Minnesota Campus Compact Announces
Navigating College: A Peer Mentoring Initiative and Retention Summit
Keynote Address Monday, June 25, 2007 7:00 PM

A recent *Star Tribune* editorial urges Minnesota to “pay attention to the college graduation rate.” Reports from the Office of Higher Education and others indicate Minnesota lags behind states that have both a higher percent of their young adults enrolled in post-secondary education and higher success rates once they are enrolled.

Under its new strategic vision—that Minnesota is a state where all students experience post-secondary success and participate in a vibrant democracy—Minnesota Campus Compact will work with member campuses to significantly increase graduation rates among underrepresented students. To launch this special initiative we invite member campuses to join us for A Retention Summit on helping first-generation and low-income college students thrive in all post-secondary programs.

The Summit will begin with a day of work by teams from pilot member campuses followed by an evening keynote lecture “Students First: Improving First Generation Students’ Performance and Retention in Higher Education,” by leading retention expert Dr. Peter Collier, associate professor of sociology at Portland State University. Collier's intervention strategies show remarkable results including dramatically higher retention rates compared to a control group. Collier is the principle investigator on a FIPSE grant to experiment with various forms of support for student retention and another grant that examines the persistence over time of the effects of peer mentoring on first generation students.

Professor Collier will outline his theoretical framework on persistence and retention within a context of college graduation rates among low-income, first-generation, and students of color, including definitions of terms, national data on persistence, and the role of mentoring in addressing pressing issues of retention. The Students First Mentoring Program he has instituted at Portland State University emphasizes distinctions between actual knowledge and displayed abilities in students and converts the assets of first-generation students into behaviors faculty recognize as engaged and critical thinking. Retention rates among students who participate in the Student First Mentoring Program are significantly higher than the PSU student body and a control group of students.

**Why now?** Minnesota Campus Compact’s Navigating College: A Peer Mentoring Initiative is a timely effort to bring together the best work in the nation and in our state to bear on issues particular to students at MN institutions of higher education. No other state Compact is organizing such an effort of diverse institutions to share knowledge, information, resources, and create together a database and resource library (of videos and other virtual resources) that can be shared nationally.

**Who should attend?** Keynote lecture open to member institutions, including higher education faculty, staff, and administrators interested in issues of retention, K-12 teachers and staff, community-based tutoring and mentoring program staff, legislators and partner organizations.

For more information contact JoAnn Campbell, 651.603.5088
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TWO DAY SUMMIT FOR PILOT MEMBERS ONLY
Getting Personal: Creating a Peer Mentoring Program that Works for your Campus and your Students
Workshop for teams from the nine pilot campuses of the Navigating College: A Peer Mentoring Initiative

Objectives:
• To provide a common framework for the nine pilot campuses to plan their peer mentoring initiatives
• To create teams on each campus that have a common set of data on their own campus efforts, resources, and challenges, theoretical frameworks, and time to plan strategies for student success
• To introduce the teams to each other and get a sense of the resources in the network

Who should attend?
Teams involved in the Navigating College Initiative could include deans, department chairs, undergraduate curriculum administrator, retention and student success staff, student and academic affairs administrators, community service and service-learning coordinators, graduate program faculty, IT staff, admissions, financial aid, TRIO program

Agenda:
Topics to be covered during this workshop:
• Institutional issues and peer mentoring
• Revealing the hidden curriculum
• Working with community and civic engagement for success
• Mentor training
• Multimedia delivery
• Documenting peer mentoring programs
• Institutionalizing a culture of success

Throughout the two days consultants will work with each campus team on issues particular to their campus; we will discuss issues common to all campuses regarding retention of first-generation students, low-income students, and students of color; and there will be opportunity for those in similar institutional roles to discuss useful practices, processes, and challenges. Day two will start with an expert panel response to Professor Collier’s Keynote Address. Expert consultants include:

• Dr. Buffy Smith, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of St. Thomas. A former Lumina Dissertation Fellow, Smith’s work focuses on the transfer of social capital in peer mentoring, particularly in African American populations. She teaches Race and Ethnicity, Social Stratification, and Social Problems.

• Dr. Frankie Santos Laanan, Associate Professor of Educational Policy and Leadership, Iowa State University. Laanan’s research focuses on college access, minority students’ pathway to the baccalaureate, community college retention strategies and understanding students in transition. He is currently working on an NSF grant to make the sciences more welcoming to women and minorities and has created a mentoring program for female faculty of color in STEM disciplines.

• Collin Fellows, Program Manager of Students First Mentoring Program at Portland State University. Fellows has been a senior consultant and implementation specialist for a high end, enterprise application software company, where his responsibilities included project planning, system design and software training. His current research focuses on the long term retention effects of participating in a peer mentoring program as well as exploring the ability to utilize available new technologies to deliver needed services to reach the broadest range of new students.

Dates: 11:00 AM June 25- 3:00 PM June 26, 2007, Location Metropolitan State University

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