

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 422 042

JC 980 365

AUTHOR Barnett, Lynn  
 TITLE Mentoring for Disability Support Service Program Development. AACC Project Brief.  
 INSTITUTION American Association of Community Colleges, Washington, DC.  
 SPONS AGENCY Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.  
 REPORT NO AACC-PB-97-2  
 PUB DATE 1997-00-00  
 NOTE 8p.  
 CONTRACT H078C44054  
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Cooperative Programs; \*Disabilities; \*Mentors; \*Partnerships in Education; Program Development; Program Improvement; \*Special Programs; Two Year Colleges  
 IDENTIFIERS Coconino Community College AZ; Harrisburg Area Community College PA; Ocean County College NJ; State University of NY Agric Tech Coll Delhi

ABSTRACT

Staff from eight community colleges experimented with a team mentoring relationship to strengthen their programs for students with disabilities. This project explored ways in which disability support service (DSS) professionals could benefit from mentoring by their peers in other institutions. From a national applicant pool of 47 colleges, 4 were selected to participate in the project. In a separate competitive process, DSS professionals from four additional colleges became the project mentor team. Each mentor was paired with an individual college and its two-person team, consisting of a DSS practitioner and a college administrator. The mentors became "outside experts," neutral observers who could act as advisors. Information on implementation, contacts, challenges, and success factors is provided for each of the four participating colleges: Coconino Community College, Arizona; SUNY College of Technology at Delhi, New York; Harrisburg Area Community College, Pennsylvania; and Ocean County College, New Jersey.  
 (AS)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

# Mentoring for Disability Support Service Program Development

AACC Project Brief  
AACC-PB-97-2

Lynn Barnett

American Association of Community Colleges

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- 
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Gollattscheck

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

980 365

## MENTORING FOR Disability Support Service PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

*Lynn Barnett, Project Director*

Staff from eight community colleges experimented with a team mentoring relationship to strengthen their programs for students with disabilities. Sponsored by AACC with support from the U.S. Department of Education, the 1995–1996 project explored ways that disability support service (DSS) professionals could benefit from mentoring by their peers in other institutions. From a national applicant pool of 47 colleges, four were selected to participate in the project. In a separate competitive process, DSS professionals from four additional colleges became the project mentor team. Each mentor was paired with an individual college and its two-person team, consisting of a DSS practitioner and a college administrator. The mentors became “outside experts,” neutral observers who could validate or advise.

The colleges received no direct cash grants; the project provided travel funds for structured group planning and evaluation exercises, as well as campus site visits by mentors. A team approach was emphasized throughout the project. Each institution provided significant commitment and some financial support, and project activities continued beyond the grant period.

Four colleges implemented plans to strengthen their disability support service programs:

- ◆ **Coconino Community College, AZ**, acknowledged the cultural context of its distant campus and created connections and training to provide equitable disability support services at a rural extension site serving students from the Navajo Nation.
- ◆ **Harrisburg Area Community College, PA**, took a holistic approach to its support services and emphasize an institution-wide service delivery system that included integrated assistive technology and improved transfer opportunities.
- ◆ **Ocean County College, NJ**, developed plans for students’ transition to work by offering community-wide courses on disability issues, surveying student needs and job opportunities, and building a campus-wide team.

- ◆ **SUNY, College of Technology at Delhi, NY**, provided professional development activities for faculty and staff to improve teaching and advising and to create a positive campus climate for the college’s increasing numbers of students with disabilities.

