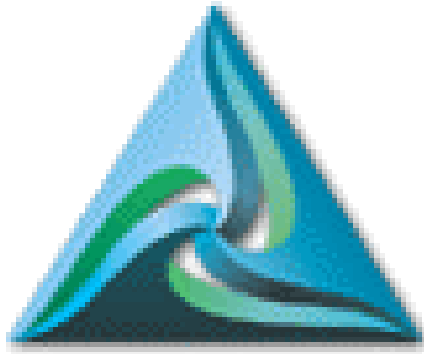


# **Florida Community College at Jacksonville**



## **Mentor Program Evaluation**

**May 2005**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2004-2005 Academic Year, the Downtown Campus of Florida Community College of Jacksonville (FCCJ) piloted a Mentor Program managed by the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The commitment of FCCJ to a community of learners with diverse demographic and academic backgrounds has prompted the College to provide considerable support to FTIC College Preparatory students, whose entry assessments indicate that their skills in reading, mathematics and/or English necessitate remediation in order for these students to remain in school and succeed. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), adopted by the College as part of the SACS Accreditation Process, and Project Renaissance, which provides additional support and reinforcement for the College-wide initiatives undertaken as part of the QEP, are testament to the strong commitment of FCCJ to increase the success and retention of its students.

**My mentee is "more confident and self-assured—priceless!"**  
*From a mentor describing student success*

Initiative 2.02, *Develop a Mentor Program*, was one of the 45 initiatives developed and implemented as part of the QEP. The Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the Downtown Campus, as part of their contribution to the achievement of the QEP goals of improving student success, student retention, and program completion rates at FCCJ, embraced this initiative although they were aware of inadequate resources to support the implementation of the Program. No modifications were made to the expected outcomes and operations of the Program due to reduced funding.

The original goal of the Mentor Program was to provide guidance and access to support services for FTIC students to successfully start and advance through college prep courses into college courses and to assist in the assimilation of these students into the college culture. The pilot phase of the Mentor Program was conducted during the 2004-2005 Academic Year. A total of 29 students, 13 of them First-time-in-College (FTIC) students, participated in the Mentor Program.

Five quantitative and qualitative outcomes were established for the Mentor Program and included the following:

- ***Outcome 1: Completion rate with a C or better grade will be 50% higher for students with mentors than the control group.***
- ***Outcome 2: Retention rate will be 15% higher for students with mentors than the control group, e.g. 6 more students retained than in the control group.***
- ***Outcome 3: Contribute to the successful orientation, advising and placement of FTIC college prep students, i.e. satisfaction with the educational program.***
- ***Outcome 4: Provide guidance into social integration with college activities, i.e. satisfaction with social interaction.***

- **Outcome 5: Promote communication between student, mentor, instructors and service providers (team-based communication) toward the academic success and retention of the student, i.e. performance-work plan progress.**

During spring 2005, an evaluation of the Mentor Program was undertaken to assess the achievement of the quantitative and qualitative outcome measures. Document review, interviews with key leaders, focus groups with mentors and mentees, and surveys provided the basis for the program assessment. Achievement of quantitative and qualitative outcomes, the performance of key activities critical to the mentoring process, and significant management functions of the program were reviewed. The evaluation identified Best Practices associated with the FCCJ Mentor Program and offered recommendations for guiding the continued management of the Program at the Downtown Campus and its potential replication on a College-wide basis.

***“Faculty have the commitment needed for this program, but we need support from administration.”***  
*A mentor*

During the Pilot Phase of operation, the FCCJ Mentor Program achieved partial accomplishment of the two quantitative and three qualitative goals that were originally established for the Program.

***Outcome 1: Completion rate with a C or better grade will be 50% higher for students with mentors than the control group.***

During the fall 2004 term, 75 percent of the mentored students enrolled in ENC0001, ENC0021, MAT0002, MAT0024, REA0006, REA0008, and REA0010 classes completed the class with a “C” or better grade. The successful completion rate for the mentored students was 48.8 percent higher than the successful completion rate of 50.4 achieved by the control group (non-mentored students) enrolled in these same classes. During spring 2005 the successful completion rate for the mentored students was 55.6 percent as compared to the 42.9 percent completion rate of the control group. Overall, the completion rate for the two semesters was 62.5 percent for mentored students and 48.9 percent for non-mentored students, or 27.8 percent better completion rate for the mentored students.

***Outcome 2: Retention rate will be 15% higher for students with mentors than the control group, e.g. 6 more students retained than in the control group.***

***“Most of my family dropped out of school and I am the only one who graduated from high school. That makes me the center of attention and a role model for my family. I broke the chain and I have a responsibility that I feel deeply.”***      *A mentee*

The retention rate of students involved in the Mentor Program was compared to that of the control group. Of the students participating in the Mentor Program during fall 2004, 83.0 percent enrolled in spring classes, while 72.4 percent of the control group returned to school in the spring. While the retention rate of the mentored group is 10.6 percent higher than the non-mentored group, the difference is below the 15 percent target that was established for the program.

**Outcome 3: Contribute to the successful orientation, advising and placement of FTIC college prep students or satisfaction with educational program.**

The students highly valued their mentors' roles in the advisement process. Mentees perceived that advising in the Counseling and Advising Center was prescriptive, when they needed developmental advising. Students believed that they received more individualized advice from their mentors regarding academic advisement because the mentor knew the student as an individual and provided guidance better suited to the student's unique situation and capabilities than someone who had only sporadic contact with them. Mentors, especially the college prep teachers, agreed that faculty should play a greater role in the advisement and placement process. The mentors pointed out that as they became acquainted with the student, the quality of the advice and counsel they could provide to the mentee improved. College prep students often have unrealistic expectations about what they can accomplish academically, given their current skill level. Having a mentor who is intimately familiar with the student and his/her situation enables the student to receive advice targeted to assist the student in achieving appropriate goals.

***"You don't want to let your mentor down—they invest time in you. My mentor sees possibilities in me and helps me know that I can be what I want to be."  
A mentee***

**Outcome 4: Provide guidance into social integration with college activities or satisfaction with social interaction.**

Mentors and mentees expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of opportunities to get together socially with each other, particularly at the very beginning of the program. The mentors expressed concern that the incentives related to opportunities for social interaction with their mentees, which had been originally planned for the Program, had not been funded.

**Outcome 5: Promote communication between student, mentor, instructors and service providers (team-based communication) toward the academic success and retention of the student or performance-work plan progress.**

Mentees commented that their first experiences in college were overwhelming and appreciated that they had someone on their side to anticipate the questions they didn't know to ask, to assist them with goal setting, to keep them focused on their goals, and to provide a consistent presence in their lives. Mentees liked having one person knowledgeable about the College services and resources upon whom they could rely to help them negotiate the system and progress toward their academic goals.

***"Some students wouldn't have anyone if they didn't have a mentor."  
A mentee***

The Mentor Program engaged in a number of Best Practices that contributed to the success of the Program. A comprehensive list of these will be found in the Project Adaptation section. Highlights of these strengths include:

- a well designed program based on thorough research;
- the risk taking and commitment of the Division of Liberal Arts to a Program that was underfunded;

- the mentor training and periodic meetings of the mentors as a group;
- creativity and persistence of the mentors in achieving and maintaining contact with the mentees;
- maintenance of the SharePoint web site; goal setting and formal work plans to focus mentee progress;
- use of FCCJ competencies to focus the mentoring relationship;
- referral of mentees to ensure access to appropriate resources; and
- faculty input into the advising process.

Several areas of weakness were also noted for the Program, chief being lack of resources that affected several areas of program operations and ability to achieve goals. In addition to a lack of institutional commitment of resources, other areas that must be addressed prior to continuation or replication of the Mentor Program include inadequately documented systems in place to manage the Program, few written materials available for duplication, and insufficient program identity.

The Program also produced some unintended positive outcomes. Mentors became much more knowledgeable about campus resources and referrals, developed a greater understanding of the problems facing students in college preparatory classes, and gained a deeper appreciation for the contributions of college preparatory faculty. This knowledge will assist them in carrying out their faculty responsibilities in working with all students at FCCJ.

The vision, risk taking, and commitment of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences are exemplary. The willingness of the Division to assume responsibility for the Mentor Program, knowing of the limited resources, and their persistence in carrying out their volunteer activities are indicative of enthusiastic dedication to student success.

The Mentor Program has successfully demonstrated the potential impact of mentoring on student success and retention. Though the targeted levels of the outcome measures were not at the desired levels, the Program confirms the impact and added value that mentoring brings to students. The effects can be expected to extend beyond the current year and to serve as a catalyst for continued student accomplishments.

## INTRODUCTION

Florida Community College of Jacksonville (FCCJ) has made a commitment to a community of learners with diverse demographic and academic backgrounds. Its mission is:

“We are dedicated to meaningful learning and excellent teaching, enabling individuals to achieve their hopes, dreams and full potential, and to being a leading partner in creating a dynamic, prosperous community of enlightened leaders and thoughtful, effective, global citizens” (2004-2005 FCCJ College Catalog).

This mission, coupled with an open admissions policy, provides tremendous opportunities for learners, but also requires that the College provide considerable support to first time in college (FTIC) College Preparatory students, whose entry assessments indicate that their skills in reading, mathematics and/or English necessitate remediation in order for these students to remain in school and succeed.

The College determined that in fall 2002, 64 percent of FTIC students needed remediation (Quality Enhancement Plan, 2003). Of these 1554 students, 31 percent placed into two college preparatory classes while 18 percent required remediation in all three areas. Additional research conducted by FCCJ found that “37 percent of first-time in college students do not return after their first semester and only 52 percent of fall FTIC students reenroll in courses during the next academic year.”

The strong commitment of FCCJ to increase the success and retention of FTIC students is verified by the focus of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) adopted by the College as part of the SACS Accreditation Process. Project Renaissance, a Title III grant, has provided additional support and reinforcement for the College-wide initiatives undertaken as part of the QEP. Project Renaissance focuses on remediation and retention of students prone to drop out as well as revitalization and renewal for faculty through innovative and targeted professional development activities.

One of the 45 initiatives developed and implemented as part of the QEP was Initiative 2.02, *Develop a Mentor Program*. The Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the Downtown Campus embraced this initiative as part of their contribution to the achievement of the QEP goals of improving student success, student retention, and program completion rates at FCCJ.

The original goal of the Mentor Program, as described in “Best Practice and Program Design for Mentoring College Prep Students,” was to provide guidance and access to support services for FTIC students to successfully start and advance through college prep courses into college courses and to assist in the assimilation of these students into the college culture. The design team defined mentoring as:

“Mentoring is a deliberate pairing of a skilled and experienced person with a less skilled and experienced one, with the mutually agreed goal of having the less skilled person grow and develop specific competencies.” (*Best Practice and Program Design for Mentoring College Prep Students, 2004*)

The Design Team met often during the period from spring 2003 through fall 2004 to complete the action plan required to develop and implement the Mentor Program. Mentors were recruited and trained during spring 2004 and the first cohort of mentees was identified and recruited for the fall 2004 term. The pilot phase of the Mentor Program was conducted during the 2004-2005 Academic Year.

This evaluation of the Mentor Program will assess the quantitative and qualitative outcome measures established prior to implementation of the Program. Key activities critical to the mentoring process and significant programmatic functions will be identified as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the Program associated with the first year of its existence. In addition, the evaluation will identify Best Practices associated with mentoring and provide guidance related to the continued management of the Program at the Downtown Campus and its potential replication on a College-wide basis.

It should be noted that the original plan for the Mentor Program as outlined in "Best Practice and Program Design for Mentoring College Prep Students" was not funded at the anticipated levels. No documentation was found which defined lower expectations regarding outcome measures, achievement of objectives, faculty mentoring activities or planned activities with the students. The lack of funding the Mentor Program to the anticipated level must be taken into consideration when reviewing the progress of the Program in reaching their goals.

