

**November 30, 2017**

**Onondaga Pathways to Careers Demonstration Project at Onondaga Community College - Community of Practice**

**Attendees:**

**Facilitator:** Meera Adya

**Discussants:** Jamila DeCarli, Jessica Perez

**Groups:**

- Erie Community College
- Gateway Technical College
- **LaGuardia Community College-CUNY**
- Long Beach City College
- Minneapolis Community and Technical College
- **Onondaga Community College**
- **Pellissippi State Community College**
- Richland Community College
- Rockland Community College
- **Sacramento City College**
- San Diego Community College District
- Schenectady County Community College
- **Burton Blatt Institute**
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency - able
- **Idaho Department of Labor**
- **Kentucky VR**
- MN Career & College Readiness Collaborative
- **National Disability Institute's (NDI)**
- **Nebraska VR**
- The Institute for Educational Leadership
- **U.S. Department of Labor - ODEP**
- Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

**Meera:** Alright, I think we will still have a few folks joining us over the minute or so but I will go ahead and get started. Again, welcome to our group. We have new folks joining us each time, we've been trying to do outreach and will continue to do that; if as you join these meetings, you think that there is someone you know in your network who may appreciate learning more about Career Pathway programs as they interface with or are situated in community colleges please share this information with them and you can put them in touch with me- As folks join us, if you wouldn't mind putting yourself on mute it would help us to get through the meeting and all be able to hear each other a little more clearly. Great, thank you. Alright, so as I mentioned, welcome everybody back from your Thanksgiving breaks. It's nice to have you join us. I think we have very interesting conversations set aside for today. We had two new members that will be giving us overviews of the programs that they interface with and they and having talked about it with them, I'm particularly interested in what it is they share; these are programs that in different ways cut across boundaries and I think have some interesting practices. So as I mentioned we have some new programs, I will introduce Jamila DeCarli from San Diego Community College District and then Jessica Perez from LaGuardia Community College that is part of the CUNY system, and after the discussion for about their programs I'd like to just, if we have time, to be able to go into a discussion of how we can best meet everyone's needs on this call with this community of practice as we move forward. Alright, so before we do get started we always like to know who's with us and I would just appreciate folks jumping in as I go down the list and letting us know if you are with us. Do we have anyone from Erie Community College today? Gateway Technical College? LaGuardia, I'm hoping we have Jessica? No Jessica yet? Okay, actually, now that I think Jessica did say she had an executive committee meeting I believe or another important meeting right before so she may be joining us fifteen minutes late or so. Let me move on, Long Beach City College, do we have anybody? Minneapolis Community and Technical College? OCC? Of course, I know we should have our visitors from-

**Jay:** Yes. This is Jay Harrison from OCC.

**Meera:** Great, welcome Jay. I see William is here as well, he is in the web conferencing system. And Pellissippi State Community College, do we have our colleagues from the partner project?

**Janet:** Hi there, this is Janet and Sheldon. We're here at Pellissippi on site so we have the call on speaker as we're breaking for lunch.

**Meera:** Okay, good tip. So everybody from PST and IEL, they're all at PSTCC. Okay. And what I have on the slides are bolded, the folks who did let us know that they would be

here. So I'll quickly start moving through as well some of the other ones that aren't bolded. Did anyone from Richland Community College join us? Rockland Community College? Sacramento City College? Okay, so we do have Lori from Rockland. I see that in the chat box. And Lori just let us know if you have any challenges using the mic or the system because I definitely want to make sure we get your participation if you have any questions and that we can hear you, but I'll continue to consult in the chat box as well. Sand Diego Community College District, I know we have Jamila with us.

**Jamila:** Hi, good morning.

**Meera:** Good morning. Schenectady County Community College? Nope. And BBI, Burton Blatt Institute. Of course you have myself and we have Ygnesse, who is also joining us. She's new to our team this fall and we have Thao and Celestia in the moderating roles through the webinar as well.

**Barry:** And you have Pam and Barry as well from Southeast ADA.

**Meera:** Yes, hi Pam and Barry. Oh, I'm sorry. Going down my list I realized I didn't list Southeast ADA Center. I usually like to highlight you guys, through that avenue I apologize. Welcome Barry and Pam! And through that project we do interface with other Career Pathway projects and have been creating resources for them so it's great to have you join us. Idaho Department of Labor, I believe I did see Gordon Graff joining us.

**Gordon:** Yes, good morning.

**Meera:** Good morning. And Kentucky VR? Do we have Helga on the line? I don't see on the web conference perhaps Helga will join us in a few minutes. Minnesota Career and College Readiness Collaborative? Do we have anybody from the Minnesota Department of Labor or those projects? NDI?

**Nicki:** This is Nicki, I'm from NDI.

**Dave:** This is Dave Mayer from Indiana also.

**Meera:** Nebraska VR, I remember Janet and Aimee saying hello at the beginning of the meeting? Did anyone else join? Did Zack come in as well?

