



Georgia's CACG Near Peer Program

In late fall 2010 CACG provided all USG institutions the opportunity to apply for funding to develop a Near Peer Program on their campus in partnership with one or more high schools. Five USG institutions (Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Atlanta Metropolitan College, Dalton State College, Gainesville State College and Georgia Health Sciences University) accepted the challenge to develop and implement a Near Peer Program beginning fall 2011. One additional institution, the University of Georgia through the Fanning Institute, is currently developing a program that will be implemented, fall 2012.

The Near Peer program deploys college students as “college coaches” to partner high schools to work with high-need students. The college coaches take a service learning course that provides the instruction they need to work with underrepresented students in order to increase access and readiness for college.

The Near Peer Program Goals

- Provide “Near Peer” mentoring services to underrepresented students at partner high schools;
- Increase awareness among underrepresented students about applying and paying for college;
- Increase awareness among underrepresented students about various career opportunities;
- Promote college opportunities in a positive way to the underrepresented students served;
- Provide information about college life and classroom experiences to the underrepresented students served; and
- Develop a sense of community involvement for college students serving as Near Peer mentors.

6 Basic Steps for Implementing a Near Peer Program

1. Create a new or reformat an existing 3-hour service learning course designed to meet the goals listed above.
2. Recruit college students to take the service learning course.
3. Solicit support and commitment from partner high school(s) in surrounding districts.
4. Send the college coaches to the partner high school(s) to mentor the high-need students each week.
5. Collect data on the high school students and the college coaches.
6. Call a current Near Peer Program institution for guidance as needed.

Near Peer Program – Initial Results

- Two semesters of implementation
- Currently implemented on five USG campuses
- Sixth campus set to implement fall 2012
- Ten high school partners
- 127 students participating as college coaches
- 347 high school students served

What the College Coaches are Saying

- “It has been so worth the time to help students make a very important decision in their lives.”



A college coach working with a student on a college application

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- “Every future educator should be required to participate in a mentoring program during their own journey.”
- “My mentee showed me a whole other side of life...I had surrounded myself with those who were like me.”
- “...mentoring is a process, the relationship will not happen overnight, but, with hard work, it can be one of the most rewarding things you have ever achieved.”



What the High School Students are Saying

- “Work, work, work, but underneath all of it there are new friends, and that extra kick we need to begin college with our heads held high. That’s what Near Peer is.”
- “My Near Peer program experience has been great. It has been kind of like a growing experience. Not only have I learned a lot education wise but also about myself.”
- “...anything is possible in life and you can accomplish anything if you try your hardest.”

Flexibility

- High School Students Served: one, two, three or all four grade levels
- Different ratios: college coaches to mentees
- College Coaches: Medical students, pre-service teachers, general student population
- Models: urban, rural, remediation, health field, foster children...

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