***When I think of a mentor, I think of someone I can talk to and who helps me balance things out--lets me get things out. Everything in life interferes and if that is on your mind, it hinders you and keeps you from focusing. If you deal with what is on your mind--that helps you get through today.***      *A mentee*

# METHODOLOGY

## Research Methodology for the Evaluation

The methodology design for reviewing the program was an in-depth case study method that focused on both quantitative and qualitative factors. This was deemed to be the most appropriate approach for this evaluation, particularly because the number of participants was small. The design included a number of activities:

- Initial Document Review (prior to on-site visit)
- Extended Document Review
- Structured Interviews with Program Coordinator and Associate Dean, Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences (on-site and telephone interviews prior to and after on-site visit)
- On-site Visit (March 31 and April 1, 2005)
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Telephone Interviews to attempt to reach mentees who were no longer in the program and who were underrepresented in the surveys
- Statistical information on student grades and retention

## Initial Document Review and On-site Visit Preparation

Prior to the on-site visit, the following documents and resources were provided to the researchers:

- The plan for the Mentor Program
- The job description for the Program Coordinator
- Best Practice and Program Design for Mentoring College Prep Students
- Access to the SharePoint web site

These documents were reviewed in February and March 2005 and afforded initial information about the goals of the program, the methodology and format for implementation, and the expected outcomes. Several telephone interviews with the Associate Dean of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Program Coordinator were conducted to clarify information, to gain an update of the progress of the Program during its existence and to develop topics to explore later in focus groups, interviews and the surveys. These interviews provided valuable information that necessitated modification of a number of areas to be investigated. Best practices from mentoring programs adopted for FCCJ's program were included as subjects for further investigation, as was an examination of the literature on mentoring.

Several groups of program participants were identified for interviews during the on-site visit and through follow-up surveys. Upon additional information from the administrators about the course of participation in the program (particularly the addition of a large group of new mentees in January) more groups of participants were added. The categories of mentors and mentees were determined to be:

**Mentors:**

- Mentors who had an ongoing relationship with their original mentee, matched in August (6 persons)
- Mentors who had an ongoing relationship with a second mentee matched later than August (22 persons)
- Mentors who did not have an ongoing relationship with a mentee (9 persons)

**Mentees:**

The categories of mentees were numerous, based on their time of entry into school, their time of joining the program, their continued enrollment at FCCJ and their continued involvement with the Mentor Program. These will be described in Section III, Outcome Measures.

**Extended Document Review**

A number of documents were obtained during the on-site visit and at other times after the visit that were reviewed during the evaluation:

- The *2004-2005 FCCJ Catalog*
- Memos, emails and other correspondence related to design of the mentor program
- Memos, emails and other correspondence related to implementation and administration of the mentor program
- Mentor training agenda and materials
- Current status list of mentors and mentees
- Work Plans and postings on the SharePoint web site.

**On-Site Focus Groups and Structured Interviews**

The Program Coordinator assisted with contacting Mentor Program participants to arrange focus groups or individual interviews during the on-site visit. Three focus groups were conducted during the site visit on March 31 and April 1, 2005:

- College PREP faculty and a counselor, all of whom were mentors (7 persons)
- Students who were continuing participants in the program (6 persons)
- Mentors (11 persons)

During the visit, structured interviews were conducted with the Associate Dean of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Mentor Program Coordinator. Informal interviews were conducted with personnel in the Learning Center and the Division of Student Success.

## Participant Surveys

Based on information gathered in focus groups and interviews during the on-site visit, the mentor and mentee surveys were modified significantly. Focus group interviews provided valuable information to include in the surveys about topics such as the reasons why Prep students drop out of school, what types of communication had been attempted by both mentor and mentee, whether the students had really understood what the program would be like when they joined it.

Surveys were specifically developed and distributed to the four target groups identified in Table 1: mentors, mentees who were currently involved in the Program, mentees who had had little or no contact during Fall Semester and were enrolled at FCCJ for Spring Semester, mentees who were not enrolled at FCCJ for Spring Semester.

It was decided not to contact the six students who had signed up for the program but did not enroll at FCCJ or the two students who joined the program in January but had moved away from Jacksonville by the time of the on-site visit.

Once a list of mentees was obtained to determine which students would fit into the assigned categories, surveys were distributed to participants in the following manner:

- Mentor surveys and surveys for mentees currently involved in the Program were sent to the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator distributed the mentor and mentee surveys to the mentors. Mentors were asked to complete and return their surveys and to distribute the active student surveys to their mentee. A stamped, addressed envelope was included with each survey for return to the investigators. The Program Coordinator sent follow-up emails to the mentors to increase the response rate for both groups.
- Two other surveys were developed for mentees not active in the Program: mentees enrolled at FCCJ but not in the Mentor Program and mentees no longer enrolled at FCCJ. The survey was sent through the mail to the student's home address and included a stamped, addressed envelope for return to the researchers.

Table 1. Surveys Sent and Returned

	<b>SURVEYS SENT</b>	<b>SURVEYS RETURNED</b>
Mentors	35	20 (57%)
Students Still Enrolled at FCCJ and in Program	27	12 (44%)
Students Still Enrolled at FCCJ but Not in Program	14	0 (0%)
Mentees No Longer at FCCJ	4	1 (25%)

Results of the interviews, focus groups, surveys, and document reviews will be presented in the following sections of this report.

The return rate for mentors was 20 of 35 or 57.1 percent. This is an acceptable sample of the group of mentors, although the return rate for African-American mentors was slightly below those participating as mentors in the Program. Most came in within three weeks of when the instrument was distributed. Mentee surveys were another story. A total of 12 mentees out of 29, or 41.4 percent of those who had continued in the Program, returned surveys--a less satisfactory return, but still acceptable. They dribbled in one at a time over the course of six weeks. Of these mentee respondents, nine identified themselves as African-American, one as biracial and one did not state race. All responses were female.

## **Telephone Interviews**

The response to the survey was negligible in the mentee group with little or no contact with their mentors. Only one mentee (who had been in the program and was no longer in school) sent back a survey. To counter this, the researchers called students who were not in the Program and attempted to interview them in an abbreviated format. As mentors in the program had discovered, it was not easy to connect with the students. Five telephones had been disconnected, and two others hung up on the researcher. It had been decided not to leave messages on voicemail or with telephone answerers who were not the mentee.

The researcher reached three students. One stated that he actually had met with his mentor several times, although it was generally informal, and that he took his classes on other FCCJ campus during the Spring Semester. Another student said her mentor had contacted her and that she had left a message on the mentor's voicemail but never received another response. She was disappointed that the mentor did not call back and said she could really have used a mentor. The third said she had decided she was not interested in the program.

## **Statistical Data**

The Program Coordinator provided data related to mentees' status with regard to recruitment and participation in the Program, grade point averages, demographics, courses taken, and grades.

The Registrar's Office supplied similar information on a cohort of students, both FTIC and non-FTIC, eligible for the Mentor Program but who did not participate, i.e. the students has tested into two or more college preparatory classes. The Registrar's Office was provided with a list of students who participated in the Program to ensure that students were associated with the correct cohort.

## OUTCOME MEASURES

The original goal of the Mentor Program, as described in “Best Practice and Program Design for Mentoring College Prep Students” was to provide guidance and access to support services for first-time-in-college (FTIC) students to successfully start and advance through college prep courses into college credit courses and to assist in the assimilation of these students into the college culture.

The quantitative and qualitative outcomes on which program evaluation was based included the following:

- ***Outcome 1: Completion rate with a C or better grade will be 50% higher for students with mentors than the control group.***
- ***Outcome 2: Retention rate will be 15% higher for students with mentors than the control group, e.g. 6 more students retained than in the control group.***
- ***Outcome 3: Contribute to the successful orientation, advising and placement of FTIC college prep students, i.e. satisfaction with the educational program.***
- ***Outcome 4: Provide guidance into social integration with college activities, i.e. satisfaction with social interaction.***
- ***Outcome 5: Promote communication between student, mentor, instructors and service providers (team-based communication) toward the academic success and retention of the student, i.e. performance-work plan progress.***

## Participation Data

Students who tested into two or more remedial subjects were identified as potential participants in the Mentor Program. Based on information provided by the Registrar, the Program Coordinator made telephone contact with the potential mentees to solicit their participation in the Program. Thirty-five students who had tested into two or more college preparatory courses expressed interest in the Program and verbally committed to participating. Table 2 provides information regarding the participation of the students recruited into the Mentor Program during the 2004-2005 academic year. Of the original 35 students, six students never enrolled in school. Of the 29 students who entered school, eight participated in the Mentor Program and 21 students never enrolled in the Mentor Program.

A student was considered to have enrolled or participated in the Program if the student and mentor established a relationship. For example, if a student and mentor made contact, either by telephone or in person, but apparently did not actively begin a goal setting process, the student was not deemed to have enrolled in the Program.

In addition to the original recruitment in August, six additional students enrolled in the Program in October and November. Five of the six students participated in the Mentor Program during fall 2004 and enrolled in spring 2005 classes. One student, though she had expressed interest, did not establish a relationship with her mentor and did not return to school in the spring.

Table 2. Participation in Mentor Program, 2004-2005 Academic Year

	<b>AUGUST 2004 RECRUITMENT</b>	<b>OCT/NOV 2004 RECRUITMENT</b>	<b>JANUARY 2005 RECRUITMENT</b>
<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECRUITED FOR PROGRAM</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>
Students who participated in Mentor Program			
Students enrolled in Fall Classes only	2		
Students enrolled in both Fall and Spring classes	5	5	8
Students enrolled in Spring Classes only	1		8
Students who did not participate in Mentor Program			
Students who were recruited but did not enroll for classes	6		
Students enrolled in fall classes only	7	1	
Students enrolled in fall and spring classes	13		
Students enrolled in spring classes only	1		
Moved Out of Area			2

In January 2005, an additional 18 students were recruited for the Mentor Program. Two of those students moved out of the area during the spring 2005 Term. Of the 16 students who established a relationship with their mentors, eight of the students had attended FCCJ in the fall although they did not participate in the Mentor Program while eight of the students were new enrollees at the College. The total number of students participating in the Mentor Program during the 2004-2005 academic year was 29.

Although the original intent of the Mentor Program was to serve FTIC students, the recruitment list contained names of both FTIC students and non-FTIC students who had tested into two or more college preparatory courses. Table 3 provides data on the 29 students who participated in the Mentor Program according to their FTIC status. Thirteen of the 29 students were FTIC and the remaining 16 were non-FTIC.

Table 3. Participation in Mentor Program, 2004-2005 Academic Year, Reported by FTIC Students and Non- FTIC Students

	AUGUST 2004 RECRUITMENT		OCT/NOV 2004 RECRUITMENT		JANUARY 2005 RECRUITMENT	
<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN MENTOR PROGRAM</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>16</b>	
	<b>FTIC*</b>	<b>NFTIC**</b>	<b>FTIC</b>	<b>NFTIC</b>	<b>FTIC</b>	<b>NFTIC</b>
Students enrolled in Fall Classes only	1	1	0	0	0	0
Students enrolled in both Fall and Spring classes	3	2	3	2	3	5
Students enrolled in Spring Classes only	0	1	0	0	3	5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>

\* FTIC = First Time in College Student

\*\* NFTIC = Not a First Time in College Student

The results of the quantitative outcome measures are reported by FTIC status in Tables 4 and 5 as well. Survey and focus group data are reported and discussed only in the aggregate.

## Outcome Evaluation

The Registrar's Office provided the evaluators a list of students who had tested into two college preparatory classes, had enrolled in classes during the fall 2004 term at the Downtown Campus, and had not participated in the Pilot Mentor Program. The list included 28 FTIC students and 30 Non-FTIC students. The data for these students are reported as the control group in the following results and discussion regarding the quantitative measures.

Two quantitative outcomes had been identified previously as indicators of success for the Pilot Mentor Program during the 2004 – 2005 Academic Year. The results and discussion of these outcomes are presented in Table 4 (Outcome 1) and Table 5 (Outcome 2).