**Janet:** I'm not sure if Zack was able to make it today or not.

**Meera:** Okay no problem. I know IEL is on the phone. It was Pellissippi and that's ODEP

as well, they're on the site visit. What about the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired or DARS at Virginia? Okay, and do we have anybody whose institution hasn't been listed up here, anyone new that would like to just say hello? We'd love to welcome you to our group. Well thanks everybody for joining us again as we come back here from the holidays and thank you to Pellissippi and ODEP and IEL for joining us during your break. I will continue to proceed through our agenda. As I mentioned, we have new members that will be introducing themselves today and then I'd like to talk a little bit, if we have time, about just getting your input into how these community of practices can be most useful for you- what information you're looking for, perhaps changing the format, anything that you can tell us that we can use to improve the services we're providing. In the next meeting we're looking forward to actually hearing from Pellissippi telling us a little bit more about their program as well, as I mentioned, a sister program of ours, if you will, also funded by ODEP. So I will start by turning over the presentation to Jamila from San Diego Community College District. When speaking with her I was very interested to hear about how this project work as it cuts across multiple sites and so it's not necessarily similar to the one that we have and we've been talking to you about here at Onondaga Community College where we're clearly one college. So with that I will turn it over to you Jamila, welcome, and thank you for being willing to share more about your program with us.

**Jamila:** Thank you so much and I'm glad to be here and just a little side note this is completely out of my comfort zone being on this side of things, I've participated in many of these but just kind of like to sit back and relax and take everything in and now I'm going, 'Oh my goodness this is totally different.' So if you can guide me Meera, tell me if I'm talking too much or not enough or maybe if you have any questions for clarification please let me know because this is my first time doing this. So we'll see- can everybody hear me okay?

**Meera:** Yes, you're great.

**Jamila:** Okay, great. So this is a picture of our little team in a little park here in San Diego. I'm the one in the middle with the hat on and I'll just go into the slides here for our present and review. So down here in San Diego, San Diego Community College District is the second largest community college district in California. We serve approximately 100,000 students annually and we have three different college sites, credit sites that are large community colleges. We also have six continuing education centers which provide a number of certificate programs. Workability III is the program that I work with and we had a partnership with the DOR, or the Department of Rehabilitation, for over 25 years now, I believe we're going on 27 years. We have credit and non-credit options for students including course options and programs specifically

designed for individuals with disabilities. Some of those programs include our brain injury program and community living skills, occupational opportunities choices classes, adaptive living skills, art and P.E.

**Meera:** Jamila, do you regularly add new courses or program options or have you been pretty static over the past 25 years?

**Jamila:** That's a great question, unfortunately we have been pretty static at the college district for the course offerings for people with disabilities. However, my understanding is that through a non-credit course option there's some new courses that are being developed, new curriculum being written, so we're looking to expand our course offerings. I think next semester is the first time they're offering a communication for students with disabilities course as well as that community living skills.

**Meera:** Great, great.

**Jamila:** Okay, so on an individual basis we assist our students with securing competitive employment by providing the things listed here. One of the things that we've been able to do is provide one-to-one vocational counseling by our trained specialists. One of the things we do is we push from the very beginning for our students to get some kind of relevant and recent work experience whether it's the student getting their first- looking for their first position or maybe it's an individual who hasn't worked in some time and maybe it's retraining in a new area. One of the things we really try to facilitate is while they're in school taking classes maybe retraining whether they're in a full program or maybe just taking one course we want them to be getting work experience. We work with them individually to teach effective job search skills, work with them on developing appropriate workplace behaviors and communication skills, mock interviews. We do give them the option to practice, they're considering practice disclosing their disability and requesting accommodations and sometimes that even falls in line with their academic program. If they're not connected with disabled student services that's one of the things that we encourage so that they can get those accommodations and support in college and then that way they're a little bit more familiar perhaps with what they might need in the workforce. We can reach out to employers if the individuals are comfortable with us disclosing that we're a program that works with students with disabilities, we try to teach them self-advocacy so we can always reach out to an employer, whether it's to get information about how they did during an interview, what's going on while they're at work, if there's any problems or issues or challenges that come up we can interface with the employer. We can also do short-term job coaching meaning we can go to the site on a fairly limited basis to kind of get them oriented and comfortable and do some basic training hands-on with them at the work site. They can also apartment with the

Department of Rehabilitation to provide extended job coaching through an additional agency if needed. And then, of course, job retention. One of the things I didn't mention that is important to our program is that we are numbers driven. We serve about 150 students annually, our goal in terms of job placement is 47 individuals, that's the goal to be placed in employment and have their cases closed with the Department of Rehabilitation within the fiscal year. And I think, Meera, you had asked in an email what numbers we have and since we've had this partnership for a really long time it would be really interesting to go back 25, 26 years and count up all the jobs that students have gotten, but going back over the past three years I think the number I came up with was about 121 students being placed in employment that relates to their individualized plan that they created through the Department of Rehabilitation. So currently we're working with about 80 students and I would say about right now there's about 15 individuals working in their intended fields.

**Meera:** Do you have, not specific numbers of course because I'm putting you on the spot, but do you find certain strategies more than others have supported job retention? Are they able to gain employment and then maintain that employment to move down a career pathway?

