



FAQ:

COMMUNITY COLLEGES CAN

College Mentoring Program

What is the College Mentoring Program?

The college mentoring program is a central component of *Community Colleges CAN*, [www.communitycollegescan.org](http://communitycollegescan.org) (<http://communitycollegescan.org>), an initiative funded through June 2009 by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The initiative, which is administered by JBL Associates, is designed to strengthen the capacity of community colleges to meet students' academic needs and support their success in college and the workforce. The college mentoring program is a fast-track, intensive, collaborative learning experience through which participants share knowledge and experiences and receive technical assistance and expert advice.

How many colleges are involved in the project?

Eighteen colleges are involved in the project. Six of these colleges will serve as mentor colleges, and 12 will serve as mentee colleges.

How are the mentoring relationships organized?

There are six mentoring communities that constitute the program's learning network. Each mentoring community includes one mentor college, two mentee colleges, and a facilitator with strong professional experience working with community colleges. Each college has a team of three or four members — consisting of faculty, program staff, and administrators — participating in the mentoring program.

What are the mentoring communities?

Each mentoring community focuses on a program area that is important to all community colleges and centers on an initiative successfully implemented at a mentor college. The mentoring communities are: Academic and Student Support Centers, Career Pathways, Developmental Education Learning Communities, Innovations in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), P-20 Educational Partnerships, and Teaching and Learning Centers. For a full list of the mentoring communities and participating colleges as well as descriptions of the colleges' initiatives, visit www.communitycollegescan.org/about/factsheet.cfm (<http://www.communitycollegescan.org/about/factsheet.cfm>).

How were the colleges selected for participation?

Mentor colleges were selected based primarily on the success of a specific initiative that will be the focal point for the mentoring relationship. Colleges selected as mentees were identified through a national competition. Each is interested in developing a specific initiative that closely matches its mentor college's program.

What is the value of mentoring?

A mentoring relationship can serve as an effective method to help colleges design and enhance intervention strategies and to support relationship-building among schools. A mentoring experience can promote new learning and inform the conversation around effective interventions for improving student access to, preparation for, and persistence in postsecondary education. In

addition, it allows participants to benefit from expertise to which they might not otherwise have access. While peer mentoring may focus on a specific initiative, it has the potential to more broadly affect the college and its students.

How will the program operate?

The mentoring communities will be self-directed and will work to develop an active and intentional learning experience for mentee colleges, to promote idea development and capacity building, and to address challenges related to the development of the mentee college's initiative. Representatives from mentee colleges will visit mentor college campuses to observe programs in action and meet with key stakeholders. Facilitators will visit mentee colleges to advise on the initiative with faculty, staff, and administrators.

What are the expected outcomes of the program?

Mentee colleges will identify specific, practical strategies that can be supported and informed by mentor colleges and the facilitators. These might include project planning and design, curriculum development or redesign, staff training and professional development, evaluation and assessment, data collection and analysis, student recruitment and outreach, community partnering, or funding strategies and resource identification. Mentor college team members and the facilitator will provide guidance, coaching, and technical assistance to forward these activities.

How will the participating community colleges benefit?

The colleges will learn practical strategies, skills, and tools they can use to advance their initiatives to improve student achievement, outcomes, and success. In addition, they will have the opportunity to develop collegial relationships through which they can build broader networks of support in the two-year college community and continue the learning process outside of the mentoring program.

Will other community colleges benefit from the college mentoring program?

Yes — during the first half of 2009, six issue briefs will be developed and disseminated. Each will focus on a critical issue or challenge commonly faced by community and will reflect the work being done in the mentoring communities.

How long will the colleges work together?

Community Colleges CAN and the college mentoring program are funded by OVAE through June 2009.