***Outcome 1: Completion rate with a C or better grade will be 50% higher for students with mentors than the control group.***

The academic records of the students participating in the Mentor Program and the Control Group were examined. The numbers of individuals enrolled in the ENC0001, ENC0021, MAT0002, MAT0024, REA0006, REA0008, and REA0010 classes were identified for fall and spring semesters, the students were identified as FTIC or not, and

the students were classified as to participation in the Mentor Program. If a student earned a grade of "C" or better in the course, the students were considered to be successful. Course grades of "D", "F", "FN", "I", or "W" were classified as unsuccessful.

During both the fall and spring semesters, FTIC students in the Mentor Program completed college preparatory courses more successfully than FTIC students not in the Mentor Program. Non-FTIC mentored students had a higher rate of completion than the non-FTIC non-mentored students, though the differences in the completion rates were not as great.

Table 4. Successful Completion Rate of College Preparatory Classes with Grade of "C" or Better by Mentored and Non-mentored Students

		MENTOR PROGRAM STUDENTS		CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS	
		FTIC	NON-FTIC	FTIC	NON-FTIC
<b>FALL</b>	# PREP Courses taken	11	9	56	59
	Completed with C or Better	9	6	34	24
	Completion Rate	81.8%	66.7%	60.7%	40.7%
	<b>FALL RATES</b>	<b>75.0%</b>		<b>50.4%</b>	
<b>SPRING</b>	# PREP Courses taken	16	20	21	14
	Completed with C or Better	10	10	9	6
	Completion Rate	62.5%	50.0%	42.9%	42.8%
	<b>SPRING RATES</b>	<b>55.6%</b>		<b>42.9%</b>	
<b>FALL AND SPRING TOTAL COMPLETION RATES</b>	# PREP Courses taken	27	29	77	73
	Completed with C or Better	19	16	43	30
	Completion Rate	70.4%	55.2%	55.8%	41.1%
	<b>TOTAL YEAR COMPLETION RATES</b>	<b>62.5%</b>		<b>48.9%</b>	

In fall 2004, mentored FTIC students successfully completed the college prep courses at a rate of 81.8 percent while among non-mentored FTIC students the completion rate was 60.7 percent. Slightly larger differences are apparent between the mentored non-

FTIC students versus the non-mentored non-FTIC students in that the completion rates were 66.7 percent and 40.7 percent, respectively. The aggregate successful completion rate for fall Mentor Program students was 75 percent, which was 48.8 percent higher than the completion rate of 50.4 percent for the Control Group students.

By the end of the spring 2005 term, the completion rate for the control group non-FTIC students had risen slightly, though the completion rate had dropped for the other three groups. Completion rates for the mentored students remained higher than those of control group students, however. The FTIC mentored students achieved a 62.5 percent completion rate while the mentored, non-FTIC students successfully completed 50 percent of the courses in which they enrolled. The aggregate rate for the mentored students was 55.6 percent. The mentored students completed courses at a 29.6 higher rate than did the control group during this term. For the spring term, the FTIC and non-FTIC students in the control group successfully completed approximately the same percentages of courses, 42.9 and 42.8 percent respectively, with a combined rate of 42.9 percent.

When the yearly total of the completion rates for both terms was calculated and compared between the mentored and non-mentored students, the completion rate for mentored students was higher, 62.5 percent versus 48.9 percent for the control group. The mentored students completed courses during the year at a rate 27.8 percent higher than the control group.

In summary, the data indicate that the completion rate for fall term for mentored students was 48.9 percent, very close to the targeted level of 50 percent. While the data indicate more successful completion rates for mentored versus non-mentored students in both terms, the differences ranged between 27.8 and 29.7 percent, or below the targeted level.

***Outcome 2: Retention rate will be 15% higher for students with mentors than the control group, e.g. 6 more students retained than in the control group.***

The academic records of both mentored students and the control group were examined to determine the retention rate for each group. Retention was defined as a student enrolled in the fall semester returning for spring semester, whether or not the student completed all classes successfully. For example, even if a student withdrew from spring classes, or received "FN" for classes, the student was considered "retained" upon enrollment in spring classes.

**"The faculty and my mentor encouraged me (not to drop out of FCCJ). I have a wonderful support network at the college." A mentee**

The difference in retention rate between the FTIC mentored students and the FTIC control group was 10.7 percent. A similar difference is noted between the non-FTIC students who were mentored and those who were not, 80.0 percent versus 70.0 percent.

Overall, the difference in retention rate between mentored students versus the control group members was 10.6 percent, below the targeted 15 percent. The trend toward

higher retention among mentored students whether they are FTIC or non-FTIC is evident from Table 5.

Table 5. Retention Rates of Mentor Program Students and Control Group Students

	MENTOR PROGRAM STUDENTS			CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS		
	FTIC	NON-FTIC	TOTAL	FTIC	NON-FTIC	TOTAL
<b>Students Enrolled Fall</b>	7	5	12	28	30	58
<b>Returned for Spring</b>	6	4	10	21	21	42
<b>Percent of Students Retained</b>	85.7%	80.0%	<b>83.0%</b>	75.0	70.0	<b>72.4</b>

In addition to the quantitative outcomes, the “Best Practice and Program Design for Mentoring College Prep Students” specified three qualitative outcomes for the Mentor Program. These results will be reported by outcome.

***Outcome 3: Contribute to the successful orientation, advising and placement of FTIC college prep students (Satisfaction with educational program).***

Students commented that the Mentor Program should be more widely advertised during orientation and information about it should be included in the on-line orientation. Orientation to FCCJ is conducted either in one hour on-campus sessions or on the College’s website with material that would take a half hour to view. While a step in the right direction, this level of orientation is only partially effective. Mentoring, as well as SLS classes, can provide more in-depth introduction to the beginning of college life. Since the majority of Prep students are first generation college students, including some who are the first high school graduates in their families, they need a comprehensive, well timed, developmental approach to orientation issues, and the Mentor Program can provide this.

**“I have also learned from Prep students how much they lack both academically and with certain life skills. I have also learned about holes in the system and can identify where some of these are, or will be, for them.”** *A mentor*

The students highly valued their mentors’ roles in the advisement process. Students believed that they received more individualized advice from their mentors regarding academic advisement because the mentor knew the student as an individual and provided guidance better suited to the student’s unique situation and capabilities than someone who had only

sporadic contact with them. They perceived that advising in the Counseling and Advising Center was prescriptive, when they needed developmental advising.

Mentors, especially the college prep teachers, agreed that faculty should play a greater role in the advisement and placement process. The mentors pointed out that as they became acquainted with the student, the quality of the advice and counsel they could

**"In the counseling center, they don't give individualized advice. I haven't been back downstairs for advising; I work with my mentor and bypass counseling."**

*A mentee*

provide to the mentee improved. College prep students often have unrealistic expectations about what they can accomplish academically, given their current skill level. Having a mentor who is intimately familiar with the student and his/her situation enables the student to receive advice targeted to assist the student in achieving appropriate goals.

Advisement of students and their placement in appropriate classes is another area in which mentors and mentees agreed that the Program had been successful and should be enhanced. As an example, one of the mentors reported that he was puzzled about a student in a college credit class who was doing very poorly. While attending a mentor meeting, he learned that this student had tested at the sixth grade reading level and was in two college preparatory classes. The College has taken steps to remedy this particular situation in that students testing into two remedial subjects will be required to take SLS 1103. However, this situation illustrates that students may have unrealistic ideas about what they can accomplish and mentors play a vital role in monitoring the students' schedules and advising them regarding appropriate class schedules and sequences.

Several trends were noted during the review of grades to analyze the data for the success and retention rates. A review of the grades for spring semester revealed that ten of the 42 students in the control group completed the spring semester with "F" or "FN" in all their classes. Another observation gleaned from reviewing grades also supports more intensive, individualized advising, primarily among non-mentored students. For example, a student might be unsuccessful in a course, but rather than repeat the course the next semester, the student would take the next course in the sequence or take a higher-level course.

#### ***Outcome 4: Provide guidance into social integration with college activities (Satisfaction with social interaction).***

The mentees provided very unambiguous feedback during the focus group and in the surveys that they desired increased opportunities for social interaction with each other and with their mentors. When the students were asked what should be done differently the next time, their responses included: an opportunity to meet with mentors on a social basis prior to the matching; interaction with peers who also participated in the program; forming a club; getting together to perform community service; sharing a meal or other activity with mentors throughout the semester; and other activities that would bring them into contact outside the more formal sessions. As the focus group activity was drawing to a close, one of the students asked the evaluators, "Are you going to come

back so that we can get together again?" Clearly the mentees were dissatisfied with the level of social interaction they had experienced.

During the focus groups, the college prep teachers and other mentors also expressed their dissatisfaction with lack of opportunities to get together socially with their mentees, particularly at the very beginning of the program. The mentors also expressed concern that the incentives had not been funded for the Program. Few mentioned their stipends, but were quick to decry a lack of support for activities originally planned, such as funds to take their mentee out for a meal or to provide refreshments. They expressed frustration that there were not any funds available to the Program to provide refreshments and bring the mentees together in social situations. Of those who responded to the survey, only one-fourth indicated any social interaction with their mentee, primarily sharing a meal together on campus. Other mentors indicated that they had a meal together off campus or shared refreshments together. Only one mentor who answered the survey indicated attendance at a cultural or social event with the mentee.

**"I haven't met anyone else in the program. We need to meet others who have the same needs. Other students may know other resources. You could group mentees together for study groups. It would be good to know others in the same situation."**

*A mentee*

***Outcome 5: Promote communication between student, mentor, instructors and service providers (team-based communication) toward the academic success and retention of the student. (Performance-work plan progress).***

Mentees commented that their first experiences in college were overwhelming and appreciated that they had someone on their side to anticipate the questions they didn't know to ask, to assist them with goal setting, to keep them focused on their goals, and to provide a consistent presence in their lives. Mentees liked having one person upon whom they could rely to help them negotiate the system.

Mentors were surprised at the number of nonacademic situations that continually

**"I got my mentee into the program she wanted by getting her in contact with a person who could facilitate her financial aid problems."**

*A mentor*

interfered with the ability of their mentees to successfully achieve their academic goals. Instructors and mentors developed very strong, informal systems of communicating in order to build and maintain the mentoring relationship. Mentors stated that they became much more knowledgeable about College services and resources as they endeavored to provide needed support to their students.

In summary, the Mentor Program has made progress toward achieving the outcomes originally established for the project. Though the overall success and retention rates for students who tested into two college preparatory classes were not at the targeted levels, differences between the two groups and trends in the data indicate the positive influence that the Mentor Program has exerted on success, retention, and satisfaction.

Students and mentors have expressed satisfaction with the effects that mentoring has had on the advisement process and the student's ability to succeed. Students value the individualized academic advice provided by a mentor who knows them and their needs. Mentors have commented, and students confirm, that this group has multiple, nonacademic problems that can side track the student. A mentor provides a key focusing function for the student. Although the Program has not been as effective with integrating students into the social aspects of the College, the foundation for future activities has been established.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A great deal has been written about the mentoring process. It is the subject of numerous books and articles, both scholarly and in the popular press. Much of the literature focuses on the mentoring of children and youth, and there are many programs across the nation that foster linkages between children and teens with adult mentors (e.g., Big Brothers and Big Sisters) or sometimes, teen mentors with children (school programs). Mentoring in the workplace, particularly for women, and the military has also been written about frequently. Mentor relationships in the professions, especially for novice classroom teachers, are another area that has been explored to a great extent in the scholarly literature.

For college students, much of the initial research has been with graduate students as the mentees. A growing body of work is examining undergraduate students, particularly those at high risk of academic difficulties, including first-generation college students, minorities in general, and minorities and women in non-traditional fields such as engineering and the sciences. Mentorship programs on many college campuses are ongoing, with the mentors ranging from faculty and staff to graduate students to upper class undergraduate students. The design documents for the FCCJ Mentor Program include a bibliography that shows they accessed a large number of relevant studies in the field.