**Jamila:** I think it's hard to say numbers wise and trend wise. It's really on an individual basis that I think our goal is really to help individuals develop the skills that they need to stay in positions and also have the skills needed so they're ready to advance and they want to move up. We let the ladder within the company or apply further positions that they're able to do fairly independently. I would say our rate for retention is actually pretty good although a couple of individuals might reach a point of working for 90 days and then find themselves in a situation where they've- they're not performing well, they've been let go, in which case we can open them for post-employment services. And these are just some fun slides of some of the individuals within the past couple years that have gone to work. I would say I know at least four of these individuals are still in the positions that they're featured in here in the pictures and actually one of them has gone on to get a number of different jobs and increased his pay and actually gone off the security benefits and gone on to more secure and higher paying positions.

**Meera:** Fantastic.

**Jamila:** So a little bit about our students, I mentioned we have quite an age range and I think our youngest student is 18, our oldest student, I want to say, is 72 years old. They're really diverse in their academic pathways and this is something that I think is a little, maybe, unique in that we get a number of students referred to us from Department of Rehabilitation who are in really across the board in a number of varying

pathways. We could have a number of students in IT, healthcare and health systems, specific programs related to social work, cosmetology, culinary arts, and hospitality is huge in San Diego, so really it's kind of interesting to try to meet the needs of all the students who are across the board in a number of different interest areas. As I mentioned, you have a range in age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, a lot of our students have diverse facts in the challenges part. The largest disability category is mental health, but the number of students on the spectrum is really growing and this is probably a trend for everybody. We're also getting younger students referred earlier and younger and younger, so I would say maybe a couple years ago about half of our student population was over the age of 45, which is kind of non-traditional for college students; now I would say we're growing at about a quarter of our students are between 18 and 24 so this is definitely a growing population. Here in San Diego we're kind of spread out. A lot of our students have additional challenges outside their disability including transportation limitations, whether it's not having their own vehicle or not having the awareness of how to use public transportation. Students, a fair number of them, have criminal history and there's also factors with housing being a challenge, so some of our students are homeless who are living in their cars or with friends or family, but don't have consistent places to stay. However, we do our best to refer our students to community agencies, resources within the community and on campus to try to help ameliorate these issues.

**Meera:** That's great. I know we've also presented on our program here and we have talked about some of those same challenges that we face where students need assistance with things outside of academics and work experience. OCC has also had to create strategies for connecting folks to community services as well as community care hubs and services that are offered or routed through the college system. So a lot of similarities, I think, in what you've been presenting. And moving forward, your service model.

**Jamila:** Okay. As I mentioned, sort of the provided one-to-one by vocational specialist, usually while the student is still enrolled. Sometimes we get the referrals early in the student's academic pathway which means we can work with them for a couple of years to beyond; sometimes they are referred maybe within their last semester and we start working with them at that point. As I mentioned, the relationships can last months or years. We have a number of ways that we can connect with students; our program's actually located in Central San Diego at our district headquarters which is not, per se, a campus but we can have our students come here or what I usually do is individuals enrolled, especially in full-time courses, I'll go to the campus to meet with them. So this could be northern, southern, central San Diego. I do quite a bit of driving, but I'll meet them at their campus and really get to know what their program's about and what some

of their challenges are too in terms of participating. So when they're assigned to work with a vocational specialist, they can come here, the specialist can go meet them, we also can meet at other places in the community. I met a student at Starbucks the other day because he couldn't get to me, so we're pretty flexible. That's kind of a neat feature. And communication can be on the phone, email, we've also started using text messaging with some students and that's actually something I thought maybe I'd bring up in terms of asking other programs what they're doing to connect with this generation of students that doesn't necessarily like to meet so much in person or talk over the phone, but responds really well to texting. This is something we've kind of started doing and it's working- it seems like a simple thing and maybe not that big a deal but we've figured out how to email- to go from email to text and it seems like we're having a good amount of success with the younger students who aren't necessarily super social or comfortable talking over the phone. I'm just curious, maybe we can talk later with the group about other ways to engage students. But that's something we started doing.

As I mentioned, work experience is something that we highly encourage. Students are expected to be independent and practice and develop their communication and self-advocacy skills, something that we really try to work on with them but it's been a challenge for some of the younger students. They're not showing up for appointments, they're not responding to email, we're having to resort to call mom or dad to really get their attention to, I don't want to say force them to engage, but remind them that 'hey this is something that you're committed to.' But that's something that we're definitely focused on. We monitor once they're working, we monitor them for a minimum of 90 days until it feels like their employment is stable, they're comfortable in their work setting, and the Department of Rehab has fulfilled all of the services then and obligations outlined in the ITE plan.

**Meera:** Excellent. Thank you very much and before we move on to the other program I'll just ask if anybody has any questions for you, any comments, certainly you posed a question to the group and if anybody has any thoughts about that, how do you engage with students these days? What strategies are keeping up to date meeting with them, communicating with them that works best for you? At OCC, of course, I know, again, this is a one community college model and the students are enrolled and they're on campus so they meet with the advisors on campus. It's easier in that sense than I think you're situation where you're removed from them and they're removed from you so meeting is sometimes a little more of a challenge.

