

program offerings, campus health services demonstrate they are as actively committed to starting positives as to stopping negatives.

- *Staff characterized by commitment.* Staff demonstrate good health practices and possess a lively and enthusiastic attitude. As models for the students they serve, staff understand the importance of demonstrating exemplary personal and professional behavior. These qualities support a unit that appropriately relates to an overall commitment to health and wellness. Staff also maintain close relationships with colleagues in college health and related disciplines through active involvement in professional organizations.

#### CONCLUSION

College health services are challenged to adopt a new frame of reference, a new perspective. Every conceptual model carries its own program implications, and the contemporary model of medical care has been built on narrow, specialized interests that maximize technology and minimize attentive care for the total person. Such a model is inadequate to the challenges of entry-level health care and unfaithful to the basic principles undergirding the college health field. Any program that demeans the importance of prevention and education, fragments rare into segregated disciplines, adheres to authoritarian relationships with patients that encourage passivity, weds itself to impersonal technological tools, and generally ignores important social and psychological influences on health, is simply unacceptable. A new model can be created on college campuses across the country to better meet the health needs of students. Many elements of this model will be applicable to secondary school health programs and ultimately to outpatient clinics in the wider community, as well.

The new approach includes a deep commitment to preventive services for all students and adheres to a commitment of total-person health care. As such, the connections among people and disciplines throughout the health service must be well-developed. An organizational structure remarkable for its horizontal, participatory strength must be in place. Health services on campus can be powerful stations for learning behaviors that will help insure wellness for the lifespan, as well as facilities for treating illness. Campus health services should be known less by their technological sophistication than by their skillful work to educate others in self-care and by their effective sharing of knowledge about how best to utilize the medical care system. By recommitting to a more open, more educationally balanced service, campus health programs can rediscover for the future many noble values that have been at the heart of the healing professions since earliest times.

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# Student Services and Retention for Welfare Students

The authors describe a vocational training program established for individuals receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

#### THE COLLEGE SETTING

Located in a rural area of upstate New York, Tompkins Cortland Community College serves its two sponsoring counties, Tompkins and Cortland, as well as a third county, Tioga, which has no sponsored community college. The average number of students served annually has grown to almost 3500, including both full- and part-time enrollees. Programs are a mix of technical, vocational, and transfer, and include a wide variety of community service activities.

The College has attempted over the years to serve the educational and training needs of those nontraditional adults who are more highly "at risk." They have been recruited sporadically for special training programs, which have not had good results because short-term training has not proven adequate in preparing them for workplace demands. Before attempting a program for nontraditional welfare students that would prepare them to be permanently employed (by enrolling them in regular two-year courses of study), criteria for the program were researched.

#### BACKGROUND RESEARCH FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Research on adult, nontraditional student programs was reviewed and articles collected and studied. Two studies found that personal life circumstances such as conflict with job, home, family, or child care responsibilities, and problems with finances are most commonly cited as contributing to adult attrition (Beal & Noel, 1980; Mishler, 1983).

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The Tinto Model (Tinto, 1975) suggests that students' decisions about whether or not to drop out from a postsecondary educational institution reflect the extent of their academic and social integration within it. A subsequent study of retention of nontraditional students (Weidman, 1985) selected indicators of "social integration" and "academic integration." These works suggest the following support mechanisms can have a significant effect on retention: provision of special counselors available at times and places easily accessible to nontraditional students and faculty oriented more fully to their particular problems, provision of financial aid, provision of day care facilities on campus, provision of resources for personal and career counseling, and flexibility with respect to institutional demands.

Lukenbill and McCabe (1978) identify the major impediments to and facilitators of adult students' success during the first three months of school and recommend interventions that would minimize the difficulties of returning adults as they attempt to manage the learning process. The eight categories of factors found to influence those attempts are closely interrelated in the students' lives; the categories are: economic, home and family, transportation, personal, goal and commitment, academic adjustment, classroom, and institutional. The authors discuss each in depth and suggest three additional categories of interventions: helping adult students with their problems outside of school, improving the classroom experience, and improving academic services.