Although most of the incoming Prep students in the FCCJ Pilot Program are traditional age, or close to it, their complicated lives give them many of the characteristics of adult learners. Most of these students work off campus, sometimes at several jobs. A number have children and many of these parents are single mothers. They may have come to college having had negative experiences with academic institutions in the past which contribute to them having doubts about their abilities to master college work. They tend to prefer practical ways of learning and may be frustrated with teaching that does not have personal relevance to them. Because of these factors, the literature on the needs of adult learners is likely to be applicable to the FCCJ Prep students.

***"I got to decide what to work on."***  
*A mentee responding to what aspect of the Mentor Program had been most helpful*

The classic work in the field of adult mentoring is Laurent A. Daloz' *Mentor*. This book, now in a revised second edition, turns the focus of mentoring to empowering the mentee and transforming the learning process. *Developing Adult Learners* by Kathleen Taylor, Catherine Marienau and Morris Fiddler is one of a number of recently published books that focus on important principles of adult learning and strategies to develop them. *The Mentor's Guide* by Lois J. Zachary is a practical text which specifies elements of the changing mentoring paradigm when combining adult learning principles, such as the mentee role changing from a passive receiver to an active partner, and the learning process moving from being mentor directed and responsible for the mentee's learning to being self-directed and the mentees responsible for their own learning. A chart of the changing paradigm is in the appendix.

This section will describe the activities undertaken by the Mentor Program during the development and implementation of the Program. These activities will include processes

associated with Program Planning and Design as well as the activities associated with the progression of the mentoring process.

## **The Mentoring Process**

Much of the literature on the mentoring process identifies the progression through which mentors and mentees travel—first separately and then together. For the purposes of this evaluation, the researchers modified a framework cited in Lois J. Zachary's *The Mentor's Guide* (2000), which is based on the seminal work of Laurent A. Daloz in *Mentor* (1999). Adapting Zachary's work to the FCCJ educational setting, the phases are:

- **Preparing for the Mentoring Relationship.**  
Much of the work in this phase occurs as the mentors develop a clear understanding of the mentoring process, their roles in it, a sense of what the mentee's journey has been so far, and what the mentee will need to be successful. Mentors should assess their own comfort level with the roles and skills required of them in this process. Mentees should also be acquainted with what awaits them in the process and develop a realistic awareness of what mentoring will be like.
- **Building the Mentoring Relationship.**  
During this phase, the mentor and mentee begin to make a real interpersonal connection that will facilitate the work to come in the next stage. Trust building may emerge after contact that includes a non-judgmental acceptance of each other. Strategies for the initial conversation are essential. Boundary setting and negotiation are discussed, as well as developing an agreement of well-defined goals.
- **Facilitating Competency Development**  
Much of the "real" work of mentoring occurs during this stage, which is likely to be the longest. Once the relationship has been established, the processes of goal-setting, problem-solving and skill development can occur. At times, goals and behaviors may be re-worked with more effective strategies. The mentor may act as a coach, information-sharer, encourager, feedback-giver and guide. In this phase, the mentor and mentee work together to move forward with the mentee's goals, as well as maintaining flexibility to develop additional goals or modify initial ones. Behaviors required to move toward competencies will be clarified and accountability is encouraged. The partners will work together to determine the objectives and actions that will facilitate the successful completion of the goals.
- **Progress Assessment and Closure**  
Mentors assist their mentees in a realistic assessment of their progress and together they develop strategies to define and determine the end of the formal relationship. Care should be taken to ensure that the closure is planned, appropriate and meets the developmental needs of the mentee. Often, a phased ending is suitable, where the active interaction tapers off to less frequent meetings or other contact. Mentors and mentees often stay in touch for long periods of time after the formal relationship is ended.

## **Program Planning and Design**

The Design Team for the Mentor Program performed thorough research into best practices for mentoring programs during the program planning stage. The original plan as described in "Best Practice and Program Design for Mentoring College Prep Students" was grounded in the literature, well designed, and provided guidance for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the Mentor Program. Program design based on research provides a foundation for program development and benchmarking and is a Best Practice.

An interdisciplinary, cross-college design team, meeting a dozen times in 2004, undertook an extensive planning process. The members of the team included top administration, faculty from several disciplines, faculty and staff from counseling and administrative support. The proposal to the QEP Group was based on a thorough research of the literature and included benchmarking with key elements of successful mentoring programs. This original plan included fundamentals related to defining mentoring, qualities in good mentors, choosing mentors, mentoring process, work plans and the associated competencies, and learning objectives that mentors and mentees were expected to include in the work plan to focus the mentoring process. Examples of the competencies, learning objectives, and associated activities identified by FCCJ as being associated with the competency exam required for graduation were incorporated into the plan. Mentoring activities were to include referrals to those FCCJ services needed by the College Prep student to make appropriate academic progress.

The program design also prescribed the frequency, duration, and content of the expected sessions/meetings between the mentor and mentee. The plan specified that progress reports be developed and kept by the mentor and mentee to ensure that movement was being made toward the specified goals. It was also suggested that students keep journals.

In addition to academic activities, mentors and mentees were encouraged to engage in other activities such as cultural events, particularly those sponsored by the College, and to take advantage of other activities in the Jacksonville community.

The original plan prescribed that a certain number of incentives be made available to mentors and mentees pending completion of certain activities. From a review of original budget proposals, the key activities such as mentor training, training materials, and program administrative and management activities were funded at what appeared to be realistic levels. Prior to implementation of the pilot program in Fall 2005, the team was notified that a majority of these activities and initiatives would not be funded. As a testament to their dedication and commitment, the Associate Dean and the Faculty of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences decided to continue with implementation of the program knowing of these changes. However, there is no documentation that the Program was redesigned as a scaled-down. The expectations regarding outcome measures, achievement of objectives, faculty mentoring activities or planned activities with the students were not revised. Due to lack of revised expectations, the program evaluation is based on original documentation, but the lack of funding the Program to the original level must be taken into consideration when reviewing the progress of the

Program in reaching their goals. This example of faculty commitment to student success in the face of minimal resources is instrumental to a mentoring program and is a Best Practice.

## **Preparing for the Mentoring Relationship**

Several key components of the program are necessary to prime both mentor and mentee for what is to come, and to clarify expectations of both parties. Preparing for the Mentoring relationship includes: recruitment and selection of mentors, orientation and training for mentors, recruitment and selection of mentees, and orientation and training of mentees.

### ***Recruitment and Selection of Mentors***

Mentors were recruited in spring 2004 by the Program Coordinator from among the full-time and part-time faculty in the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences, as well as from the Counseling and Advising Center at the Downtown Campus. The Program Coordinator recruited 40 mentors, including full-time and part time faculty members from the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Counseling and Advising Center, the Library and administration. The diverse group of mentors is a Best Practice. It is also commendable that this high degree of interest in the Program and commitment to the goals of working with prep students to facilitate their entry into college classes was not limited to one discipline. By the time the program began, there were 35 active mentors, as five were no longer involved in the Mentor Program for various reasons.

The recruitment was carried out through e-mails from the Program Coordinator, word of mouth, and discussion at faculty meetings of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The "Best Practice and Program Design for Mentoring College Prep Students" and "Job Description for the Program Coordinator" were posted to the SharePoint web site. The faculty was also aware of the QEP proposal and its associated initiatives.

All faculty and counselors who stated an interest in working with the program were selected, so there was no screening of potential mentors. Faculty mentors included those who taught college prep classes currently or in the past as well as the faculty who had not. For many of the mentors, this was their first experience with mentoring, based on the focus group and the survey which showed that only about one-fourth had been involved in a mentor program. For a number of the faculty, this was also their first experience being involved with students in college prep classes.

### ***Orientation and Training for Mentors***

A four-hour workshop was designed based on best practice information of important elements to include. The workshop was repeated, so mentors had the choice of attending either of two afternoons: April 13 or April 23, 2004. All but two of the mentors attended one of the workshops. Faculty and staff at FCCJ with specific skills and experiences conducted the training sessions. Providing training for potential mentors is critical to success of the program and is a Best Practice. Although an evaluation of the

training was performed, the results of the evaluation were not available. The majority of those responding to the survey and focus group questions indicated that they thought the training was adequate.

Faculty who had not worked previously with college prep students suggested that the training include greater insight into dealing with college prep students, especially

***“I was very uncomfortable being a mentor as I am not yet familiar with FCCJ campus services and I knew very little about the College Prep program. A mentor***

suggestions for contacting mentees who were often unresponsive and required frequent interaction, especially to set up the first meeting. Other mentors wanted more specifics about the expectations of both mentors and mentees.

In the surveys and focus groups, mentors cited the need for additional training and information related to dealing with personal issues raised by mentees. Students often

brought up nonacademic issues interfering with achieving their academic goals and faculty felt unequipped to deal with the issues. Several mentors asked for a list of resources and referrals to assist them with the mentoring process. Some indicated that as one benefit of participation as a mentor, they had learned more about resources available on campus to all of their students. These comments by the mentors are consistent with the literature on what mentors need before a pairing begins.

Although mentors received handouts related to mentoring issues during the training and some materials were posted on the SharePoint site, no handbook that included educational materials, policies and procedures, and other resources was provided to the mentors.

Topics for the half-day workshop and time allotted for each session are listed in Table 5. Other areas of discussion that were handled informally during the session included practical and legal issues for interaction with students, such as meeting in public places. Providing training that includes appropriate and relevant topics in the mentoring process is a Best Practice.

Methods of instruction at the workshop included PowerPoint Presentations with lecture and discussion, study skills strategies and examples of such items as test preparation checklists and relating goals to classroom experiences, web resources, brief readings, exposure to the VARK web-based learning styles inventory, and a list of activity ideas to facilitate development of various competencies (e.g., for math, coordinate with the other mentors to schedule an orientation session in the math lab). Among the materials posted to the web site were scenarios related to common situations that could arise during mentoring. No active learning strategies, such as role-plays or brainstorming activities were included in the training.

Table 5. Mentor Training Workshop Topics

TOPIC	TIME ALLOTTED
SharePoint software	15 minutes
Academic counseling, advising and career planning	30 minutes
Coaching on study skills	30 minutes
Motivating and encouraging	30 minutes
Referring for college support	30 minutes
Active Listening	30 minutes
Monitoring student work plans and overview of work plans	45 minutes
Handling stressful situations	15 minutes

During the Fall Semester, the Program Coordinator conducted three meetings of the mentors. Each meeting lasted for approximately one hour. On the survey, most of the mentors reported attending two of the meetings. According to the survey and focus group comments, the meetings provided opportunities for mentors to share ideas, to develop strategies to connect with mentees, and to offer support for each other. Mentors, particularly those with no previous experience teaching college prep students, indicated that these meetings were helpful. Routinely scheduled meetings provide mentors with opportunities to interact and to develop new strategies of working with students, to learn to enhance communications, and to learn new ways to approach the mentor-mentee relationship and are a Best Practice. The mentors did not meet as a group during the Spring Semester, however mentoring issues and progress of the Program were discussed during Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences Faculty meetings.

***“A mentors meeting is useful, we need to have one often. It was at one of those meetings that I put two and two together about reading problems of some of my students in non-prep classes.”*** *A mentor*

Materials provided to mentors consisted of a series of handouts and readings distributed at the workshop. Additionally, links on the SharePoint website were connected to a few campus resources, as well as topical ones related to mentoring techniques and bibliographic resources. The proposal for the Mentors Program was posted on the website and contained valuable information for mentors to use, but it is uncertain whether many downloaded it. Not all mentors took advantage of the SharePoint site.

***Recruitment and Selection of Mentees***

Following the protocol set forth in the proposal, the Registrar provided the Program Coordinator with a list of 150 potential participants, including their contact information, who were eligible for the Mentor Program. These students had applied to and been accepted by FCCJ and fit the criteria by testing into at least two of the reading, writing and mathematics college preparation courses.