**Jamila:** I know for us, we have not traditionally had a lot of involvement with the family and this is something that's changing because we do recognize that parents and other family members are valuable contributors and definitely an important piece of the

puzzle. I think before, in the last year or so, we almost discouraged that because when we were talking about employment, how much is your family really going to be involved? Does your mom go to the interview with you? I think that as students transition from the K-12 system and their parents have been so heavily involved with trying to advocate for them in getting them the services and resources and all of those supports that they need that that just doesn't stop in college; although the message that I think they're getting is 'okay you're independent, you're doing this on your own, it's up to you.' And so we're really trying to work with the parents to achieve this kind of balancing act where they're part of the team that they're not- we're still developing with the student their own self-advocacy. It's a balancing act. I've actually had three meetings this week, two which involved parents, and I always tell them 'I'm really grateful that you're part of the process, how can we work together to help these- help your son or daughter become independent and a good self-advocate for themselves?' But it's hard because sometimes we can't get the students to call us back or to check their email instead of their voicemail or things like that. So it's interesting, the balancing act between what is really coddling or handholding and what's becoming or changing to be more flexible to meet the needs of the student. It's a balancing act.

**Meera:** Absolutely.

**Miranda:** I'm wondering just hearing this, I'm reflecting back to the presentation we had quite a while ago from South Dakota about where we were referencing South Dakota's student success coaching. He's on so maybe he can help me with this, but where that piece about connecting with them when they're on campus. They have these student success coaches who would go in and who are working with students with disabilities and others who maybe they come from a culture or family or what have you where folks haven't gone on to additional education or gone off to school or college or training like this and to help make sure they stay engaged. And that issue about folks not getting back to you, not responding to emails or phone calls, the student success coaches get flagged by the teachers and others of those support folks about what's going on; 'hey someone's not showing up to class' and these folks check in on them in their dorm or the classes they are going to and meeting them as they're coming out of that class and checking in with them. It's a pretty engaged model and then just wondering if- I just thought there are pieces of that that seem to be successful and it'd be great to have these programs talking to each other. I don't think we have anyone on from South Dakota right now. Dave is there anything, when you were listening to this, did you make that connection to or have anything else you wanted to add? Dave is working directly with South Dakota, he is their TA liaison.

**Dave:** You're always one step ahead of me Miranda. I was actually planning on asking

the same equation, ironically. The student success coach process, it really has a lot to do with the database that they have set up and they have some specific software that allows this to happen that the flagging when there are issues or problems and the communication between the student success coach and the teachers and the administration, it just seems to be a very effective way of making sure that students are not left behind. But they also make that connection with the student success coach when they enroll and that's the big part is getting them up front, not waiting until they have a problem or an issue. So I think that that's a place where you're really going to benefit, making a connection, and of course it's the student's option. It's always their choice on whether or not they're going to utilize that person, the least the student success coach can say, put notes in, is either the person is engaged or isn't engaged so teachers can try to figure out new ways of engaging that student who are not utilizing that coach.

**Jamila:** How are the student success coaches funded or supported? How does that work?

**Dave:** It was originally funded through a philanthropic organization in northern South Dakota and they got funding up front. So it, I think the best thing to do would be if you're interested in finding out more is let us have you connect with the Western Dakota Technical Institute, which is where they actually piloted it and get you connected with them to get more information.

**Jamila:** That would be great and I'd actually include our DSTS coordinator from Mesa College because we were having this discussion just a day or so ago and he's kind of like us, he's newer to our community and he's got all these ideas and we we're kind of talking along these same lines in terms of how to do these peer supports, how can they create a peer support community. Yeah, I definitely think he'd be interested and I'd love to know more and maybe kind of pose the idea to see if we could explore something like that.

**Dave:** There's a possibility that the system that you're using right now, the database within the community colleges, has the capability of making that connection. Maybe you already have something that you could tap into instead of having to start from scratch.

**Jamila:** That's true.

**Miranda:** And Dave I'm so glad you spoke up because so many much more than I do about this working directly with them, but one question too. When they first came up with this though, I know our DEI project has worked with them and they're folding in

and increasing connections with workforce and around disability and accommodation acts, I've seen supports that they have with DEI, but when this originally came up the focus was not on students with disabilities although that could certainly, those folks could certainly be included in this. I know there were a number of other issues that they were speaking to address with this for students who just- so not disability specific although it's grown that way and it's certainly a model to be looked at. Is that accurate Dave?

**Dave:** Yes, most definitely.

**Miranda:** Okay, just to keep that in mind that it wasn't a disability focus that originated it although it's been incorporated into it.

**Dave:** I'm looking back at some emails and it looks like we actually discussed this last year. We had South Dakota talk about this, remember this Meera?

**Meera:** Yes, we have them archived on our website, the presentations, and this one, South Dakota's discussion, was under the topic of retention.

**Miranda:** And Dave, that was you and I. I don't think we had anyone from South Dakota, I think we were relaying what they were doing. Or did you have- did we have another one where they did join?

**Dave:** No.

**Meera:** Not on this. We do have the one where you and Dave presented.

**Miranda:** It might be a good thing to check in with South Dakota and see how- I mean I'm sure you have and I know we're talking to them next week, Dave, our DEI project there. So where that connection is and how that's move further and what kind of outcome they're getting.