Four mentors from the following colleges served the project:

- ◆ Calhoun State Community College, AL
- ◆ New River Community College, VA
- ◆ Richland College, TX
- ◆ St. Philips College, TX

### MENTORING SUCCESS FACTORS

INFORMATION SHARING

MENTOR EXPERTISE/GENEROSITY

FOCUSED PLANNING

SITE VISITS

WRITTEN GUIDELINES

CONTINUING NETWORK

TEAM APPROACH

AACC SUPPORT

*NOTE: Findings drawn from a post-project participant survey.*

JC980365

# CREATING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TO SUPPORT Disability RESOURCES FOR RURAL EXTENSION SITES

Cococino Community College (CCC), was founded in 1991 with 970 students. By fall 1996, enrollment had jumped to more than 4,100. Of these, some 270 students attended the small rural Page campus 137 miles from the main campus. Page's population is approximately 60 percent Navajo and 40 percent white and other races. While students with disabilities on the Flagstaff campus were receiving adequate assistance, those on the Page campus were not. CCC's Disability Support Office team launched a community-based project that included workshops on disability awareness and assistive technology. They increased the use of assistive technology and provided more consistent transition planning for high school students. The team collaborated with the Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation to improve services overall.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The project began with a site visit from the project mentor, who worked with the college team to determine how the Page Campus could reach appropriate levels of service to its students with disabilities, including ways to meet federal requirements. The mentor addressed the administration and board about compliance issues and advised team leaders about effective ways to seek funding and community support for essential programs.

Twenty people attended the Disability Awareness Workshop. They reported gaining greater empathy about barriers faced by people with disabilities as one woman told about her daily challenges. The Assistive Technology Workshop emphasized determining a task's goal before selecting an accommodation, and participants tried low-tech devices. Community linkages, a mailing list, and training plans resulted from these workshops.

Initial telephone contacts with Navajo Nation Vocational Rehabilitation counselors were followed by more successful personal meetings. A strong working relationship resulted in weekly contact and collaboration on how to

improve services at several campuses and to deal appropriately with unique needs such as culturally based learning styles.

To help develop consistent transition planning for high school students, CCC sponsored presentations at

the high school that included information on vocational counseling, disability resources, and campus tours.

CCC is working with Northern Arizona University (NAU) on assessment services, technology funding, and resource sharing, especially in outlying areas. CCC students receive training through NAU's assistive technology project.

## CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Cultural differences threatened to sabotage linkages with Navajo representatives until face-to-face contact turned an obstacle into successful collaboration.

Transition planning was hindered when the primary contact person was injured.

The project mentor advised, encouraged community involvement, and gave invaluable information on funding and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

CCC has built a new campus at Page with space and accessibility that was previously lacking. The school anticipates that more students with disabilities will join the five currently enrolled. Funding is underway to establish a half-time Disabilities Resources Coordinator at the Page campus.

### CONTACTS

**Lariisa McClung**,  
Disability Resources  
Coordinator  
[lmclung@coco.cc.az.us](mailto:lmclung@coco.cc.az.us)

**Vivian Fisco**, District  
Director for Learning  
Assistance and  
Foundation Studies  
[vfishco@coco.cc.az.us](mailto:vfishco@coco.cc.az.us)

Coconino Community  
College  
3000 North 4th Street,  
Suite 17  
Flagstaff, AZ 86004  
Phone: 520/527-1222  
FAX: 520/526-1821

### MENTOR

**Rhonda Rapp**,  
Educational Support  
Services  
St. Philip's College  
1801 Martin Luther King  
Drive  
San Antonio, TX 78203  
PH: 210/531-3474  
FAX: 210/531-3513  
[rrapp@accdvm.accd.edu](mailto:rrapp@accdvm.accd.edu)

\*\*\*  
Disability AWARENESS TRAINING  
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TRAINING  
COOPERATION WITH NAVAJO  
NATION  
TRANSITION PLANNING  
INCREASED ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY  
IN OUTLYING AREAS  
\*\*\*

# A Holistic Approach to Servicing Students with Disabilities

**HARRISBURG  
AREA  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE**  
*Harrisburg,  
Pennsylvania*

**H**arrisburg Area Community College (HACC) is an urban institution that also serves students from suburban and rural areas. With a service area that includes 22 school districts, it has additional campuses and centers with more than 10,100 students. Students with disabilities comprise about 2 percent of the total enrollment on this fully accessible campus. The Special Services Program has a full-time faculty coordinator. Since the inception of a formalized program for students with disabilities, enrollment by students with disabilities has increased by more than 400 percent, greatly increasing the need for cooperation and service coordination. The project helped to improve HACC's disabilities service delivery system, boosted staff expertise, integrated assistive technology, and improved transfer opportunities to four-year institutions. Work within the community to create community linkages and develop job transition and placement activities also proved successful.