The Program Coordinator attempted to contact potential participants by telephone. Using a prescribed script, he explained the program format and potential benefits. He also

asked the students about their career goals, majors and interests in an attempt to gather information that might be helpful in matching mentees and mentors. Numerous calls were made; often telephone numbers had been disconnected or changed in the relatively short period since application. Additionally, messages were left on voice mail or answering machines, as well as with other occupants of the student's residence. No written materials, such as brochures, handouts, or pamphlets, describing the Program and the expectations of mentees were distributed or mailed to prospective participants.

Recruitment calls were discontinued after 35 students agreed to be Program participants since the pool of mentors was at that number by the time the calls were made. Only two persons the coordinator actually spoke with declined the Program. The coordinator estimated that he attempted to contact 125 students before 35 were identified for the initial cohort. Once school began, six students were discovered not to have enrolled at FCCJ. Mentors were unable to contact or initiate a relationship with 18 others and one mentee did not attend in school in the fall but did enroll for spring and was in the Program. This left the Program with only nine active participants during fall semester from the group recruited into the original cohort before classes began.

***"I had big issues and nobody was helping me. When he called, it sounded good." A mentee***

Because the non-enrollment and attrition rate was so high, it was decided to recruit additional students using an alternative method. Mentors who were left without a student were becoming discouraged and were desirous of being matched with another student. It was believed the student need was certainly great enough to attempt to involve others in the program. Six students were recruited in October and November when the Program Coordinator contacted students who had been in the original participant pool but were not reached at that time. In January, the Program Coordinator attended several Prep classes and described the program to the students, asking those interested to sign up. Eighteen students volunteered at this time. Of these eighteen students, eight students had been enrolled in fall classes but had not participated in the Mentor Program, eight students matriculated in the Spring 2005 Term. Two students signed up but moved out of the area without becoming active participants in the Program.

***"I thought it would be helpful to talk to somebody who would sit and listen." A mentee***

Although the secondary recruitment altered the original design, it should be considered a Best Practice to revise program plans when it appears aspects of the program are not working and resources could be used to benefit other students. Using a personal appeal to recruit mentees directly from the prep classes also appears to be a Best Practice from the point of view of maintaining participation in the Mentor Program. Another Best Practice in this situation appears to be waiting until students have actually entered school and attended classes before undertaking recruitment. The retention of students in the program was significantly higher when this practice was used. For instance, five out of six of the students recruited in October or November returned during the Spring Semester and have remained in the Program. Sixteen of 18 who were recruited in late January remained in the program throughout the semester.

## **Orientation and Training for Mentees**

The Mentor Program conducted no orientation or training for mentees. The Fall Semester recruits received a brief statement on the telephone, and the spring semester recruits received a statement about the program when the Program Coordinator spoke in their classes. The mentors provided orientation into the Program and the mentoring process when they met with their mentee.

Mentors indicated on the survey and in focus groups that mentees should receive a formal orientation that described the Mentor Program including a description of the students' roles and responsibilities as well as the mentors' roles and responsibilities. Mentees also stated that they were unsure of what the program was really to be, and would have valued an orientation at the beginning of the Program.

## **Building the Mentoring Relationship**

Research had identified socialization of this group of students as an issue and the results from the focus groups and surveys confirmed these findings from FCCJ. Not only were students very vocal about desiring opportunities to meet together as a group on a continuing basis, the mentors, too, observed that this would be valuable for the mentees. In addition, mentees and mentors both expressed the desire for the two groups to meet together at the beginning of the program for an opportunity to get to know each other; some observed that perhaps this should occur before mentor-mentee assignments were made while others thought that this would facilitate contact and interaction once the initial pairings were made.

***"It takes time and can be a long process to build a relationship. Some may have instant rapport, but not always."*** A mentor

from the focus groups and surveys confirmed these findings from FCCJ. Not only were students very vocal about desiring opportunities to meet together as a group on a continuing basis, the mentors, too, observed that this would be valuable for the mentees. In addition, mentees and mentors both expressed the desire for the two groups to meet together at the beginning of the program for an opportunity to get to know each other; some observed that perhaps this should occur before mentor-mentee

Mentors employed a variety of methods to make contact with their mentees. Many mentors commented on the frustration of making initial contact with their assigned students, in maintaining contact with them, and in getting any response. Telephone calls, including calling cell phone numbers when available, were used most commonly to contact mentees. Mentors also indicated that visiting the classroom, talking in the hall, or sending notes or messages through other instructors was sometimes successful. The creativity and persistence displayed by some faculty to make contact with their mentees is a Best Practice.

***"They track you down until they can find you."*** A mentee

## **Facilitating Competency Development**

Once the mentor had established a trusting relationship with the mentee, the processes of goal-setting, problem-solving and skill development could begin. During this phase, the mentor and mentee work to clarify goals and determine the objectives and actions that will facilitate the successful completion of the goals.

## **Work Plans**

The design for the Mentor Program prescribed a specific format and content for the development of work plans as well as posting of work plans to the SharePoint web site. The SharePoint website was developed and supported as a vehicle for the mentors to communicate and for the Program Coordinator to monitor the development and posting of Work Plans and progress reports. The SharePoint site is a Best Practice for this Program. The site also enabled the mentors and Program Coordinator to communicate as a group. Eleven out of 19 mentors who answered the survey indicated that they and their mentees had developed work plans and the majority of those were in the suggested format. A review of the SharePoint web site and discussions with the Program Coordinator identified eight formal work plans. The majority of the posted

***The work plan “helps keep me on track and focused.”***

*A mentee*

work plans had been updated with progress reports indicating the status and date of competency achievement, addition of new competencies, and statements regarding the content of the formal mentoring sessions. A Best Practice is goal setting, which is a key element of the mentoring process and should be required of all mentoring relationships. Also a Best Practice is a

formal work plan that assists the mentor and mentee in managing progress toward the goals. As mentors develop a relationship with the mentees recruited during spring, additional work plans should be posted for these students.

The posted work plans provided insight into how the mentoring relationship developed, the types of competencies and skill sets on which mentoring pairs chose to focus, and the record of how the student progressed. Faculty who are hesitant to use a work plan or uncomfortable with their ability to generate a plan with their student could also learn from their colleagues, particularly the postings in the mentoring techniques and student activities areas. The use of the SharePoint site to supplement the face-to-face meetings and encourage greater sharing of ideas and progress of mentees is a Best Practice. Best Practices would also include formal records of student goals, skill development, and progress.

Mentors generally agreed that the work plan was somewhat useful during the mentoring process to ensure that the interactions between the mentor and mentee were focused, that they were useful to monitor progress and to use as a motivational tool. Focus group and survey responses also indicated that mentors viewed some type of goal setting as important for the mentoring process, even if they did not generate a work plan. Some mentors also indicated that there had been a lag time in gaining access to the SharePoint website on which to post the plan. Several faculty members, perhaps those who didn't attend training, indicated that they did not know how to create a formal work plan.

Some mentees apparently viewed the work plan as extra work and were resistant to their development and use. However, mentees commented on their need for someone in their lives to assist them in maintaining focus. The mentees agreed that the mentor served a vital role as this external source for focus. A formal work plan assists the mentor in managing this role.

Routinely, most mentors scheduled the next meeting at the end of a formal session, although the student survey showed that this only happened half the time. While the original design for the Mentor Program indicated that sessions of 90 minutes conducted once per week were desirable, mentors reported spending less time in formal sessions. Most commonly, mentees and mentors met formally in sessions that ranged between 30 and 45 minutes. Approximately one-fifth of the mentors who responded to the survey indicated that their sessions lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The mentee survey showed that students perceived the session length to be slightly shorter with an average of 30 to 45 minutes per meeting.

About one-third of the mentors indicated that they met in formal sessions with their mentees once per week. An equivalent number said they met with their mentee two to three times per month, while the remainder of the mentors said they met a few times per term. Two-thirds of the students who responded to the survey said they had formal meetings once a week. Overwhelmingly, the mentors assumed responsibility for initiating contact, although one-fourth of the mentees saw themselves as the one who usually initiated. Several mentors commented on the frustration involved in making initial contact with their mentees, maintaining routine communications, and in getting responses from them. In those pairs that did establish a relationship, there appeared to be greater response, perhaps from the personal relationship established early in the process.

### ***Ongoing Communication and Contact***

One method of communication available to faculty and students was e-mail. However, college prep faculty indicated that college prep students do not routinely use this method of communication and computer literacy is not a common skill in this group. Interestingly, about half of the mentees said they had fairly regular email contact with their mentors and one half of those perceived themselves as initiators of the email.

Not all students have the technological skills to activate their FCCJ e-mail account, nor did those who have active accounts routinely check e-mail. Some mentor-mentee pairs chose information literacy as an objective and developed strategies to communicate and use these skills. One student felt secure enough with her new computer literacy skills to purchase a computer through the College and another has plans to do so. One prep faculty member stated that she scheduled her classes to go to the computer lab and access the e-mail account that is available to all FCCJ students. Students are required to access the account during the class to receive communications such as assignments and additional course information from the instructor. Encouraging computer literacy in mentoring relationships and in classes is a Best Practice.

Improving the computer literacy skills of the mentees might have facilitated communication with the mentors and Program Coordinator and perhaps alleviated some of the frustration that many mentors experienced in making and maintaining contact with the mentees. Mentors may have also been unaware of personal e-mail addresses and so did not use this mode to contact the mentees.

There is a rich, but informal system of communication between mentors and mentees. Mentees and mentors indicated that they use a variety of methods of connecting with

each other. A preferred method used by faculty is to physically track the student down at the student's classroom since they have access to student records and can determine the student's schedule. One mentor expressed this as "stalking" her mentee, perhaps describing the intensity with which some mentors pursued making contact with the mentee. This creativity displayed by mentors in making and maintaining contact with mentees is a Best Practice.

There was no documented consistent communication to the mentees as a group. According to faculty, communication with the students as a group would have been difficult because of changes in student addresses, telephone numbers, etc. Some students did not respond to telephone calls, e-mail, and letters so communications became problematic.

Mentors commented that the mentor program was very time intensive both in the actual meetings their mentees but also in trying to contact and maintain communication, as well as document Work Plans. Strategies to facilitate this communication would be key to continuation of the program and to reduce frustration of the mentors in contacting their mentees.

The majority of faculty who responded to the survey expressed agreement that it was important for the mentors to meet periodically as a group and that they had found the meetings that they did attend helpful. Three meetings for the mentors were conducted during fall 2005, but reports from faculty indicated some differences in opinion as to their usefulness or how well attended they were. Of those mentors responding to the survey, more than half indicated that they had attended at least two of the three meetings. In the focus groups, faculty also indicated that these meetings had value. Those who attended the meetings reported that the meetings were very useful to compare notes regarding strategies that worked in contacting mentees; useful approaches when working with individual student problems, and identifying resources that they were not aware existed or who to contact. In particular, the faculty who had not taught college prep courses commented that they found these occasions most helpful. The unique problems of the college prep students were often eye opening. Using faculty with more experience with this population to provide guidance to successful approaches with this group should be recognized as a Best Practice.

***"College prep teachers turn these students into college students. They are not recognized for what they do. So much of the problem is helping them develop social skills—something as simple as how to tell the teacher that you have a problem."*** A mentor

No meetings of mentees were held either on an informal or formal basis. There was no regular communication with the group of mentees by the Program Coordinator during the Pilot Program. During the focus group, mentees were quite vocal regarding their desire and need to meet together as a group. The surveys also confirmed that mentees highly valued the perceived benefits from social interaction and having a peer group. Their suggestions have been incorporated as part of the recommendations for the future management and replication of the program.

The SharePoint web site was developed and maintained for the Program, but its use by mentors and Program Coordinator was variable. A review of the discussion postings indicated 59 postings to General Discussion from April 23, 2004, through April 28, 2005,

***“As you can see from the plans, there are many ways to help students.”***

*Message from Program Coordinator to mentors on SharePoint website.*

with 45 of those postings occurring in fall. In early fall, the Program Coordinator posted several requests that mentors share their stories, post news, and report progress of mentees. His postings to mentors were upbeat and inviting, as in “Please get in touch with the students within the next couple of days. They are eagerly awaiting you.” Several mentors posted updates about their mentees, but many reported their frustration in trying to reach mentees.