**Dave:** Yeah, we could also resend the-

**Meera:** We could host them here too.

**Dave:** We also put some PowerPoint slides together for that so maybe we could send them to you so you can send them out to everybody Meera.

**Meera:** Sure, thank you. That'd be great.

**Miranda:** Meera, I think you've got those too because they would be from our presentation or do you have new ones Dave?

**Dave:** No, they're the same ones.

**Miranda:** So Meera, you should have those in your archives.

**Meera:** Thank you.

**Miranda:** I didn't mean to sidetrack the conversation when you opened up those comments, I just thought that was a really good connection there between the two. I think they have things they can learn from San Diego, certainly as well. I think this can be a great dialogue.

**Meera:** Absolutely. I think it touches on a lot of different little pieces that we've addressed before or that others have raised and we could maybe look into a little more deeply, again, the South Dakota practices. We've also been talking about, at OCC, they're implementing peer mentors as a strategy and that seems to overlap a little bit with what South Dakota is doing, and also developing a new model of presenting stories of success so that they have students' examples to look at and understand some similar situations. And I think there's an interesting idea behind peer student coaching type strategies that really maps onto how in our later careers we're successful at work and that's often through these networks, formal and informal networks that we build up and this really lays a foundation down for learning about networking as well. So that might be another interesting idea to throw in the mix. And then we'll also dig up the past meeting that we had in the archives where we've talked about family engagement and family outreach because I think, Jamila, you've raised that issue as well. And getting back to one of your points about staying engaged and text messaging, I'll say that that echoes a strategy that I believe the Bridges, the Mariota Bridges program, has used very successfully as well. They provided TA to our program locally onsite and this was one of the strategies that the folks there mentioned. She has a very large case load and staying in touch with everybody, both through mass communication but also individually, they've adopted some formal texting type programs, but I think any simple texting and email to text works just as well. And you're right, I think with this generation it engages them quite effectively. Any other thoughts or questions before we move to our next program?

**Gordon:** I had a question about the Workability III? It sounded like all of the students are connected with a vocational rehabilitation counselor and having IPE and I just

wanted to see if I was hearing that right?

**Jamila:** Yes, that's correct. We actually specifically work with clients from the Department of Rehabilitation and we also, by way of the Disabilities Support Services that we have on campus, can also kind of cross connect students that aren't clients of the Department of Rehabilitation but would like to be clients as well as participate with our programs. So we do have a couple things set up where we can get this referral from the colleges and link them then with the Department of Rehabilitation.

**Gordon:** Okay, great. Thanks so much.

**Meera:** Okay, and just for anyone who would like to connect with Jamila she has provided her contact information here for us. The slides, again, are posted to our website and on the archives too, so if I go too fast those will certainly be available. I will now move forward and I'd like to introduce Jessica Perez who will tell us about the program at LaGuardia community College which is part of the CUNY system here and cuts across community colleges all across New York State. Welcome Jessica.

**Jessica:** Hi everyone, can you hear me okay? Okay, thank you so much for having me on today and I look forward to being a part of this group. I'm going to share a little bit about what we're doing in CUNY overall and then specifically at LaGuardia. So CUNY has implemented a program called CUNY LEADS which is specifically for students with disabilities and helping them with their academics and their career choices. And very similar to the previous presentation, it's really about self-advocacy as well. So establishing a support system with the student but also providing them the skills to be successful as an individual. So the goal is for this to be a national model, to provide training services for students, and it's been very successful throughout the campuses. So we have plenty of great campuses within our system. I'm not sure how the- okay, thank you. So just a little bit on more background, this was an initiative coming from CUNY Central. So CUNY Central is our central offices and they are directors within the system. So the director for the CUNY LEADS program, her name is Barbara Bookman. I have definitely extended an invitation to her to join us. So unique at LaGuardia is we're one of two schools that actually has LEADS advisors in the career center. The other campuses have the LEADS advisors in the Disability Services office. The reason why the LEADS advisors are here in my office is because they're spending resources available here at the office and they felt- the administration felt that it should be one uniform service for students that they don't feel like they have to go to another particular office. The students have been very receptive of coming to coming to the office here instead of having to go somewhere else. The program is available at both the community college and the four year schools. The unique thing about the program is that all the LEADS

advisors meet on a monthly basis so they have a great rapport, so when a student transfers from a community college to a four year school the LEADS advisors being that transition with the student and transitions the student to the new advisor over at the four year school. So the student feels a sense of community like a cohort in a sense, that they would have the same support services over at the four year.