## IMPLEMENTATION

**A**t a well-publicized, three-day campus visit, the project mentor conducted informational training sessions on accommodating students with disabilities, met with key individuals at the college, and recommended ways to enhance HACC's disability support services (DSS) program. The team and mentor met twice more to refine project activities, share resources and expertise, and evaluate progress.

To help improve the DSS delivery system, the college project team distributed brochures describing services, provided mid-term class progress reports for students with disabilities, and conducted follow-up surveys to DSS students. The team also evaluated software packages and developed resource manuals for faculty and students.

### CONTACTS

**Timothy Neher**, Vice  
President for Student  
Services

*tjneher@hacc01b.hacc.edu*

**Subrina Smith Taylor**,  
Coordinator/Counselor  
of Special Services

*staylor@hacc01b.hacc.edu*

Harrisburg Area  
Community College  
One HACC Drive  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
PH: 717/780-2614  
FAX: 717/231-7674

### MENTOR

**Oscar Lopez**, Director,  
Special Services

Richland College  
12800 Abrams Road  
Dallas, TX 75243-2199  
PH: 214/238-6180  
FAX: 214/238-6352  
*oml8341@dccc.edu*

Improved services—including faculty support and integrated use of assistive technology—were attributed to the involvement of key people on the project team. Supportive administrators and skilled counselors were crucial to the project, as was the overall staff training program. Materials were distributed to help students become aware of transfer opportunities to four-year colleges.

To create community linkages, HACC developed a transition checklist for high school, implemented a growing referral network, and established a community advisory board. The board provides information on employment, training, cultural, and social activities to students with disabilities. An action plan was developed to assist students with disabilities in job transition and placement, and students with disabilities took part in the annual college job fair.

## CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

**T**he college has a strong commitment to ensure that students with disabilities are treated fairly, have equal access to all programs and services, and are treated with respect. This attitude spread widely across the campus as the project progressed.

The mentoring process—including an excellent match between mentor and team—helped define goals, objectives, and timelines, and provided opportunities for invaluable feedback on a number of issues.



# PROJECT EDGE: ENHANCING DISABLED GRADUATES EMPLOYMENT

Since 1964, when Ocean County College (OCC) began its mission as an open-door college, its enrollment has grown to more than 8,000 students. The college established P.A.S.S. (Project Academic Skills Support) in 1987, created its Disability Resources Center (DRC) in 1993, and has become a regional center for college students with learning disabilities. Because the area's rapid population growth is not matched by economic and cultural development, limited employment opportunities affect everyone. Persons with disabilities—even individuals with degrees—often find it difficult to gain employment. The new Enhancing Disabled Graduates Employment (EDGE) project evolved from P.A.S.S. and has on transition-to-work issues. Activities include assessing existing campus career activities, reviewing current research to assess transition needs, and offering community-wide courses addressing disability issues.

## IMPLEMENTATION

An initial visit with the project mentor helped establish the 23-member EDGE team, which met monthly and consisted of representatives from college staff and students, local agencies and employers, and the community. The team conducted surveys and reviewed results to generate suggestions for improving career services—and opted to continue for another year to follow up on implementation. EDGE team suggestions often paralleled campus Retention Committee recommendations and followed the “system change” philosophy of the national School-to-Work initiative.

The mentor played an important role in presenting comprehensive information to students and OCC staff. The mentor and team leaders met with the OCC president, and a meeting between the mentors, team members, and key campus personnel resulted in frank exchange and goals clarification.

A campus survey indicated that students receive career information through the classroom, but help offered through OCC's Career Center, library, and seminars was often overlooked. A community poll indicated multiple needs—information and support on disability-related issues, learning opportunities for practical workplace demands, and better skills for locating employment. Common barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities

included transportation problems, limited work experience, limited job-seeking skills, and lack of marketable skills.