#### CREATION OF THE PACE PROGRAM

The literature and additional information on teaching adults indicates that a program providing specific and special support services can be effective in bringing nontraditional students to college and retaining them. Conversations with county social services commissioners in our area assured us there was a pool, primarily women with small children, who would be interested in educating themselves to improve their employability. Simultaneously, we discovered that the New York Department of Social Services was interested in supporting model programs to develop the employability of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients.

With the enthusiastic support of the State Department of Social Services, funding was provided for the start-up and first year of a program to provide exactly the kinds of support the research shows is needed and to recruit students into the College's programs. Each of the three counties served by the College agreed to participate. The majority of the funding came directly from the state, although a portion was to be paid by each county on a per-student basis. The program was designated the Public Assistance Comprehensive Education Program, or PACE.

The added services for PACE students are provided by a full-time staff that has grown from two to five professionals. The ratio of staff to students has remained about 1 to 30. One-half of the Director's time is devoted to administration and there is a full-time Administrative Assistant for support services.

The premise of the PACE program is that when students finish their two-year degree in a vocationally oriented field, they will be able to earn enough money to support their families and, in addition, have more disposable income than they would had they remained on public assistance. Students receive sufficient financial aid, largely through state and federal grants, to pay their tuition, fees, books, and some of their child care and transportation costs. The county pays the additional child care and transportation expenses, so the students' basic AFDC grants are not affected while they attend college.

#### PROBLEMS FACED BY PACE STUDENTS

Since most of the participants have extremely stressful living conditions, a significant portion of PACE staff time is spent addressing personal difficulties. Whenever appropriate and possible, students are linked with community-based services or the College counseling office for more in-depth assistance.

These students' problems greatly exceed those faced by other groups of students on the community college campus. The following statistics, based on 128 students who had enrolled in PACE by August 1987, illustrate the magnitude and diversity of these problems.

- Sixty percent are single parents.
- The 128 students have 215 children; 74 of these are under 5.
- Twenty-three percent rely on public transportation.
- Forty-three percent live more than 15 mile@ from campus.
- Fifty-three percent own cars, but AFDC regulations limit the value of recipients' cars to \$1500 so these vehicles are often in poor condition and there are many breakdowns and repair expenses associated with driving to school.
- Twenty-four percent are dependent on other students for rides.
- Sixty-six percent needed at least one remedial course.
- Approximately 20% reported substance abuse or battering.

#### STUDENT INTAKE

Potential students are referred to the PACE program by caseworkers in the appropriate county Department of Social Services. They undergo intake interviews and placement testing on their first visit to the campus. During their second visit, students meet individually with a staff member from the financial aid office to review their aid applications, and with a PACE staff member to review placement testing results. PACE students are required to take any remedial courses recommended by the test results and are limited to a maximum of 14 credits per semester. Since most degrees require 65 credits, each county has agreed to automatically approve five semesters, plus summers when necessary, rather than the usual four. On their third visit, students register for classes. Planning for study time, child care and transportation arrangements, and specific family needs takes place during each of the campus visits.

#### ONGOING SUPPORT SERVICES

Once PACE students are enrolled and attending classes, an extensive range of supportive services are provided by the PACE professional staff. They include academic advisement and tutoring; consultative assistance and/or advocacy with respect to child care, transportation, and food stamps; and personal counseling. PACE staff are actively involved in job development, and, in conjunction with the Placement/Transfer Office, provide assistance with job placement to graduating PACE students. Contact with employed graduates continues for six months.

Because PACE participants have varied class schedules, pressures to be home relatively early for their children, and differing personal styles and needs, we have found it most effective to use a variety of delivery methods for supportive services. PACE students are required to stop by the conveniently located office at

least once per week. Staff use these contacts to answer questions, provide information, and probe for problems. During the first five weeks of enrollment, participants are required to take a one-credit course, *Introduction to the college Experience for PACE Students*, taught by a PACE staff member. The class sessions provide a forum for discussions of problems or stresses, build a support group, and allow for sharing of information. Once the PACE staff have established a positive, helpful relationship with PACE students, the students tend to come readily to staff with concerns, problems, and frustrations.