The program started back in 2008. The advisors at first were part-time until 2012, the advisors became full time and also it was spread out to more campuses. I previously worked at Bronx Community College and they didn't have a LEADS advisor when I was there and then as I was leaving someone came on board. I mentioned earlier that we have a bit of a different model than the other schools as far as the advisor being here. So of course, the services are free for students; any CUNY student is eligible. We also let the students stop off, let's say they decide to not take any classes, during the fall semester we will still provide services to them regardless of their status as long as they are thinking about or committing to registering again for the spring semester. We also assist alumni, so even if the student transfers to the four year school they are always welcome to come back to the community college LEADS advisor, which is the model here at the office, we provide services to our alumni. Each campus has a LEADS advisor that collaborates with the different departments. Also we access VR which is another local resource. Here at LaGuardia, it's actually just a few blocks away, we ask the VR office for referrals to there as well. CUNY students with disabilities are eligible, so even the non-degree students as well, so we have a great partnership with our adult and continuing ed. programs. So any students with a certificate program or training program they could utilize the services of CUNY LEADS. I will share, ironically I was at a meeting earlier before this one and the director the PDA program shared some stats with us and in the academic side, we have 30-40 students a year that are hard of hearing and we actually have the highest number of the student population at LaGuardia. And I'll share a little bit more about that in a few minutes.

Each campus, like I mentioned, has the advisor. So the goals of the advisor is to do a bit of academic advisement even though here at LaGuardia we follow a career community model, which we call advising teams. So our LEADS advisor works very closely with the Office of Advisement to make sure that students not only gravitate to her, but they also gravitate to other resources here at the college. The way we're structured actually advising is just down the hall from us which makes a lot of sense right? It's walking distance for the students. Of course, we do additional career development with students, so we do workshops and skill training, even study skills, we help students with their resumes, prepare them for their interview, we do mock interviews and we include the closed captioning. We assist in internships, so Wendy Nicholson is my current LEADS advisor and most of our students gravitate to the internship piece. We help with job

search. All of our events from the career center are open to all students, so we need students to participate at the job fair, at our on campus recruitment even, and any other workshop events that we offer.

So the LEADS advisor, she works with my employment team which is specifically the placement of students with jobs. And like I mentioned, students gravitate more toward the internship component of the program because they just want to gain some experience, they don't want to commit to a full-time job. For example, recently we had a student in dire need of a job, so we referred her to Sketchers from the job fair. She was called in for an interview and my LEADS advisor actually was an interpreter, so it worked out that she went with the student to the job interview to interpret. So that's one of the perks that we have here at LaGuardia, that our LEADS advisor is also an interpreter. She helps with the development of skills and that is really the main work that she focuses on here at La Guardia specifically. Our students are more interested in that professional development, really developing those skills. And we're actually launching a soft skills workshop today later on at 3 o'clock. And the focus is our students are not necessarily interested in employment per se for the most part, right, there is a full population of students really interested in developing that resume, developing that cover letter, so when they are ready for a job they are really prepared. I think that's it, I covered everything that's here. And overall what the center does, we assist with the traditional resume reviews, mock interviews, we do mentoring and networking opportunities, and we're shifting into a motto of doing everything based by industry in our career communities. For example, last night we had a health sciences industry fair which we provided students with resources as far as some part-time jobs, some full-time internships, and volunteer opportunities related to the health care field. So we had some staffing agencies for a local hospital, recruiting, our advisors again interest in student internship opportunities. We offer workshops, we actually refer to the mass career labs for students. The topics offer from resumes to interviewing to labor market research. We hold two large fairs each semester and then we hold the smaller industry fairs. We also have the American LEADS Fellowship program help us in the office, that's the fellowship program that's in New York, Chicago, and New Jersey at the moment. It's a two year commitment of students that they're matched to a career mentor and they attend bi-weekly career intensive workshop. So we just launched a program in September and we have 45 fellows here at LaGuardia. And we have a wealth of online tools as well that are available to all students, the career coach is very popular here at the office.

**Meera:** We use career coach at OCC as well. We've talked about it.

**Jessica:** Oh you do? So far the total number of students served here at LaGuardia in the CUNY LEADS program is 250. Over 30 students have received jobs through the services

working with Wendy, and she works very closely with them that they meet a scheduled appointment on a weekly. Some students request the weekly services or meet with me or her on a monthly basis. About 10-15 have completed internships and like I mentioned earlier, students are more concerned about losing their benefit depending on case-by-case situations and they prefer the developmental services that we provide and things like internships that wouldn't hinder their losing their benefits.

Again the program for deaf adults here at LaGuardia is housed in the department in the continuing ed. division, they provide services for matriculated degree and non-degree students. They provide interpreters for one-on-one sessions, tutoring services, interpreters for in the classroom. They're a great program, a great resource here at the college. In east, the number of students in the specific certificate and non-degree programs vary year by year depending on the course offerings. The director this year was saying about twenty student that they provide services for. She mentioned that the reason why students gravitate to LaGuardia is because they feel a sense of community and like a cohort model here at the college. So we're known for providing these services to deaf students and they gravitate here. We also have a four year partnership with the SUNY system. So students can take their associate level courses here and transfer over and take an ASL interpreter degree which is pretty awesome for the students and a reason why they come here.

**Meera:** That's very interesting. I know the OCC program was trying to look into some cohort models as well so I think that idea that you raised about creating a community and people wanting to be engaged and actively looking for that around a commonality, that's an interesting approach and it looks like it's been certainly successful at LaGuardia.

**Jessica:** Yes, she mentioned currently 20 students in the program as of today and she said the students are very happy and are often seen together. One of the students last fall started a student club for students that are deaf. And again, that group share with each other their experiences and I believe the club has been active going on a year and a half at this point as a result of the associate degree program.

