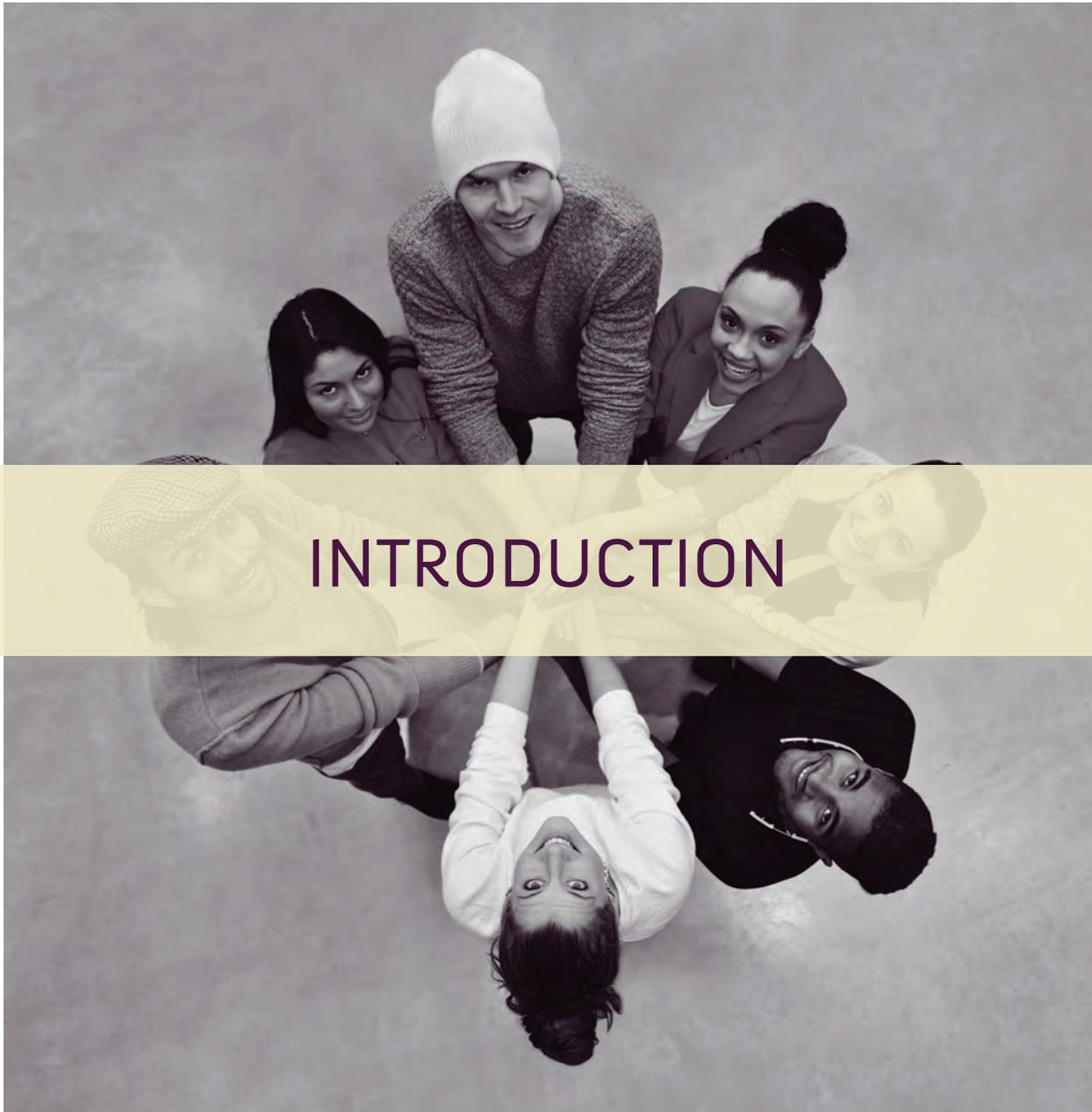# Meaningful Connections: Service-Learning, Peer Advocacy & Student Success

INTRODUCTION

A Resource Guide for Integrating the Connect2Complete Approach into Developmental Education Courses

This C2C Resource Guide can also be found online in PDF format at
http://www.compact.org/c2cresourceguide/

For additional C2C materials not included in this C2C Resource Guide, please visit the C2C
webpage: http://www.compact.org/connect2complete/

About Connect2Complete

As community colleges serve large populations of underprepared and vulnerable students at a time of
decreasing budgets, they seek innovative and cost-effective ways to increase graduation rates while supporting
high-quality learning experiences for all students. Connect2Complete (C2C), developed by Campus
Compact, is a new model that takes advantage of existing resources to increase student learning
and success.

C2C integrates two key features—service-learning and peer advocacy—into developmental education courses
designed to support underprepared students in getting ready for college-level coursework. Peer advocates are
enrolled college students who, in addition to leading service-learning projects, serve as mentors, advocates,
and advisors to their peers in developmental education courses. This integrated strategy enables students to
connect in meaningful ways with their peers and instructors and to experience the relevance of their course-
work to the real world, both on campus and in their communities. The C2C strategy encourages academic,
personal, and social development, as well as development of students' cultural identity and critical civic
consciousness—all key factors for student persistence.