The Program Coordinator posted to the General Discussion ten times, one mentor seven times, and 17 mentors had posted to SharePoint discussions once. Eight other mentors posted between two and six times. There did not appear to be many threaded discussions initiated or maintained on the board. According to the focus groups and surveys several factors might have affected usage of the site: two mentors did not attend training, there was a delay in putting the site up, and some mentors had difficulty accessing the site.

### ***Referrals***

Mentees commented that enrolling in college provided them with a number of challenges in working through the system. They credited their mentors with assisting them in completing some rather daunting tasks in this regard. In the survey and in the focus groups, mentors reported that they provided assistance to students with both on campus services and off campus referrals. Although off campus referrals were rare and were not a provision of the original program design, mentors became invested in assisting mentees in getting the appropriate assistance for their needs and sometimes this was not available on campus.

Mentors made specific referrals to such services as the Learning Center, Financial Aid, Admissions, and the Counseling and Advising Center, although there were no referral forms or feedback mechanisms to track whether the student had completed the referral. Mentors, especially those who had not previously worked with college prep students indicated that they learned a great deal about the College and its services and that this knowledge helped them function more effectively as a faculty member. Encouraging students to use institutional resources established to assist them is a Best Practice in mentoring programs.

***“They are very helpful in getting classes and scholarships.”*** A mentee

### ***Mentoring Process Topics of Discussion***

Mentors and mentees discussed a number of topics during the mentoring process. Although discussions regarding the 12 academic competencies identified in the original plan were an integral part of considerations by the pairs, some of these were given more

attention more than others. For example, mentors cited socialization issues, career planning, and study skills more frequently than the other competencies specified (the others including reading, writing, math, information literacy, conflict management, time

***"I have a learned from this experience—I see them on a different level and I look at their lives from a different perspective."*** A mentor

management, reflection, problem solving, and communication). In addition to the competencies and skill sets discussed, top academic related items cited by the mentors included academic performance, academic advisement, problems with other teachers or with specific classes. The student survey showed that every topic listed was discussed in some pair, with adjusting to college, academic advisement, study skills and communication skills the most common. The number of topics listed by students ranged from one to fourteen with eight being the most

frequent number. It is a Best Practice that relevant competencies endorsed by FCCJ were encouraged to be included as topics for discussion in the program.

In particular, mentees and mentors cited academic advisement as a great area of concern. Three fourths of the mentors responding to the survey cited academic advising as a key topic of discussion great area of discussion. The majority of the responders to the survey indicated that mentors should play a role in academic advising. This was confirmed by the mentee focus group and survey results. They were very vocal regarding their mentors' roles in this area. Their concern was that academic counseling services was satisfactory if you didn't have specific problems, but they followed a prescribed format and were not seen as developmental in nature. The students, and some mentors, pointed out that the students have some very specific needs and require additional information and guidance that the Counseling and Advising Center often cannot provide due to time constraints or lack of personal knowledge about the students. The mentors often know more about the students because they have developed a relationship with them that is useful in providing guidance. Faculty input into the advising process provides individualized counseling and support that may not be available at the college level and should be considered a Best Practice.

***"What was most helpful was talking with my mentor about everything—life decisions and adjusting to college."***

A mentee

## **Progress Assessment and Closure**

Mentors maintained responsibility for assessing the progress of their mentees, although mentees are encouraged to be self-evaluating. The Program maintained no formal documentation of these assessments or reports from the mentors. Journals and logs had been prescribed but none of mentees were keeping these. As far as the program design is concerned, no description of what would happen at the end of the academic year was identified. Apparently there was an assumption that the mentors would work with the mentees for the academic year, but it is not clear what, if any, expectation there was after that time. Additionally, the majority of mentees still active in the program began in Spring 2005 Semester and it is unclear what the expectation is for these pairings.

# PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

## Staffing

The Program Coordinator for the Mentor Program was recruited from among the faculty in the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the Downtown Campus. He had been actively involved in the Design Team for the QEP for the College and for the Mentor Program Initiative. The Program Coordinator was professionally educated in psychology, and had experience in counseling teens and young adults. He had taught for ten years, six of those years at FCCJ. He had no previous experience teaching college prep students. The Program Coordinator received three workload units of release time, in addition to his other faculty responsibilities.

Limited clerical support for the Mentor Program was provided from existing support staff in the Dean's Office of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

In-house technical support was provided to the Program to establish and assist with maintenance of the SharePoint website. Although the SharePoint web site was not used as effectively as it might have been, it provided an opportunity for mentors and program administration to communicate.

## Program Operations

Two documents, "Job Description for the Program Coordinator of the Mentor Program" and "Best Practices and Program Design for Mentoring College Prep Students," specify a number of program management, documentation, operations, and reporting functions that should be maintained for the Mentor Program. It should be noted that the expectations of the Program Coordinator and the requirements for managing the Mentor Program were not revised when the full funding of the Program was denied. The findings of this section should be reviewed with these considerations in mind. The program design recommended that appropriate documentation, as reflected in Table 6, would be maintained.

**Agreements between the Mentor and Student:** The Work Plan included space for the mentor, mentee, and Program Coordinator to sign and date that they understood that the mentoring experience was a developmental opportunity and that the parties had specified and agreed to the skills, learning, competencies, and timeframe outlined in the Plan. There were no written agreements required of the mentors and mentees that specified such items as mutual commitment to confidentiality and guidelines or expectations regarding other conditions of program participation or commitment to the program.

**Work Plans:** The development and adoption of work plans were cornerstones of the original design of the Mentor Program. As indicated in previous sections, although most mentors indicated that they developed work plans, few of these were posted to the SharePoint web site. Other mentors stated that they had developed less formal approaches to working with the mentee that included some type of goal setting.

Table 6. Documentation of Program Activities

	MET	PARTIALLY MET	NOT MET	NOT APPLICABLE
<b>Agreements between Mentor and Student</b>		X		
<b>Work Plans</b>		X		
<b>Contact Logs</b>			X	
<b>Handbook of Policies</b>			X	
<b>Budget and resource allocation</b>				X
<b>Training Manual/materials</b>		X		
<b>Referral Forms for internal support services</b>		X		
<b>Discussion board for Mentors</b>		X		
<b>Other documentation for evaluation of Program</b>		X		

**Contact Logs:** Mentors did not maintain records of formal or informal meetings with the mentees, nor the time they expended in trying to make contact with their mentees.

**Handbook of Policies:** Mentors and mentees were not provided with a handbook or guide to the Program's policies and procedures. No handbook was maintained centrally.

**Budget and Resource Allocation:** Due to lack of funding and limited expenses, no monitoring or allocation of financial resources was required.

**Referral Forms:** Mentors referred students for internal services but there are no records of these activities. No referral forms were developed.

**Discussion Board for Mentors:** As indicated earlier, the SharePoint web site was developed and maintained for the Program, but its use by mentors and Program Coordinator was variable. A review of the discussion postings indicated 59 postings to General Discussion from April 23, 2004 through April 28, 2005 with 45 of those postings occurring in fall 2004. The General Discussion link was used for some program management activities, but in general, the site was not used for program activities such as tracking time spent on the Program, documenting mentor-mentee pairings, or posting Program progress reports.

**Documentation for Program Evaluation:** No system was in place to routinely collect, analyze, and report information related to program activities. There were no written policies, procedures, or operations documented. For example, there were no files on mentees, no tracking of frequency of contact between mentors and mentees, no indication of duration of relationships, and little Program information related to participation that was easily ascertainable. Information provided to the researchers was sometimes inconsistent and the quantitative measures of program performance for the

Fall 2004 term were not available until April. The Program Coordinator maintained no formal file of mentoring policies and procedures. A copy of the training materials distributed at the Mentor Training was maintained and some materials were posted to the SharePoint site.

## **Evaluation and Progress Reporting**

The Associate Dean of the Liberal Arts division submitted two Mentor Program progress reports regarding the status of this QEP Initiative. These reports confirmed the difficulties experienced by mentors in achieving and maintaining contact with mentees, the related problems of taking too many classes and poor reading levels, and difficulties with the original sampling approach to identify volunteers for the Program. There appeared to be no formal, written, periodic reporting of program activities by the Program Coordinator to the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences or the mentors.

Three meetings of the mentors were held during the fall; no formal meetings were conducted during the Spring Term. The Mentor Meetings conducted in the fall, enabled mentors and instructors to discuss and report on student progress, discuss topics relevant to student success and retention, and share strategies for contacting students and building mentoring relationships. Monthly faculty meetings of the Division were conducted and informal progress reports were made to administration and mentors at that time. There is some evidence of e-mail communication from the Program Coordinator to the mentors; most mentors indicated that the level of communication from the Program Coordinator was adequate.

## PROJECT REVISIONS

The Mentor Program has undergone three major revisions.

The first revision occurred prior to the implementation of the project. The Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences was informed that the anticipated funds would be unavailable to the project. Although the Program Coordinator position was approved for three workload units of release time and resources for the evaluation of the project were approved, none of the incentives for either mentors or mentees were funded. In addition, resources to provide ongoing clerical support, to purchase materials or print materials, or to finance other elements of the program were not funded. The Division made a commitment to proceed with the Mentor Program even with the lack of funding for key elements of the Program. Performance expectations of the Program Coordinator, mentors, and mentees were not revised.

A second revision to the Mentor Program occurred once the Program began. Six of the potential students who had agreed to be mentored did not enroll at FCCJ. In Fall 2004, mentors experienced difficulty in contacting or maintaining contact with their mentees. Less than one-half of the students originally recruited for the Program were involved with mentors, so the Program Coordinator recruited additional participants in October and November. The students were recruited by calling students who tested into two prep classes from the original list of students. Of the six students recruited during this time period, five of the six remained in school for the spring term and were in active mentoring relationships. This revision in program design appears to have added to the success of the Program and was an appropriate use of mentoring resources available to the Program.

The Associate Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences, in the November 2004 progress report, described a lack of participation in the Mentor Program by mentees, a high drop out rate for students in the program, and frustrated faculty who had been unable to establish successful mentoring relationships. The Program took additional measures to recruit participants for the Program. In January and February of 2005, the Program Coordinator visited prep and SLS classes to solicit students for participation in the Program. Eighteen students indicated an interest and were paired with a mentor. At the end of spring term, 16 of these students were involved in an active mentoring relationship. One half of these students had been enrolled in fall classes and one half had just matriculated at FCCJ for the spring semester. Given the participation rate and the continuation rate through the semester, using personal contact and direct appeal in the prep classes appears to have been an effective and efficient method of recruiting mentees and an appropriate program revision. Mentoring programs should include alternate methods of recruiting program participants.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mentor Program has demonstrated the potential for successes during the pilot phase of implementation. Although a number of recommendations are made to support and strengthen the activities of the Mentor Program, the mentors have accomplished much with limited resources. The QEP Leadership Team must evaluate whether the Mentor Program will be supported with the necessary resources and or be considered an ancillary services activity. As part of the deliberations regarding continuation and/or replication of the Mentor Program, several areas should be addressed. The recommendations to address these program limitations are organized in the following six areas: Program Resources, Preparing for the Mentoring Relationship, Building the Mentoring Relationship, Facilitating Competency Development, Progress Assessment and Closure, and Program Management.

### Program Resources

It was unfortunate that the Mentor Program was not provided with the financial resources to implement the original program plan. Commitment from top administrative levels, as evidenced by appropriate resource allocation to the Program, will be necessary for the Program to achieve success in all areas. The sustainability and success of the Program with no additional resources are questionable. Even though the mentors committed to the Program without incentives and resources during the Pilot Phase, consideration must be given to the time and resource commitment the Program will require on a long-term basis. Additional support for the Program might be available from external funding sources, particularly with some preliminary data available showing successes.