The OCC graduates with disabilities who

were surveyed reported general satisfaction with DRC staff availability. Half reported career preparation as the reason for their enrollment at OCC. Respondents also mentioned seeking employment and difficulties in entering the job market as pertinent issues. All respondents to a telephone survey said they needed guidance in finding employment.

OCC and two local agencies presented an on-campus informational seminar, and OCC cooperated with another local group to develop a series of employment-related seminars, including résumé writing and interview process simulation at Career Empowerment Day. An existing class focused on job-seeking skills, understanding the effects of disability legislation, and the interview process.

## CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Seminars were well-received by attendees, despite sparse attendance resulting from inadequate promotion.

OCC president's support was key to EDGE's success, since project implementation involved a systems change for the entire campus. The mentor's site visit, critical feedback on grant-related activities, and objective perspective all helped to maintain project focus.

The EDGE project also benefited from important non-monetary resources—professional expertise and support from other community colleges.

## CONTACTS

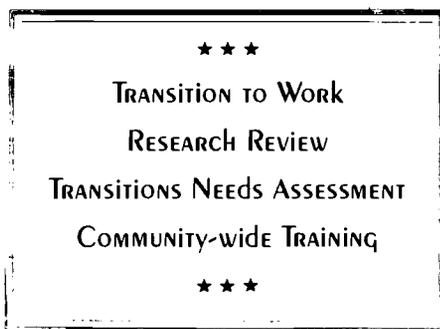
**Maureen G. Reustle,**  
Director, Disability  
Resource Center

**Lorett E. Cramer,**  
Career Specialist-  
Disability Resource  
Center

Ocean County  
Community College  
College Drive  
P.O. Box 2001  
Toms River, NJ 08753-  
2001  
PH: 908/255-0456  
FAX: 908/255-0444

## MENTOR

**Virginia Smith,**  
Counselor  
Calhoun State  
Community College  
Hwy 31 North  
Decatur, AL 35601  
PH: 205/306-2866  
FAX: 205/350-2656



# A TEAM APPROACH TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF "OUR" STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

SUNY,  
College of  
Technology  
AT Delhi  
Delhi,  
New York

Located in rural, upstate New York, the College of Technology at Delhi serves about 2,100 students in both traditional and technological/trade programs. The college currently enrolls nearly 300 students with disabilities—an enormous increase over the past two years. A high percentage of these are students with learning disabilities, many of whom are enrolled in the trade programs. Greater student numbers combined with fewer support staff and severe budget cuts forced Delhi to look for innovative ways to serve its students. By fostering campus-wide ownership of meeting the needs of students with disabilities, the college increased faculty and staff awareness of disability issues and helped faculty develop greater proficiency in teaching and advising students with special needs.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The project began strongly with the mentor's first visit, funded through the college president's budget. A keynote address to faculty and staff explained the project and inspired enthusiasm for participation. A second visit featured inservice workshops conducted by the mentor for faculty, staff, and students. These well-attended sessions helped build relationships among participants and left them with a unified purpose. Additional workshops followed.

A Disabilities Advisory Team was formed, giving ownership of the project to the entire campus. The team developed a faculty/staff handbook and sponsored Disability Awareness Week activities to raise awareness of

disabilities issues. Activities included administrators trying out a disability in "Disabled for a Day," a seated campus volleyball tournament, and a stress management workshop for students with disabilities.

A Faculty Liaison Group has emerged from the Disabilities Advisory Team to help provide inservice training to instructors. Since many of the faculty are local tradespeople or technicians with little formal training in teaching methods, this approach has offered great benefits.

Student involvement increased through "Common Ground" (a club for students with disabilities), classroom presentations, and student newspaper articles publicizing

administrative support for project initiatives. Students with disabilities also nominated faculty and staff who show particular caring and service to receive awards sponsored by the Disabilities Advisory Team.