Campus Compact & the C2C Pilot Program

Developed by Campus Compact—a national coalition of 1,100 college presidents committed to fulfilling the
civic purposes of higher education—C2C grew out of Campus Compact's 2010 white paper, *A Promising
Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement,* which highlights local and
national studies that demonstrate positive connections between civic engagement and college success.

In 2011, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded funds to Campus Compact to develop and manage
the C2C pilot project with nine community colleges in Florida, Ohio, and Washington and their related
Compact state affiliates:

Florida
Broward College
Miami Dade College
Tallahassee Community College

Ohio
Cuyahoga Community College
Lorain County Community College
Owens Community College

Washington
Big Bend Community College
Edmonds Community College
Green River Community College

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Over the course of the pilot (January 2012–May 2014), the nine colleges engaged more than 6,500 low-income, underprepared students. The C2C pilot program provided the colleges with an opportunity to test and fine-tune various approaches to C2C implementation.

Campus Compact partnered with researchers at the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University to evaluate the C2C program. Data from the evaluation demonstrates that C2C is a promising model. C2C students benefited from the program in a variety of ways; most notably, when colleges implemented the model with fidelity, retention among C2C participants was higher than among a comparison group of developmental education students not in the program. After six semesters, the retention rate among C2C students was six percentage points higher than among the non-C2C comparison groups—a significant increase.

Evaluators also reported that C2C students demonstrated increased civic skills and awareness and that peer advocates had a positive impact on C2C students' adjustment to college. Not surprisingly, peer advocates' growth and leadership development was noteworthy and sometimes dramatic, and faculty members found inspiration in the C2C strategy for helping the most underprepared students succeed. For more detailed results, see the C2C Pilot Program Evaluation Report in Section 4. Based on the experiences of the pilot's participating colleges and results from the implementation evaluation, Campus Compact has identified a promising model that can be adapted to a wide range of campus cultures.

Navigating the C2C Resource Guide

The success of the C2C program has prompted Campus Compact to create this Resource Guide to help colleges implement the C2C model on their own campuses. The guide is designed for a broad range of audiences, including community engagement professionals, faculty, student leaders, administrators, and presidents. While resources contained within this guide were developed on the basis of the experiences, needs, and cultures of community colleges, the model has garnered interest from four-year institutions offering developmental education, which can adapt the information here for their own use.

The guide is divided into four sections, each focusing on a different aspect of the program. Section 1 provides an overview of the program; as such, it is a good starting point for all readers. Section 2 looks specifically at classroom application and is of particular interest to faculty and peer advocates. Section 3 focuses on the administrator's role in structuring work with peer advocates and faculty. Section 4 focuses on program evaluation. Following is a more detailed breakdown of the contents of each section.

Section 1, **The C2C Model,** provides readers with a high-level understanding of the C2C strategy. It begins with an overview that paints a picture of what the program looks like on the ground. A review of the theory and assumptions underlying C2C connects theory with outcomes for participants. Discussions of service-learning and peer advocacy summarize research on the positive impact of these approaches on student success, review the integrated C2C approach in depth, and lay the foundation for C2C implementation (explored in later sections).

Section 2, **Implementing C2C in the Classroom,** presents a comprehensive view of what C2C looks like in the classroom. It begins with two documents that explore considerations for faculty implementing the C2C strategy in their developmental education and college success courses: how to implement service-learning with a particularly vulnerable population, and approaches for integrating the C2C strategy into redesigned developmental education courses. The section also offers sample materials for supporting faculty and peer advocates in integrating C2C into the classroom, including faculty-created descriptions of peer-assisted service-learning coursework and activities.

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Section 3, **Program Administration,** includes resources for planning and managing a C2C program. While this section addresses faculty and peer advocate roles, it focuses more closely on the administrator's role. This section offers resources for planning and launching a C2C program on campus, including information on assessing readiness, staffing, structuring, and budgeting for such a program. It also provides resources for recruiting and supporting faculty as well as for recruiting, screening, training, and supporting peer advocates.

Section 4, **Program Evaluation,** provides resources for conducting a C2C evaluation, including information on measuring program impact and the C2C Evaluation Report from the C2C pilot program. While program evaluation is included near the end of the Resource Guide, it's important to note that evaluation is not an event that occurs at the end of a project; rather, it's an ongoing process that should start at the outset, with systems put in place to support evaluation in the early stages of program planning.

Two final sections with sample materials offer additional information and insight. The first is a series of profiles of C2C students, peer advocates, and faculty. The profiles provide a window into the range of program participants, including their background, experience with C2C, and the personal impact the program has had on them. A second appendix provides sample hands-on materials developed by participating colleges, such as organizational documents, brochures, training guidelines, a classroom planning guide, and more. These materials provide models to help make the start-up process easier.

Next Steps for Launching C2C at Your College

For support with launching C2C, contact Campus Compact—see www.compact.org for contact information. Campus Compact can provide those interested in C2C with resources and connections to state and regional Compact offices supporting this work.