Passing the torch: Utilizing the Power of Peer Coaching to Impact Transfer Student Success and Retention

Nancy Yang
Associate Director for Student Success Initiatives
NYSTAA Conference 2018
John Jay College – Institutional Summary

John Jay College Enrollment Characteristics
• Undergraduates: 13,000
• Student body: 47% Hispanic, 20% White, 17% Black, 10% Asian
• 47% first-generation college students

Transfer Student Enrollment (2016–2017)
• 60% of newly enrolled students
• 40% of new transfer students transition through CUNY Justice Academy
  - Dual degree program in partnership with six CUNY community colleges
Session Outline

1. Supporting transfer success at John Jay
2. Peer Success Coach goals and roles
3. Coaching impact on new transfer GPA and reenrollment
4. Peer Success Coach Program details
5. Passing the torch to YOU
6. Q&A
## Peer Success Coaches at John Jay College

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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Supporting Transfer Success at John Jay College

Pre-transfer engagement at community colleges
• Welcome letters, newsletters, and social media engagement to joint degree students
• Campus visits

First semester transfer success
• Transfer Orientation
• Welcome events
• Postgraduate success workshops
• Transfer Seminars + peer success coach support
Transfer Seminars: Building an academic community

- 3-credit, 300-level general education requirement designed to support transfer student success
- Smaller class sizes (25 vs. 30+)
- Hand-picked faculty
- Available for ~20% (800) of incoming transfers each year
  - 16 sections each semester
The Power of Peer Success Coaches to Support the Transfer Transition

Peers are the most influential force impacting growth and development during the undergraduate years (Astin, 1993)

Harnessing this influential power, transfer peer success coaches:

- Assist transfers in a new transition – new campus, new resources, new academic expectations
- Help build social capital in a new environment
- Support academic and postgraduate goal-setting and planning
- Serve as successful role models

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From: 
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2018 12:08 PM
To: Yujery Paulino
Cc: Nancy Ying
Subject: RE: Greeting from your LLS 341.03 Peer Success Coach

Hi good afternoon;
My name is Gabriela Maces and I am transferring from ASA College where I obtained a Criminal Justice Associates. This spring semester I'll be a junior majoring in Forensic Psychology. Thank you for the nice welcoming and offering help. I'm very excited about starting classes. I'd like to know if you have any idea of what did I miss on the transfer orientation, since I couldn't attend it because I'm still in class on my college. Also, you know when do new students get their student ID? And if it possible for a transfer student to graduate with a minor? I'd prefer to schedule an appointment to talk to you guys, because I have so many questions and concern about this new semester. See you in class.
## Transfer Peer Success Coaches
### Goals & Roles - in & out of the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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</table>
| **Course Support**     | - Work with faculty to support academic success  
                          - Support Early intervention efforts & ongoing student support  
                          - Arrange faculty/student group lunches |
| **College Success**    | - Send weekly success tip emails and texts  
                          - Provide college deadline and policy reminders |
| **Campus Connections** | - Promote and facilitate transfer welcome events  
                          - Introduce student organizations & campus involvement  
                          - Refer to campus resources |
| **Planning**           | - Support academic and postgraduate goal-setting and planning  
                          - Support on-time graduation and re-enrollment |
Success Coaching Sessions
Providing Individualized Support

- 30–45 minute session
- Encouraged by all transfer seminar faculty; incentivized by some
- Structured focus in four areas

[Table]
- Background & Obstacles
- Academic Expectations
- SMART Goal-Setting
- Action Plan

successcoach_nancy • Follow
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

successcoach_nancy Super secret inside look at @jjaysasp Peer Success Coach Stacey facilitating a group success coaching session. Those peers are incredible (I know, I know. I’m biased). #myjohnjay #jjcstudents #jjcacademicjourney #repost @jjcstudents with @get_repost

As Peer Success Coaches for freshmen students, we meet with each of our students at least once a semester for Success Coaching Sessions. Today:

35 likes
MARCH 28
Success Coaching Area 1: Background and Potential Obstacles

**Path to Success**
Why is it important that you attend college?

Who are your biggest supporters?

