Springfield, MA 01105  
Phone: 413-755-4402  
Fax: 413-746-0344  
Email: Kdrumm@stcc.mass.edu

## REGION 2

New Jersey      Pennsylvania  
New York

### Contact for More Information

Brenda Scranton  
Vice-President, Student Development  
Bronx Community College  
University Ave. & West 181st St.  
Bronx, NY 10453  
Phone: 718-289-5869  
Fax: 718-289-6347  
Email: brenda.scranton@bcc.cuny.edu

## REGION 3

Delaware              Virginia  
Maryland              West Virginia

### Contact for More Information

Charlene Dukes  
Vice-President, Student Services  
Prince George's Community College  
301 Largo Road  
PO Box 7010  
Largo, MD 20772  
Phone: 301-322-0412  
Fax: 301-808-0960  
Email: dukescm@pg.cc.md.us

## REGION 4

Alabama              Mississippi  
Florida                North Carolina  
Georgia                South Carolina  
Kentucky              Tennessee

### Contact for More Information

Bill Thallemer  
Dean of Student Affairs  
Jefferson Davis Community College  
PO Box 958  
Brewton, AL 36427  
Phone: 334-867-4832  
Fax: 334-809-0178  
Email: bthallemer@acet.net

## REGION 5

Illinois                Minnesota  
Indiana                Ohio  
Michigan               Wisconsin

### Contact for More Information

Keith Howard  
Executive Director, Student Support  
Systems  
Ivy Tech State College  
One West 26th St., PO Box 1763  
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1763  
Phone: 317-921-4936  
Fax: 317-921-4629  
Email: khoward@ivytech.edu

## REGION 6

Arkansas              Oklahoma  
Louisiana              Texas  
New Mexico

### Contact for More Information

Susan Chappell  
Executive Vice-President  
South Arkansas Community College  
El Dorado, AR 71731-7010  
Phone: 870-864-7108  
Fax: 870-864-7109  
Email: schappell@southark.cc.ar.us

**REGION 7**

Iowa Missouri  
 Kansas Nebraska

**Contact for More Information**

Elizabeth Minis  
 Dean, Student Services  
 3201 Southwest Trafficway  
 Kansas City, MO 64111-2764  
 Phone: 816-759-4114  
 Fax: 816-759-4161  
 Email: minisl@pennvalley.cc.mo.us

**REGION 8**

Colorado South Dakota  
 Montana Utah  
 North Dakota Wyoming

**Contact for More Information**

Vacant

**REGION 9**

Arizona Hawaii  
 California Nevada

**Contact for More Information**

Erlinda Martinez  
 Vice-President, Student Services  
 Cerritos College  
 11110 East Alondra Blvd.  
 Norwalk, CA 90650  
 Phone: 562-860-2451, ext. 2236  
 Fax: 562-467-5069  
 Email: emartinez@cerritos.edu

**REGION 10**

Alaska Oregon  
 Idaho Washington

**Contact for More Information**

Vacant

**REGION 11**

East/Central Canada

**Contact for More Information**

Vacant

**REGION 12**

Western Canada

**Contact for More Information**

Ted James  
 Dean, Student Development  
 Douglas College  
 PO Box 2403  
 New Westminster  
 British Columbia CANADA V3L-5B  
 Phone: 604-527-5321  
 Fax: 604-527-5095  
 jamest@douglas.bc.ca





**NCSD National Office**  
University of Illinois  
129 CRC, 51 Gerty Drive  
Champaign, IL 61820

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