PACE program students are assigned faculty academic advisors and participate in the same courses and registration procedures as all other full-time students. The role of the PACE staff is to provide more in-depth advisement, support, and clarification of information. In addition, staff arrange for group or individual tutoring services for students who need such assistance. During the first five weeks of each semester, PACE staff members contact each faculty member who has PACE students in class. They identify the PACE students, indicate their willingness to provide support services, and ask faculty to keep them informed of problems. Usually, faculty volunteer information on how each student is doing. All of this information is recorded in student files and related to students during check-in visits. If a student is identified as needing assistance, PACE staff take a more active role in seeking the student out, explaining the situation, and arranging for appropriate services.

*Example:* Linda is a 28 year-old mother of a three year-old girl. When she enrolled in PACE, she was interested in the art or advertising field. She learned that a degree in commercial art would qualify her for the type of position she desired, and the PACE staff convinced her to enroll in the commercial art program even though it is a liberal arts program. She achieved the highest grade average of any PACE student for her first semester, a 3.94. She has maintained that high level of achievement and has been initiated into Phi Theta Kappa, the national honor society for community colleges. She has used PACE emergency loans as an interim solution for problems created by slow transportation reimbursements and has turned to PACE staff for supportive counseling concerning her former husband's treatment of her daughter.

Job development and placement activities were initiated during fall 1987, the third semester of the PACE project. These activities consist of workshops and individual conferences with PACE students within two semesters of graduation. Workshops focus on resume preparation, practice interviews, and job search plans. The individual conferences supplement the workshop activities in a more personalized manner. Job development activities consist of staff contact and meetings with community employers to stimulate interest in PACE applicants, as well as in-depth interaction with the College placement counselor to secure openings for PACE students.

## RESULTS

The PACE program was designed to assist multiproblem, public assistance recipients in obtaining education and jobs. The problems faced by these students greatly exceed those faced by other groups of students on the community college campus. In spite of their academic, personal, and financial difficulties, PACE students' achievements have been remarkable in terms of retention rates and grade point averages.

The retention rate for the 50 students who started in the fall of 1986 was 88% through the end of the spring semester, as compared to a collegewide rate of 81%. Their retention rate through the fall 1987 semester was 50%, compared with the college rate of 53%. We expect at least 38% of those who began in the fall of

1986 to obtain degrees or certificates by December of 1988 (within five semesters). This compares very favorably to the overall college rate of 20% of degree-seeking students obtaining their degrees within six semesters. Of those who stopped attending during the summer of 1987, 14% are employed and 19% went off AFDC because of a spouse's income.

In addition to these respectable retention rates, PACE students have had remarkable academic success. For the fall of 1986 the mean grade average was 2.65 on a 4.0 scale, and 46% had averages of 3.0 or better. For the spring 1987 semester the mean was 2.41, and 29% had averages of 3.0 or better. Thirty-three students attended the summer 1987 session: their mean average was 2.64, with 58% achieving at least a 3.0 average. For the fall of 1987 the mean grade average was 2.48, and 34% had averages of 3.0 or better. Eight PACE participants have joined Phi Theta Kappa.

Nine participants have graduated from the program: seven in May 1988 and two in August. Two graduates are employed as nurses, earning more than \$8 per hour; three are working as special education trainers at an average of \$5.25 per hour; one is a secretary at \$4.55 per hour; one is establishing a telemarketing program for a large employer at \$6.50 per hour; one is a customer service agent for an airline at \$5 per hour; one is pursuing a four-year degree; and one August graduate is working as an administrative assistant in a local hospital at \$5.95 per hour. One of the May graduates was selected the New York State Continuing Education Adult Student of the Year. All of these students are earning significantly more income than they received on public assistance and would have been qualified only for minimum wage jobs without this program.

