

DANVILLE AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE – UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS REPORT 2023
STRATEGIES IN RECRUITING & RETAINING
UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS ON THEIR PATHWAY TO COMPLETION IN FY22

Institutional Practice #1: Expanded Mental Health Services

Part A - Purpose:

Access to mental health services has been challenging for our students and community. Prior to the pandemic, there was a two month wait for students to receive mental health services. Then, with the onset of the pandemic and a shortage of mental health providers, the wait became even longer as mental health needs rose. The College also noted that underrepresented students often had more barriers than other student populations. The ability to find and receive mental health services was at the top of the barrier list. In order to assist and retain the students, the College needed to implement additional strategies.

With the State's implementation of the Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act, the College responded with the following strategies: 1) Creation of a Mental Health webpage; 2) Continued in house Counseling services (with employees employed prior to the Act); 3) Established a partnership with a local mental healthcare provider, Crosspoint Human Services, to provide free mental health counseling to students and training to Advisement & Counseling staff on local mental health issues and resources.

Part B - Implementation: November 2021

Part C – Elements & Strategies Utilized:

- Students can submit a referral form for counseling services through the Advisement & Counseling website. Appointments and walk-ins are available.
- Expand services on campus to remove the barriers of long waits and transportation issues.
- The therapist is part of the regular Advisement & Counseling services which provides a level of discretion with students checking in at the front desk and following the same protocol as other appointments.
- The therapist trains Counseling & Advisement staff on how to access and explore campus/community resources for students.
- Therapeutic services are free of charge for all in need.
- Minors can access services with a parent's permission. This includes dual credit students.

Part D - Evidence:

After partnering with Crosspoint, the Counseling department communicated with students and staff to make them aware of the expanded services.

- Over 25 students and staff completed referrals for mental health services. Unfortunately, due to staff turnover at Crosspoint, the number of walk-ins is not consistently documented, but we know walk-in appointments were provided.

- With the funding, mental health resources and materials were purchased to share with students/staff. This was to increase awareness, provide basic information on services, and to serve more students/staff.
- With the increased awareness, a DACC professor stepped up to provide professional development services for staff. The chosen method also provided social/emotional support for students. Within this reporting period, five Mental Health seminars on topics such as Suicide Prevention and Helping Yourself or Others with Mental Health were provided.
- In April 2022, the Counseling department hosted a mental health speaker who was a licensed counselor from Crosspoint. Two faculty members had their classes attend which indicates the need to cover the topics and how faculty taking the initiative to help address mental health needs is so important.

Institutional Practice #2: ICONIC

Part A – Purpose:

With the retention and success rates of African American males much lower than other student populations on campus, the College made it a priority to increase student engagement and improve graduation, transfer, and employment rates. ICONIC is an example of one of the strategies in place. It prepares African American males for academic/employment success by introducing them to resources/tools on campus or in the community, by offering and supporting student-developed social activities, by helping them establish a positive network of peers and mentors, and by introducing them to opportunities outside their day-to-day world.

Part B –Implementation: Spring 2022

Part C –Elements & Strategies Utilized:

ICONIC group members meet routinely with the Coordinator. The relationship is established early in the student's academic path, preferably before their first semester. Examples of strategies utilized during FY 22 year include:

- Participants attend regular check-in meetings and tutoring sessions to monitor their progress and build community.
- Program focuses on learning about services through interactions with Financial Aid, the Foundation (for scholarships), Counseling, Academic Deans and faculty members, Career Services, Vermilion County Works (a WIOA program), and community agencies/partners.
- Successful second-year students mentor first year participants.
- Mental health challenges are discussed within the group. Students (if comfortable) talk about their mental health struggles. Campus resources are discussed and provided.
- Academic and relationship issues are discussed. ICONIC provides a positive support group for students where they learn from each other.
- Risks/issues from being away from family are addressed as some students need extra support while separated from family.
- ICONIC Coordinator provides assistance with college readiness which especially important for first generation students.
- Transfer support is provided to students who plan on transferring to a 4-year university.

- Job search exploration and training is encouraged and provided. This includes local and national job trends, resume development, interviewing techniques, business and industry tours, and job referrals (both on and off campus).
- ICONIC students participated in campus events. During this reporting period, they attended the “Putting Your Best Foot Forward” (Grooming and Being Picture Ready) training.
- Students toured the campus and met with the President, Vice Presidents, and other Administrators at the College to establish connections and build their support network.
- ICONIC Coordinator provided training on how to respond when being pulled over in a traffic stop.
- ICONIC participated in a Black Teen Conference.

Part D – Evidence:

- ICONIC success in FY22: 3 students transferred to a 4-year university; 2 student athletes transferred, laterally, to another community college; 3 students entered the workforce; 3 students completed/graduated; and 15 students were retained in the program
- Students are receptive to the group and information provided.
- Student retention and persistence is improving due to participation.
- ICONIC participants deem the group a “brotherhood.”
- ICONIC members work on campus and participate in campus activities.
- ICONIC is linked to the TRIO program and a few serve as TRIO Ambassadors.