**Meera:** Wow. That raises for me another issue that connects back to the prior discussion in the program as well that these are great examples when students become peer mentors or student success coaches or start a club. They're big examples of students engaging in leadership and not specifically related to any particular career pathway that they may be pursuing, it's still a relevant experience and a skill set that they're developing that hopefully engages them, builds up their resume, and can support employment seeking and internship and work-based learning seeking. So I know that's

something that, again, when IEL and Marriott Bridges came to provide TA to our program they reminded us to think broadly and to think thoughtfully about how do you engage students and experiences that are building work-based skills? Sometimes you do it actively and it sounds like it's an example you just gave us, starting a club that can begin to emerge organically as well. So that's a great example.

**Jessica:** Absolutely. During our cabinet meeting earlier today it was of discussion on how we could better serve this population of students and student orientation by providing a session that we could have an interpreter there- minor things that were not thought of in the past, Wendy brought to the division's attention. I thought it a bit alarming that no one had thought about that, but again minor things. PDA offers public video courses, so they're going to do public courses that they're going to spread out around campus so the students can have easy access to the video courses in an emergency or if on a phone interview that they're easily accessible throughout campus. I was really excited to hear that I'm actually going to suggest that a video call is added here to the services at the career center, so hopefully it will happen by the spring semester.

**Miranda:** You referenced job fairs in here a few different times and I'm wondering, we've got a best practice series at DEI and we have two different ways that we've highlighted recently in best practice write-ups of how to do job fairs that kind of float the script or change things up quite a bit. There is a reverse career fair, reverse job fair approach that Iowa has modeled in that we've shared our projects and that our Iowa DEI project has done. Our Herkimer-Madison-Oneida site in New York has recently replicated that and is planning on moving forward with doing more of those reverse career fairs, which it features the job speaker rather than the employer in a job fair type setting, literally flipping the tables. And we have a very brief write-up with a lot of links to additional information if you'd want to check that out. I'd encourage you to do that and then we're also writing up our Connecticut project. They do a diversability career fair and I think they've held nine of those altogether recently, they're in demand, and these write-ups they really break it down and they give a lot of detail and provide even a template for how to do this on your own. It might be something worth checking out and looking into, you said you're looking into always updating your game and how to approach this from different angles, and I'd just love to share these different practices with you. Had you heard of these types of practices before or done something similar?

**Jessica:** No, we haven't. I've heard in passing, but I've never really looked into it. So any information you could forward to me-

**Miranda:** Yeah, and we've written it up in a very simple way that you can pretty much

quickly see whether or not it would be of interest to you and dive deeper into details and use these strategies, and we'd be happy to help you make connections if you wanted to talk to folks who've had some success with this. So Meera, I'm going to go ahead, I'll send you the one we have. I'm literally right before I got on the call editing the Connecticut one. The Iowa one we did last month so all of this is very fresh. But we'd be happy to share it.

**Meera:** Thank you.

**Jessica:** That's pretty much it on my end if anyone has any questions for me.

**Meera:** Okay, well thank you so much Jessica that was great. And remember to also ask questions of us. So we're glad to have you join our group, thank you both Jamila and Jessica and please do stay with us and as other things come up, we'd love to continue hearing about evolutions in your model that we can learn from. And as questions come up for you there are ways we can share what we're doing or how we've hit a similar wall and moved past it. Please do always feel free to discuss the questions and let us know. Thank you both, a round of applause for our new, brave presenters jumping into this group with us for the first time and sharing their information.

**Jamila:** Thank you Meera.

**Meera:** Thank you. So the last thing that I wanted to put on our agenda, I apologize because this went on our listserv, I know it was around the holidays, a little bit before, a little bit after, so we didn't get too many responses as I imagined it's quite buried in the email. But we got some feedback and I wanted to bring it up during our meeting so that folks on the call and since you had some opportunity to also share some thoughts with us just make sure that we could continue to shape the experience positively for you as you join our group. So some of the questions that we asked, of course we were curious how many folks were implementing a Career Pathway program at the moment versus interested in and looking forward to. Again, we had four responses, four did come from existing Career Pathway programs, but based on my email and other discussions with groups I know some of you are implementing really interesting programs or beginning to do outreach but not necessarily a formal Career Pathway program yet. And that's great, that is not a requirement to be a member in this group. We were just interested in understanding what the landscape looked like.

When asking about barriers to implementing or partnering with Career Pathway programs, folks mentioned that often low expectation for youth can result in limited opportunities being given to them and that certainly is a barrier. It would be one that we