*Example:* Cindy is a single mother of two daughters, one school-age and one born in 1986. Her work history consisted of restaurant hostessing. She entered the Nursing Program in fall 1986. After graduation in May 1988, she accepted employment with an area hospital at \$8 per hour.

During the two years she was enrolled in the PACE program, she received \$16,914 in AFDC, HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program), and food stamps; and \$2,820 in incentives and transportation and child care reimbursements. Since her younger daughter will not reach the age of 6 until February 1992, she could have received benefits, without participating in training or employment, until that time—an additional 43 months at \$650 per month. The total cost of her participation in PACE was \$2,820 plus \$650 for the local share of PACE, a total of \$3,470. The county has saved at least 43 months of benefits—\$27,950—for a net savings of \$24,480. In addition, Cindy's monthly income increased from \$700 to \$1,408 as a result of her employment.

*Example:* Kay is a single mother of four school-age children and first enrolled in Tompkins Cortland for the spring 1987 semester. Her goal was to obtain a Certificate in Human Services. She received her Certificate in May 1988. During the spring 1988 semester, she participated in the PACE job readiness activities and began her job search. She accepted a position as an assistant coordinator of independent living for a local human services agency. She started on a 2 part-time basis and moved into full-time work upon graduation, at the rate of \$5.35 per hour.

During the time she was enrolled in PACE, she received \$8,966 in AFDC, HEAP, and food stamps; as well as \$399 in training incentives and transportation reimbursements. Her public assistance case was closed on June 30, with an average monthly savings to the county of \$560. Kay's family income is now \$11,128 per year plus child support, an increase of \$6,645 in the first year.

## CONCLUSION

The preliminary success of the PACE program at Tompkins Cortland Community College is illustrated by the higher-than-average grade achievement

of its students, its very respectable retention rates, and the successful employment of its graduates. The retention rates are particularly impressive because of the family stresses, transportation problems, child care difficulties, and other complications this particular group of nontraditional students faces. We believe the program has been successful for four reasons:

1. The nature of the relationship the staff establishes with PACE students, communicating the message that they are there to be helpful and supportive in addressing students' needs.
2. The frequent communication between PACE staff and students, due to the requirement that participants stop in the office on a regular basis.
3. The active role PACE staff adopt in addressing students' problems, particularly in contacting faculty and facing up to academic difficulties with students early in the semester.
4. The comprehensive job preparation and placement activities.

PACE expects to continue gathering data on grades and retention rates, as well as on placement rates. All students placed in jobs will be tracked for at least six months after their placement. We anticipate continuation of the program's very successful results.

PACE staff believe that the objectives usually associated with welfare reform—which include enhanced self-sufficiency and the movement of AFDC recipients off welfare and into well-paying, permanent jobs—are being achieved through the PACE program and that their results can be replicated at other colleges. We urge other institutions to consider establishing such a program to address this growing community need and to increase their own enrollments by serving this receptive group of nontraditional students.

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# A National Study of Retention Efforts at Institutions with Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Programs

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The authors present results of a study showing that the presence of retention programs at colleges and universities with nursing programs increased the retention rate significantly

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## INTRODUCTION

As colleges and universities move into the 1990s, the specter of stabilizing or even declining student enrollments poses a financial dilemma for institutions with full-time enrollment based budgets (McCool, 1984). Despite the fact that declining enrollments of traditional students have temporarily been offset by increased enrollments of older, married, nontraditional students, the Carnegie Council (1980) forecasts that by 1997 there will be a 23.3% national decline in the 18-to-24 year-old population that has generally comprised the majority of entering college students. In this crisis atmosphere, the higher education establishment has been brought to realize that when a college student leaves before graduation, there is a strong possibility that he or she may not be replaced.

The monetary cost of student attrition is substantial. Recruitment is estimated to range between \$200 and \$800 per student (Kramer, 1982). At current average attrition rates, approximately 3.7 million of the 12.2 million American undergraduates enrolled in the 1986-87 academic year will drop out of higher education completely and never finish a degree. At that rate, institutions in the United States will spend between 12 and 48 million dollars to recruit students who will never graduate (Evangelou, 1986).