***“The College must do what it promised and realistically support the program.”***      *A mentor*

A number of recommendations, particularly those related to incentives, will be found in the following sections. Some recommendations will require funds that were not available to the Program during the Pilot Phase, while others could be implemented at no cost.

It is difficult to know what the role of incentives would have been on student participation in the Program. It is possible that if students had perceived there would be some concrete incentives rather than the more amorphous benefits of receiving assistance and support from the mentor, that student participation might have been higher. Certainly, the internal motivation that was more likely to come from wanting help from the mentor is the most effective; however, sometimes some external motivation can assist in “hooking” students until they realize how much they could benefit from the relationship itself.

Though faculty indicated, both in words and actions, that the lack of incentives did not affect their participation in the Program, consideration should be given to compensation of some type, especially if faculty commit to this Program for an extended time. Incentives for both mentees and mentors provide extrinsic motivation and public

acknowledgement of progress toward meeting goals. While incentives may have increased participation, particularly on the part of the mentees, there are still many avenues to add value to the Program at no or little cost. Listed below are suggestions from mentors and mentees, the literature and the researchers.

***Mentor/Mentee Incentives: No cost or very little cost***

- A designated parking place for mentor/mentee of the month or semester. This incentive would incur a minimal cost for the sign, but would be positive motivation for the holders and would also increase program visibility. According to a staff member, the Noel-Levitz Survey of Student Satisfaction from 2002 showed parking to be among the bottom two aspects of the campus.
- Tickets to campus events or performing arts series.
- An item with the FCCJ logo donated by the bookstore if this is possible.
- Priority registration if the student meets a list of behaviors in the program, such as sessions with mentors, completion of Work Plan and taking specific action steps.
- Requesting the Jaguars team to sponsor mentors and mentees at a game, including having the name of the Mentor Program on the billboard.
- Gift certificates from local merchants, if allowable under college policies. Veteran mentees could solicit and present these. These don't have to be large, but could be a discount at a popular store, coupons for fast food, movie tickets or other items that students might like.
- A textbook discount (small) if the bookstore will agree to do this.
- Getting priority for purchasing the computers the College sells.
- A dedicated bulletin board in a prominent location with pictures/recognition of the mentoring pairs, news about the program and upcoming events.
- Mentee mailboxes in the academic building.
- Financial support for such activities as picnics, parties, study breaks, covered dish meals.
- Sponsorship of a Mentee Club.

***Incentives with higher cost***

- Money or vouchers to take mentee to breakfast, lunch, etc. This was the most mentioned item by the mentors and something about which the mentees were very enthusiastic.
- Refreshments at the opening mixer and other events.

- Merit pay, workload credit, or a stipend for mentors. Although this was not essential, it would show a commitment on the part of the College to the program, particularly if the program continues on a long-term basis.
- Bus tickets/tokens for mentees. Some mentees do not drive to campus and use local public transportation.
- A free credit hour or class for mentees.
- Tickets to cultural events, particularly if attendance will be mentor-mentee or a group of mentees.
- T-shirts or other items such as backpacks with the program logo. These could be co-sponsored by local businesses if college policies allow it.
- A computer as a reward for one mentee.
- Plaque, certificate, or some other physical object for mentor's office.

## **Preparing for the Mentoring Relationship**

Preparing the mentors for their role in a successful mentoring relationship requires knowledge of the mentoring process, self assessment of skills and knowledge, an understanding of the mentee's situation, and often professional development to attain the skills necessary to perform in a mentoring role. The mentees, too, must be prepared for their role and responsibilities during the mentoring relationship. They often have unrealistic expectations about their own skills and what are reasonable short and long-term goals for themselves. The following recommendations are offered to assist in preparing the mentors and mentees for their roles.

### ***Recruitment and Selection of Mentors***

- Develop written materials that clarify the purpose of the program, describe the role of the mentor, and specify the expectations the program has of mentors, including the time commitment.
- Ensure that persons considering becoming mentors have a clear understanding of the expectations and are personally committed to the program. Not all faculty and staff possess the personal characteristics to be mentors, for instance being willing to be persistent in contacting students even when the student doesn't respond. One mentee noted that her mentor contacted her throughout the Fall Semester and she did not respond until Spring Semester. While mentors can engage in professional development to develop the knowledge and skills needed, some faculty will find this more difficult than others. Because the mentor's attitudes and motivation are so crucial to how they function as a mentor, it is also essential that faculty and staff who don't believe they are truly suited for this

- role should be encouraged to opt out of joining, and may support the program in other ways, such as offering tutoring.
- Consider recruiting additional mentors from other areas, such as Student Success, to broaden the pool of potential mentors and increase communication across departments and divisions.
  - Require that mentors complete an application/information sheet to be used in matching mentors and mentees.

### ***Training and Development of Mentors***

It would be advantageous to view mentor training as developmental, and to attempt to present topics near the time the mentors might actually face them with their mentees rather than having the training be held all at one time months prior to the match-ups. It is acknowledged that it may be difficult to schedule ongoing training when faculty have different teaching responsibilities but preplanning these events could reduce the schedule conflicts.

In addition to some of the material presented in April 2004 training session, the initial training session could spotlight such topics as:

- Clarifying the role and responsibilities of the mentor.
- Profiling the College Prep student, with demographic information and perhaps a panel of veteran mentees.
- Presenting information about mentees that will help mentors develop an understanding of typical issues faced by mentees. This could be gathered and facilitated by Prep teachers and veteran mentees. Prep teachers, who have extensive experience working directly with Prep students, suggested these were prime issues with mentees frequently deal with:
  - lack of time and weak time management skills
  - lack of focus
  - trouble following directions
  - weak reading ability
  - financial difficulties which generally require mentees to work extensive hours
  - poor social support systems
  - health problems of self or families
  - unrealistic expectations of the college experience
  - being a “needy” population
- Establishing the mentor-mentee relationship, including such issues as self-disclosure and the beginning of trust
- Active listening and other communication skills
- Role-plays of stressful situations, possibly having veteran mentees in the role plays to lend credibility

Mentors need additional written and/or on-line materials, which they can use during their participation in the Mentor Program.

- Mentors should receive a resource notebook with training materials, Work Plan materials, instructions on using SharePoint, and a directory of campus and off-campus resources. The manual should be in a binder clearly marked with the program name on its spine. This binder will be recognizable on the mentor's shelf and will contribute to increased awareness of the program.
- A small resource library could be purchased for a few hundred dollars and could serve as professional development for mentors.
- There are several mentoring associations which could be joined at low cost and which can provide additional resources for the FCCJ program.

### ***Recruitment of Mentees***

Early in the Spring 2005 Semester, the FCCJ Mentor Program modified its recruitment process by directly approaching students in the SLS and college prep classes. This appears to have been a more fruitful method to recruit students. Factors affecting this more successful recruitment include the personal appeal, the awareness that actually entering college and attending classes brings, and encouragement by college prep faculty. Some possible avenues to pursue in the recruitment area include:

- Develop written material describing the Program that can be mailed or given to potential participants, distributed during orientation, placed in strategic locations around campus such as the Registrar's Office, Learning Center, Library, Student Success, and Financial Aid. The promotional material will give visibility and credibility to the program and may clear up lack of information and/or misunderstandings about the program. For example, some mentees originally thought they were signing up for tutoring while others seemed to want a therapist.
- Hold an orientation and/or introductory meeting and require that potential mentees attend. Several sessions should be scheduled to accommodate diverse class schedules. Prior to the meeting, announcements could be made in selected classes by the Program Coordinator, faculty, staff, and previous participants in the Mentor Program. Provide an orientation regarding the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees, the benefits of the mentoring relationship, and information about mentors and potential matching. Veteran mentees from the 2004-2005 Academic Year could be excellent resources for this meeting, especially to generate a sense of excitement about the Program.
- Require that mentees complete a brief, written application, giving accurate contact information (including cell phone number and personal e-mail address, if any), as well as hobbies, interests, possible major, and a statement about what they want in a mentor. These strategies should assist in commitment to the

program, provide up-to-date contact information and give the Mentor Program an organized presence.

- The Program should provide all mentees with contact information in writing with their mentor's name, phone and e-mail, as well as the Program Coordinator's data. This may have successfully resolved the circumstance of one mentee in the original cohort who the researchers contacted over the telephone. She said she had been left a telephone message by her mentor, responded to it and never received further contact. If the mentee had known the name, phone number and email of the coordinator, she may have contacted him. She stated she was very disappointed in the lack of contact and that she could have used a mentor.
- FCCJ may want to experiment with having all students in one SLS class get mentors. This would increase the likelihood of interaction among mentees and be a convenient way for mentors to make contact with their students. It would also be a way to measure differences in the successes of students recruited individually and those in a class cohort.

### ***Training and Development for Mentees***

- Offer additional training and development sessions to mentees. The initial session or sessions could be opportunities for matching the mentees and mentors and for mentees to clarify their responsibilities in the program. Opportunities for the pairs to interact, perhaps through role-plays that focus on developing behaviors, might reinforce behaviors important to the mentoring process. Include veteran mentees to serve as elevated peer role models.

***"Our prep students have issues with follow through. We need to train the students in the mentoring process.***  
*A mentor*

- Provide opportunities for mentees to meet each other and begin the process of forming a support system for each other. The mentee focus group was highly positive about this possibility.
- Encourage skill development on a group basis. For example, one group meeting might be held in the computer lab and students learn to access and use their e-mail accounts. Mentees in the focus group were interested in doing a service project together, reaching out to their communities.
- Ongoing development could be conducted throughout the semester by using web-based self-analysis quizzes, which many students would like taking, and other continuing activities.
- Hold a gathering for family members and other intimates of the mentees to explain the program, enlist their support and de-mystify the college experience.

## **Building the Mentoring Relationship**

Establishing trust and a personal connection early in the relationship will increase the likelihood that the relationship will continue. Mentors and mentees alike voiced the need for direct contact to enhance socialization among the mentees and mentors. Opportunities for social interaction between the pairs and among the group of mentees are key to enabling students to develop positive mentor relationships and peer groups that can assist in their own development.

- Ensure that mentors and mentees actually meet. Some type of icebreaker to facilitate initial conversation would be helpful, especially for some mentors who may feel uncomfortable in a less formal setting than the office or the classroom.
- Plan a service project carried out by mentors and mentees, which would serve as a socialization activity, as well as making a connection with the community.
- Timely reminders to mentors about the elements of building the relationship, including the need to actively pursue mentees should be included in the on-going training. Mentors should be encouraged to share what strategies for initial contact and establishing the relationship have been helpful. The SharePoint web site and periodic meetings of the mentors should facilitate this sharing.

Although the subjects presented in the FCCJ workshop are valid and should be part of the training process, some of the topics would be more effective if they were presented once the Program had actually started. A significant number of the pairings never got off the ground, and some mentors were not able to maintain contact beyond the first or second session. It may be that some mentors moved too quickly to the problem solving and Work Plan steps without developing a relationship, which would facilitate self-disclosure on the part of the mentees.

- Trust building between mentor and mentee is a crucial element to accomplish before meaningful work can begin. These students may be somewhat suspicious and testing of the mentor. At the same time, they want the personal touch. In their surveys and focus group, the mentees spoke as often about wanting someone who was "there for them" as they did about the mentor having information that was helpful.
- While some of the mentees connect immediately with their mentors and jump right into the process quickly, others require a significant amount of pursuing. One mentor described how she had called and written her mentee throughout the Fall Semester, but it was not until the Spring Semester that the mentee became active with her mentor. This is an example of extreme perseverance that would not be necessary in all cases. However, it is likely that mentors will need to be active and intrusive in monitoring the contact.

The mentor training workshops very appropriately included a number of topics. Of additional interest to faculty might be readings from a wealth of literature on the

mentoring process itself. For example, faculty might be interested in the fascinating history of mentoring, with particular emphasis on the role of mentoring in literature, mythology and history in Laurent Daloz's *Mentoring*. This could especially appeal to faculty who could relate it to their discipline.