have to work through as we service populations, looking for those opportunities, finding out where they can be, who do we connect with, how do we view employer outreach, and how do we build them and hopefully this group can address those issues in the next year. So it's very helpful for us to understand that. One of the respondents mentioned that within their organization, their agency, they simply have a lack of written policies for work experiences and so depending on where you are trying to interface/put this program, that may be a necessary prerequisite, starting that conversation and building in the infrastructure in a formal way if needed. Certainly, youth not having enough work experience while they're in school or having poor links to the VR and work force systems. I think we heard from our presentations today about the importance of emphasizing that. I know Jamila you said your program right from the beginning is very interested in getting folk connected to work and getting them work experience. Jessica you were saying VR is just down the road so you connect with them of course. So good reminders for us that those are barriers but there's ways to build into your program and overcome that. Counselors not being familiar with certificates and degrees and sectors. So it sounds like how to do capacity building would be a value added, a strategy to share. And programs lacking familiarity with collaboration and how to leverage each other's resources when supporting youth either in education or employment and just providing wrap-around supports. And that's something definitely we'll make sure that we think about addressing. OCC has- its model is very much, I would say, a community collaboration engaged type model. They work with community agencies, they work with access VR as well, they work with the workforce center, and the local school districts as pipelines. So it is definitely important to be able to understand how we work with all the other programs and resources out there that can be helpful. Any other barriers from the group that aren't articulated here that are of particular importance to think about?

We also wanted to know about your programs or organization strengths when it comes to being inclusive of youths with disabilities and so the interesting thing here is we're seeing some strengths that address the barriers from the prior slide such as supporting cross-system collaboration. How to do alternative assessment and job development strategies when there are those limited opportunities, how do you find them? Providing financial literacy and capability support, I think that connects back to our presentations about self-advocacy and understanding skill development that needs to be present to really make the person be successful when they get out there into employment and the "real world." Strong training and professional development skills, assistive technology and transition services, and in general transition from high school into employment, supported employment. So it's great to see that we have some folks that are raising things that might be of a particular challenge to their program, but then others who are saying well this is something we do, so both through these meetings. And what we hope to have in the spring is an in-person meeting; to look at the calendar to refresh my

memory, but we were talking about hopefully when the snow is gone from Syracuse, we'd love to have everybody up and here and do a more detailed and focused strategy exchange and it looks like we can easily facilitate meeting some people's barriers with some people's strengths. Is there any other strengths that folks wanted to raise on the call? Something that you're doing well that you think other programs- certainly Miranda and Dave it would be great and I'll share again South Dakota's slides describing their strategies for success coaching, that was one example.

Let's see. What experiences or insights do you have regarding inclusive education, job placement, or improved earnings for youth with disabilities? So some folks said systems certainly struggle with balancing inclusive education, making time and schedules for work experiences and career exploration in high school. Again, I think that echoes with what others have said, there's limited experience and limited opportunities. And staff from multiple systems would benefit from using customized employment strategies. Certainly that is an emerging best practice that I know VR systems are trying to implement and others have been successful at implementing as well, and if we can build into their presentations here some information related to that we can certainly do so. Another great insight was that a lot of high school students are required to do service or volunteer hours, that there needs to be a similar expectations of students receiving special education services and that they need to be engaged in some work based learning activity. Teaming up with SummerWorks programs offered in some cities or coordinating extra supports that they need to help them participate in those could really provide them with valuable opportunities and that's a great insight addressing some of the challenges that have been raised. Anything else anyone wanted to share in that light?

So again, focused more on getting input around what are you looking for when it comes to information and expertise around career Pathways, inclusive education and employment? You're looking to understand how we can engage businesses, to advance individuals with disabilities in their career pathway, strategies to promote inclusion in work with partnership related to VR, workforce, and others. I think again, that speaks to the collaboration with other agencies issue. And expertise with job readiness and placement after the degree is learned, that many of your clients are underemployed and not using their degree effectively even after receiving certificates or full degrees. And having no work experience or employment related skills. Those are certainly things that we can build into our agenda for addressing. And we asked about what capacity building topics were of most interest and we can see from the responses that we did receive that the emphasis is more towards inter-agency, community-based partnerships, career development during post-secondary education, work-based learning, leadership experiences, just employer engagement and job placement as well. So a strong focus

around career related issues, work-based learning related issues, and employer outreach as well and just collaboration and less so around how do you recruit youth or career development during the transition phase. So that's definitely instructive for us as we build our agenda and develop our areas of focus. Did anybody want to add anything to that or emphasize an area of importance to them?

In terms of this community of practice, what would you like to see, how would you like to learn? We just want to see communication between our projects and sharing of successful projects that expose students to work and that's definitely something we want to facilitate for you. Do you have any additional expectations? Please do share them with us either now or continue to stay in touch with me and let us know. I was very excited to share the two projects that we had today, I think we can definitely learn a lot from them. And I look forward to the additional projects that we can learn from in the future. So as always this is my slide that I love to put here towards the end. We really are looking to continue to welcome new members and new resources. You can always use me as a point of contact and please recommend to others our group and please recommend to me folks that I can pull in. If you know someone I'm happy to do the work, I'm at your service, please just let me know of anything that is of importance or anyone. Our next meeting, as you know we have meetings the last Thursday of every month, but the next one will be during what I believe is going to be the holiday break for many, if not most, if not all of us. So for that reason we thought it prudent to cancel the December meeting and we will reconnect on January 25th. These meetings are at noon Eastern Standard Time for an hour and a half. And we will be hearing from our sister program Pellissippi State Community College and if others would like to make additions to that agenda please do let me know. That's it for today, thank you everyone for joining us. We will stay in touch and I will definitely push through the listserv and on our archives website some of the resources that we talked about today. Thank you everybody.