

**Nomination for Innovation of the Year Program
2004-05
Glendale Community College (GCC)
Gaucho Mentoring Program in Support of Nursing Students**

Team Members Nominated:

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Executive Summary: The Gaucho Mentoring Program is a uniquely collaborative cross-departmental and cross campus approach to student retention. The program utilizes existing staff to provide a variety of structured activities to support GCC's Nursing students. Students participate in orientations, seminars, study skills classes, study groups, and individual mentoring.

Program: The Gaucho Mentoring Program provides a variety of activities for Nursing students to support their academic, personal, and professional success. The program has been under the leadership of Trini Sandoval, GCC counseling faculty, for the past three years. It started out as a small pilot and has continued to evolve and expand each semester as student needs are identified.

Activities are specifically designed to meet the needs of students in various "blocks" of the Nursing program and include support for all four blocks (entire nursing program). The support provided to students changes as they move

through the program and are faced with different challenges. Initially, activities are directed at providing accurate information about the Nursing program and career information in various nursing fields. Students research career pathways, educational and training requirements, salary, job outlook, and work environment factors. This semester (Spring 2005) a new component was added for career exploration: The StrengthsQuests instrument was administered with assistance from Ron Gaschler, GCC Career Services Manager, and results were used to help students gain clarity about their desired work environment and career goals.

Kristina White, GCC academic advisor who specializes in Nursing, provides advisement services to students in pre-nursing (those completing nursing prerequisites) and nursing students who are completing the Nursing program. She works closely with campus faculty and State university faculty to stay current with ongoing Nursing program changes.

Once accepted into the Nursing program, students attend special orientations with their faculty to ensure accurate dissemination of information, discuss expectations, and learn how to access necessary resources.

As students progress through the Nursing program, they benefit from a Study Skills class (CPD150AB) and meet in study groups led by Trini Sandoval. Topics include time management, stress management, study skills, note taking skills, test taking techniques, relaxation and anxiety reduction, working with instructors, and relationships. To further her knowledge of nursing students' needs, Ms. Sandoval has visited hospitals to observe students who are engaged in clinical rotations. This has enabled her to better understand students' needs and further integrate their study skills.

Individual mentoring and support are provided by counselors and/or peer (student) mentors, depending on student needs at the time. Student mentors have an ability to form a peer relationship that is only possible in a student-to-student situation. They have a unique understanding and provide a special type of assistance that only students can provide each other.

Ralph Sandoval, MCC Reading Department Chairperson from MCC meets with student groups at GCC to provide reading assistance. He instructs them on understanding main ideas, supporting detail, and making inferences. Also included are strategies for managing anxiety in order to improve performance.

Student needs are continually monitored and evaluated by Nursing and Counseling faculty. Recently the Nursing Entrance Test (NET) has been implemented and students must pass it to be accepted into the Nursing program. This has provided an additional "opportunity" for the Mentoring program, and students now can get assistance with study skills and reading to prepare for the NET.

Everyone involved in this program works very collaboratively to ensure that students are appropriately assisted or referred so that none "fall through the cracks."

Quality – The program has increased student retention and performance. This is evidenced by: 1) direct observations of Nursing faculty; 2) program expansion (scope of services and number of students participating); 3) requests for similar support from faculty/chairs in Education, Automotives and EMT; 4) Ten nursing students who failed Block IV initially but joined the Mentoring Program and went on to complete the program and pass the National Council Licensing Exam (NCLEX); 5) Student testimonials; and 6) Elements of the program have been replicated by Counseling and Nursing faculty from Phoenix College (PC).

Efficiency – The group approach to supporting students ensures better utilization of staff time. An added benefit is that students form strong bonds with and support each other throughout their program of study.

Cost Effectiveness – This program utilizes existing staff and resources. All employees either volunteer or perform these services as part of their hours of accountability; *there has been no additional operational cost to the College.*

Replication – The program is currently being replicated for the Education, Automotive, and EMT programs at GCC. Components of the Mentoring program have been replicated at Phoenix College by their Counseling and Nursing faculty.

Creativity – To my knowledge, this integrated team approach has never been utilized before to support specific academic programs. It includes individuals from two campuses (GCC and MCC) and five departments (Counseling, Reading, Nursing, Career Services, Advisement), and student (peer) mentors who are an integral part of the program.

Timeliness – The Mentoring partnership with Nursing began three years ago and has continued to expand in scope and into other academic areas of the college. Since there seems to be a growing trend of under prepared students, this program is very timely.

Learning – The program is being expanded to include Education, Automotive, and EMT students.

Collaboration - It also has been shared with Counseling and Nursing faculty from Phoenix College.

Student Testimonials:

My experience in this class (CPD150AB) was a real eye-opener to me. I learned that you can't take short cuts to learning and if you just put a little more effort than normal you can succeed. I really enjoyed the class like hearing others who are doing through the same things and just give encouragement and just things to pick you up. It lets you know that it's not the end of the world, you can make it through!! "If at first you don't succeed, try and try again." – RoShann Colter

This class has helped me build my self esteem and the confidence needed to succeed. The support offered from fellow classmates and instructors has been wonderful. – Tracy

The class improved what I can use to help with my study habits, what bad studying habits were, and what good habits are. It helped me utilize my time management and not procrastinate with study time. I also learned other studying techniques (following notes by audio and using note card definitions). Time management is one big key to studying. – Marion Gonzalez

Nomination Submitted by:

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