What are your obligations outside of class?

What are your interests/hobbies?

What are your strategies for dealing with stress (e.g., exercise, friends, etc.)?

**Potential Obstacles**
What are some potential obstacles to your success?

- **Academic**
  - Poor test-taking skills
  - Poor study skills
  - Lack of time management
  - Poor reading/writing skills

- **Financial**
  - Number of work hours
  - Working to support others
  - Tuition Payment
  - Need more financial support

- **Personal**
  - Lack of family support
  - Family obligations
  - Relationship challenges
  - Distractions (e.g., games, TV)

If other, please describe: ____________________________
Success Coaching Area 1:
Background and Potential Obstacles

[Diagram: Mind map with categories such as Academic, Poor Study Skills, Financial, Personal, Distractions, Social, and work issues, with various subtopics and strategies for addressing them.]

[Logo: John Jay College of Criminal Justice]
## Success Coaching Area 2: Academic Expectations

### Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Grade Goal</th>
<th>Grade Estimate</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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**GPA Goal:** Semester ____ Cumulative ____

### Grades Breakdown

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>93–100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>90–92.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>87.1–89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>83–87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>73–77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>63–67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>60–62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
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Success Coaching Area 3: SMART Goal Setting

**Goals** (SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ATTAINABLE, RELEVANT, TIMELY)

What long-term goals would you like to accomplish?

What short-term goals would you like to accomplish that will help you accomplish the above?
Success Coaching Area 4: Action Planning w/Focus on Re-Enrollment

### Action Plan

What are some tasks you need to complete to achieve your goals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check CUNYfirst to-do list for outstanding items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss academic progress plan (complete current courses, 15 credits/semester)</td>
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<td>Discuss plan for paying tuition</td>
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Success Coaching Impact on First Semester GPA

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New Transfers</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers in Seminars</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers Coached</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers Not Coached</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total New Transfers  | 1795      | 1878      |
| Transfers in Seminars| 355       | 374       |
| Transfers Coached    | 43% (155) | 55% (207) |
| Transfers Not Coached| 57% (201) | 45% (167) |
Success Coaching Impact on One Semester Re-Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
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<td>1878</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfers in Seminars</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers Coached</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers Not Coached</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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Peer Success Coach Program Details

How the Magic Happens

• 1 Peer Success Coach : 50 Transfer Students (800/year)

• Compensation
  - Peer Success Coaches make $13.50/hour for ten hours a week
  - Team Leader makes $14.50/hour for 13 hours a week

• Eligibility
  - Full time student at John Jay; preferably transfer student
  - 3.0 cumulative GPA
  - Earned between 15 and 90 credits

• Recruitment – application, recommendation, & two rounds of group interviews
  - Round 1: Natural coaching style, approach to supporting an at-risk student, collaborative skills, presentation skills
  - Round 2: Background information, fit with the team, natural ability to teach a success topic
## Laying a Strong Foundation

Providing the Necessary Training

### Introductory (MAY – 3 days)

- “Family” building
- Program goals, roles, and expectations
- Thorough understanding of target population
- Working with all stakeholders
- Campus resources

### Pre-Semester (AUG – 2 days)

- Essential professional tools
- Preparations for phone calls and emails to students and professors
- Iron out fears and worries

### Training Courses (FALL & SPRING)

- Foundational helping skills
- Creating and facilitating impactful success workshops
- Ongoing experiential learning & reflection
Passing the Torch on to YOU!
Replicating at $, $$, $$$

Find the students
• Consider ways to build a transfer cohort/community
  - Transfer success programs/ workshop series
  - Transfer seminars
  - Transfer clubs
• Collaborate with offices to reach transfer students
• Determine the needs

Launch the peers
• Be clear about the goals of your peer program
• Pay your peers – work study, grants, scholarships
  - Course credit, priority registration
• Make training and supervision a priority
  - Team leaders are magical
Questions?
Contact Me

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