Other topics may have more impact if they are presented after the initial workshop, when the mentor is more likely to be able to use them. They would include the more practical and informational aspects, including:

- Academic counseling, advising and career planning
- Study skills strategies
- Learning styles
- Motivating and encouraging
- Referring to campus and off-campus resources
- Monitoring student Work Plans and overview of Work Plans
- Keeping up the momentum of the relationship

These follow-up sessions could be developed as part of the meetings held every two to three weeks when the initial work is most intense and perhaps every four weeks after

***"I am learning more things about counseling and other parts of campus that I didn't pay attention to."***

*A mentor*

that. The most relevant developmental tasks for each time period could be selected, as well as having mentor-initiated discussions and sharing. It may also be helpful to have mentors fill out the VARK and other inventories to gain a greater self-understanding and to role model self-discovery activities to their mentees. Additionally, representatives from various support services on campus could join in the meeting and offer valuable referral information to mentors.

## **Facilitating Competency Development**

The work plan is based on sound behavioral principles, but it may be more effective to suggest that mentors be encouraged not to introduce the Work Plan prematurely. It may be described briefly during one of the first sessions, but it is probably more appropriate to actually work on it at a later date, after the relationship has been firmly established. The Work Plan format may need to be revised, or it may be that the timing of its introduction has been intimidating to students. Even changing the name to something more collegiate, e.g., "Action Plan" or "Success Plan" or "College Success" might enhance the relevance to students. Communication among all parties will continue to be a critical success factor in promoting the mentoring relationship.

- All mentor and mentee pairs should engage in a formal goal setting process.
- Formalize the role of the mentor as an academic advisor, a role that they have already assumed informally. Besides reflecting the more personal knowledge mentors have of the students, it would be an additional inducement for mentees to visit with their mentors.
- Promote consistent and frequent communication among mentors and mentees. Mentees should be encouraged to access, use, and routinely check their e-mail.

Computer literacy is one of the seven skills identified as key for students and these skills could be developed in orientation, as part of college prep class, or at other formal sessions for mentees.

- Referral to the Career Center may assist mentees in determining a potential major. Mentors can assist mentees in working out action steps to move them towards these goals.

## **Progress Assessment and Closure**

The Program has not planned for continuation. As mentees successfully complete the college prep classes and continue their academic training, consideration must be given as to when and how mentees “graduate” from the Program. There are practical matters to consider as well as the emotional bonds that may be formed between mentors and mentees.

Planning for an end to intensive mentoring, for example when the student successfully completes the required college prep classes, ensures that mentoring resources will be available to other students. The limited number of mentors will require that students needing more intensive mentoring services be matched with faculty willing to make this time commitment. The Program must assist mentees and mentors in developing strategies to plan for the termination of the relationship and filling the void in the mentee’s academic and personal lives.

- Develop a plan to provide for the involvement of mentees in the Mentor Program once they have completed the college prep classes. Mentees who have completed the required college prep classes could be recruited to:
  - Promote the program and its benefits to new mentees
  - Serve as links between new mentees and mentors and/or participate in peer mentoring
  - Serve on an advisory board to the Program
- Continuing involvement of successful mentees as elevated peers to new students could be a tremendous asset to the Program and should be explored. The status difference between Prep students and professional staff/faculty is a broad one, and the veteran mentees could be a bridge.
- Develop a plan so that mentees no longer needing intensive mentoring have a safety net.

Lack of participation by mentees and failure of mentees to continue in school should also be followed up.

- Contact students who fail to participate in the Program once they have committed to do so. Determining the reasons for nonparticipation may enable the Program to make needed changes in policies or procedures and might also encourage these Program dropouts to get involved again.

- Students who are not successful in school should be contacted to determine whether the Mentor Program should make changes in their approach to FCCJ students.

## **Program Management and Documentation**

The original design for the Mentor Program was grounded in the literature, well designed, and provided guidance for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the Program. Although quantitative and qualitative outcomes were established for the Program, during the evaluation little formal written documentation of program activity was discovered. No formal policies and procedures were in place, there were no systems developed and implemented to monitor the routine operations and activities of the Program, and no systems in place to collect and manage data for program evaluation.

Providing centralized management of all Program activities imparts a solid underpinning for the program. The lack of formal systems in place to manage the Program results in several hurdles to overcome. Evaluation becomes more problematic, especially in documenting progress toward meeting process objectives and outcome measures; replication of the Program becomes more difficult; tying program activities to goal attainment is more complicated; and using program data to seek outside funding becomes more challenging.

- Develop written policies and procedures and a system to monitor their implementation. For example, written information on each mentee including contact information, confidentiality agreements, signed statements regarding knowledge of roles and responsibilities should be maintained.
- Ensure that the Program develops written material, including contact information, for such uses as public relations, student information, or orientation.
- Prescribe and implement regular methods of communication with mentees and mentors.
- Using the performance outcomes that are established for the Program, develop systems to track and document program activity:
  - identify the data that will be needed to evaluate the outcomes
  - develop the systems to collect, monitor, and manage the data
  - identify who will analyze and evaluate data
  - provide for regular, timely reporting of program progress
  - establish an intervention plan when problems are identified
- For the specific activities prescribed as part of the Program:
  - Select indicators and establish a system to collect data and monitor activities. For example, if mentors and mentees are to meet periodically, identify a method of tracking the meetings and their content, perhaps by posting to SharePoint. Tracking time spent on mentoring activities is a key consideration for faculty and administration.

- Identify strategies to assist mentors and mentees problem solve and offer positive feedback when it becomes obvious that problems exist.
- Develop a program advisory committee. Identify stakeholders in the Program and periodically meet with the group.

## **Building a Program Identity**

There is little awareness of the Mentor Program among students not directly involved in the Program. There are no physical indicators in the classroom building that the Program exists; for instance, there are no signs or posters on bulletin boards, or brochures explaining the program. This is understandable to an extent for the Pilot Program because recruitment included contacting students directly on the telephone for fall semester or in prep and SLS classes for spring semester.

However, this method has contributed to a lack of program identity, which may have been a factor in the lack of participation by the first cohort. If the Mentor Program were to be widely known and perceived as an organized, prestigious unit, students may be more willing to persevere and participate. The Program should consider having mentees from this year be involved significantly in developing the logo, name and other elements of program identity. They likely have excellent insights into what will be meaningful to their peers.

- Design a recognizable logo to be used on materials, t-shirts, and other items.
- Give mentors a plaque or framed certificate to be displayed in their offices stating that they are mentors.
- Consider selecting a name for program, other than Mentor Program, that can be recognizable and reflect the goals of program. Mentor Program is somewhat generic and also puts the emphasis on the mentor rather than the student. One of the terms both mentors and mentees used repeatedly was "focus." This might be incorporated into a new name.
- Design and distribute various materials such as a program brochure to give to potential mentees, an overarching brochure for mentors, flyers for bulletin boards and other means of dissemination. All information should include how to contact the Program Coordinator.
- Mentors and/or second year mentees might write about the program or write a column of tips for success for the College newspaper. Compiling success strategies into a booklet for new mentees would be helpful.
- If the suggested incentive of "Mentor/Mentee of the Month" designated parking is adopted, this will bring about name recognition on the campus.

- Conduct an end of the year recognition ceremony. Public recognition of the progress and achievements of mentees with family and friends in attendance would provide opportunities to recognize students who have had little academic success in the past.

## PROJECT ADAPTATION

During the assessment and evaluation, a number of Best Practices were identified that contributed to the Mentor Program achieving both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Those practices that were effective and should be replicated by the College at other campuses are summarized in this section. Other considerations that might affect the replication of the Mentor Program at FCCJ are also addressed in this section.

With limited resources and exemplary commitment to students and their success, the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences has demonstrated that the Mentor Program can influence student success, retention, and satisfaction with the academic program.

***It is recommended that the Downtown Campus be provided the resources necessary to implement the recommendations that to will address Program weaknesses and enable the College to replicate and enhance the Best Practices.***

***“What was most helpful was knowing that someone is there, caring for my future.”*** *A mentee*

Overwhelmingly, the key to successful achievement of the program objectives has been the dedication and commitment of the faculty and the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences to the Mentor Program. Despite the lack of funding, the majority of the faculty committed to participating in the program even when they had been informed that the planned incentives would not be available. Their commitment to student success is commendable.

Mentors have exceeded administration’s expectations regarding participation in the Program and their commitment to student success. Faculty developed new skills in dealing with a population with which they have had no previous contact, gained a better understanding of college prep students, and learned new resources appropriate for student referrals.

While it will be difficult to replicate the dedication and commitment of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences, a number of the activities of the Mentor Program are and should be reproduced.

### Best Practices

#### Program Planning and Design

- Program design based on thorough research provides a foundation for program development and benchmarking.
- Faculty commitment to student success in the face of minimal resources is instrumental to a mentoring program.

- Mentors included full and part time faculty from multiple academic disciplines, administration, Library, and the Counseling and Advising Center.
- There was a high degree of interest in the program and commitment to the goals of working with Prep students to facilitate their entry into college classes.
- Training mentors prior to program implementation is important to preparing mentors for their roles.
- Providing training that includes appropriate and relevant topics in the mentoring process is critical to success of the program.
- Routinely scheduled mentor meetings provide faculty with opportunities to interact with other mentors and to develop/learn new strategies, enhance communication, and learn new approaches to working with their mentee.
- Personal contact with students, especially direct appeal in prep classes, appears to be an effective method of recruitment. More intensive recruitment of students for a Mentor Program should occur once the student is enrolled in classes.
- It is appropriate to alter program design to use the resources to benefit other students.
- More effective recruitment may occur once students have actually entered school and attended classes.
- Maintaining contact with mentee often requires creativity and persistence of the mentor.
- Maintaining a web site, such as SharePoint, facilitates communication and program management.
- The use of the SharePoint site supplements the face-to-face meetings and encourages greater sharing of ideas and progress of mentees as well as contributing to the education of other mentors.
- Goal setting is a key element of the mentoring process and should be required of all mentoring relationships.
- A formal work plan assists the mentor and mentee in managing progress toward the goals.
- Formal record keeping of student goals, skill development and progress enhances the ability of the Program to evaluate program effectiveness.
- Teaching computer literacy skills to mentees and requiring its use could improve ability of students to use this avenue of communication.
- Competencies identified by FCCJ were encouraged to be included as topics for skill development in the Program.

- Information literacy is a key competency for mentees and should be reinforced by the Program and the mentor.
- Communication during the mentoring process is facilitated through the use of e-mails.
- Encouraging computer literacy in mentoring relationships and in classes.
- Routine meetings of mentor and mentee assist in maintaining the relationship and assist the student in staying focused on required responsibilities.
- Faculty with more experience with this population can provide guidance to successful approaches with this group.
- Referring mentees to appropriate resources assists with achieving personal and academic goals.
- Faculty input into the advising process provides individualized counseling and support that may not be available at the College level.

The limiting factors in replicating this program have been identified as lack of resources that has influenced the contact and recruitment of students, lack of formally documented systems for program management, and few written materials that could be duplicated. Another factor that must be considered in replicating the Program would be the culture on other campuses of FCCJ.

The culture of each campus could constrain or enhance the implementation of the Mentor Program at each location. For example, a campus with more college prep and ESL students than other locations might have difficulty meeting the need for mentors. Locations that rely more heavily on part time faculty would have to consider whether the faculty resources would be available for mentoring. A campus with an adult population working full time would have to consider the effects of students attending classes at different times. For example, some students may work at night and go to school during the day; others will work during the day and attend night classes. At the Downtown campus, prep classes are taught in 16-week terms and none are online; this is not true on the other campuses.

The faculty of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences must be applauded for their risk taking and willingness to assume new roles as mentors. Their vision in seeing the promise of the Mentor Program and their commitment to participate in a labor-intensive endeavor with no compensation are commendable. Replicating these qualities on all campuses will be quite an undertaking!

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