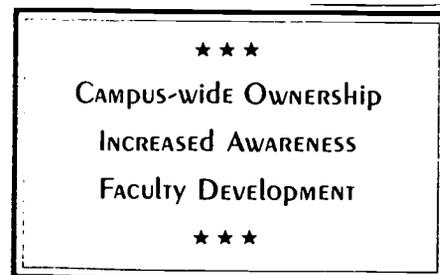
Faculty and staff were surveyed concerning their beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes about students with disabilities both before and after the project. Project success was gauged by the evidence of significant changes in prior-held beliefs as well as the level of respondent participation in disability-related activities. A significant change in attitude appeared to have taken place. The survey also provided information on where to focus ongoing efforts.

## CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Despite severe budget cuts, the college president placed a high priority on providing disability support services by funding an additional mentor visit. This firm support of the project helped set the stage for campus-wide cooperation.

The mentor, knowledgeable about rural communities, brought insights that encouraged collaboration and helped avoid pitfalls. The mentoring process was viewed as invaluable to the college and helped provide a continuing support system.

The liaison team approach ensured active participation and ownership of the program. The Disabilities Advisory Team began organizing a whole new agenda, and the activities implemented during the project are poised to continue.



### CONTACTS

**Leslie Mokay**, Director  
of Academic Success  
Center

Room 333 Bush Hall  
Phone: 607/746-4588

**Jody Fiorini**,  
Coordinator of  
Disabled Student  
Services

PH: 607/746-4590  
SUNY, College of  
Technology at Delhi  
Dehli, NY 13753  
FAX: 607/746-4208

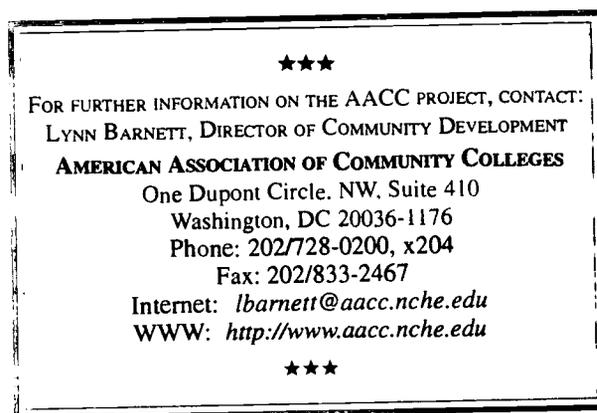
### MENTOR

**Jeananne Dixon**,  
Coordinator for the  
Learning Disabled  
New River Community  
College

P.O. Box 1127, Rt. 100  
Dublin, VA 24084  
PH: 540/674-3600 x358  
FAX: 540/674-3642

## SELECTED RESOURCES

- A guide to accommodating students with disabilities. Faculty resource manual.* (1997). Harrisburg, PA: Harrisburg Area Community College.
- Cramer, L. E. (1996). *P.A.S.S. job transition and placement program. Final report.* Toms River, NJ: Ocean County College.
- Fiorini, J., Mokay, L. (1996). *A team approach to meeting the needs of "our" students with disabilities. Final report.* Delhi, NY: State University of New York College of Technology at Delhi.
- Guidelines for mentors. AACC improving disability support services in community colleges project.* (1995). Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.
- Lopez, O. M. (1996). *Improving disability support services project. Final report [Mentor].* Dallas, TX: Richland College.
- McClung, L., Fisco, V. (1996). *Creating community connections to support disability resources in rural extension sites. Final report.* Flagstaff, AZ: Coconino Community College.
- Neher, T., Taylor, S. S. (1996). *Improving disability support services at community colleges project. Final report.* Harrisburg, PA: Harrisburg Area Community College.
- Rhonda, R., Wright, A., Villarreal, J. (1995). *Handbook for students with disabilities.* San Antonio, TX: St. Phillip's College.
- Smith, V. (1995). *College students with disabilities. A resource guide for faculty and staff.* Decatur, AL: Calhoun Community College.



This report was prepared under Grant No. H078C40054 from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government. (Dollar amount of federal funds for grant: \$113,953; percent of total project financed by federal money: 100%).



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
*Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)*  
*Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*



JL 980 365

## NOTICE

### REPRODUCTION BASIS



This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.



This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").