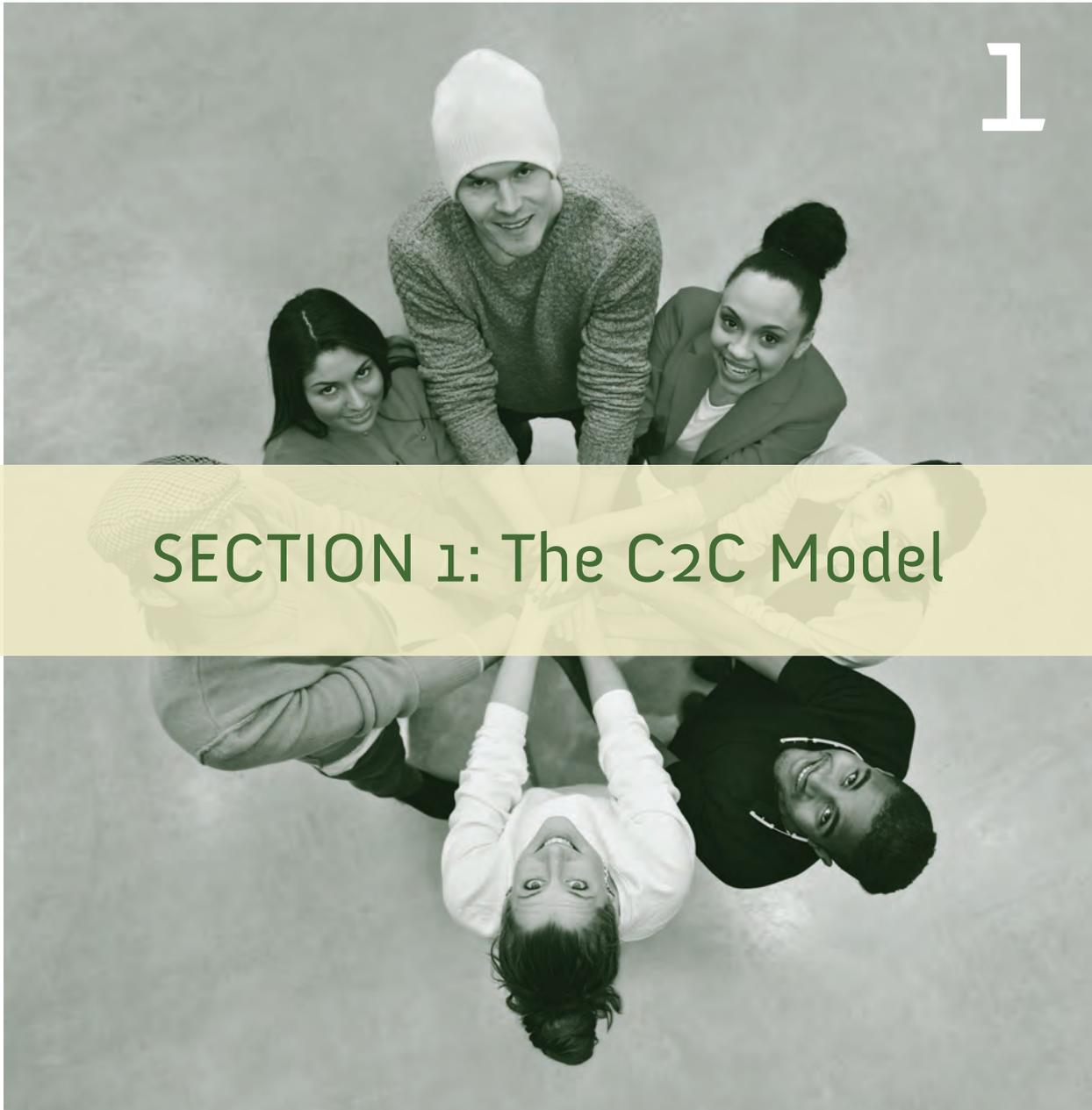


# Meaningful Connections: Service-Learning, Peer Advocacy & Student Success



## SECTION 1: The C2C Model

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

## Why Connect2Complete?

### MEETING THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE STUDENTS

Low-income, underprepared community college students face many challenges and graduate at lower rates than their better-prepared, more affluent peers (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2009). Less than one-quarter of two-year community college students who take one developmental education course go on to earn a degree or certificate within 8 years. In comparison, non-remedial students graduate at a rate of almost 40% (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006).

Recognizing the link between college completion and economic mobility, President Obama has set a goal for America to have the highest percentage of college graduates in the world, calling for 5 million more community college graduates by the year 2020. A variety of powerful private foundations have committed funds to this effort, known as the “completion agenda.”

There is no easy answer for improving the graduation rates of developmental education students. These students come to college with many obstacles and risk factors—including under-preparedness, low-income status, first generation in college, structural inequality, racism, and challenges of balancing school with family and work responsibilities (Boylan, 2001). Longitudinal studies conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) show that students in the lowest socioeconomic quintile are far more likely to enroll in developmental education than those in the highest quintile—63%, compared with 25%. These studies also show differences by race/ethnicity, with African Americans and Hispanics having higher rates of remedial enrollment than whites and Asians.

At the same time, students’ experiences with inequality and other challenges can be a source of resiliency and pride. When vulnerable students are engaged in a manner that is constructive; that recognizes, utilizes, and enhances their strengths; and promotes positive outcomes by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths, these students can thrive.

There is a movement led by the organization Complete College America to pressure state lawmakers to do away with or severely limit developmental education courses. The organization argues that developmental education is a waste of taxpayer dollars and a “bridge to nowhere.” To the contrary, many college leaders have recognized that their ability to serve increasing populations of vulnerable students requires providing deeper and smarter support. These leaders favor directing legislative and administrative efforts into improving developmental education to better meet students’ needs. In this context, many higher education professionals have pointed out that the completion agenda’s singular focus on time to degree may emphasize efficiency to the detriment of high-quality learning (Humphreys, 2012). Aware of this critique as one of many of the completion agenda, community colleges are seeking innovative strategies to increase graduation rates while improving the quality of student learning. One such approach is the Connect2Complete (C2C) strategy, which integrates service-learning and peer advocacy into developmental education courses.

Even as service-learning has been identified as one of ten high-impact educational practices effective in increasing student retention and engagement (Kuh, 2008), this pedagogy is rarely integrated into developmental education courses. Connect2Complete offers a model for combining and integrating proven interventions with a population ripe for such engagement.

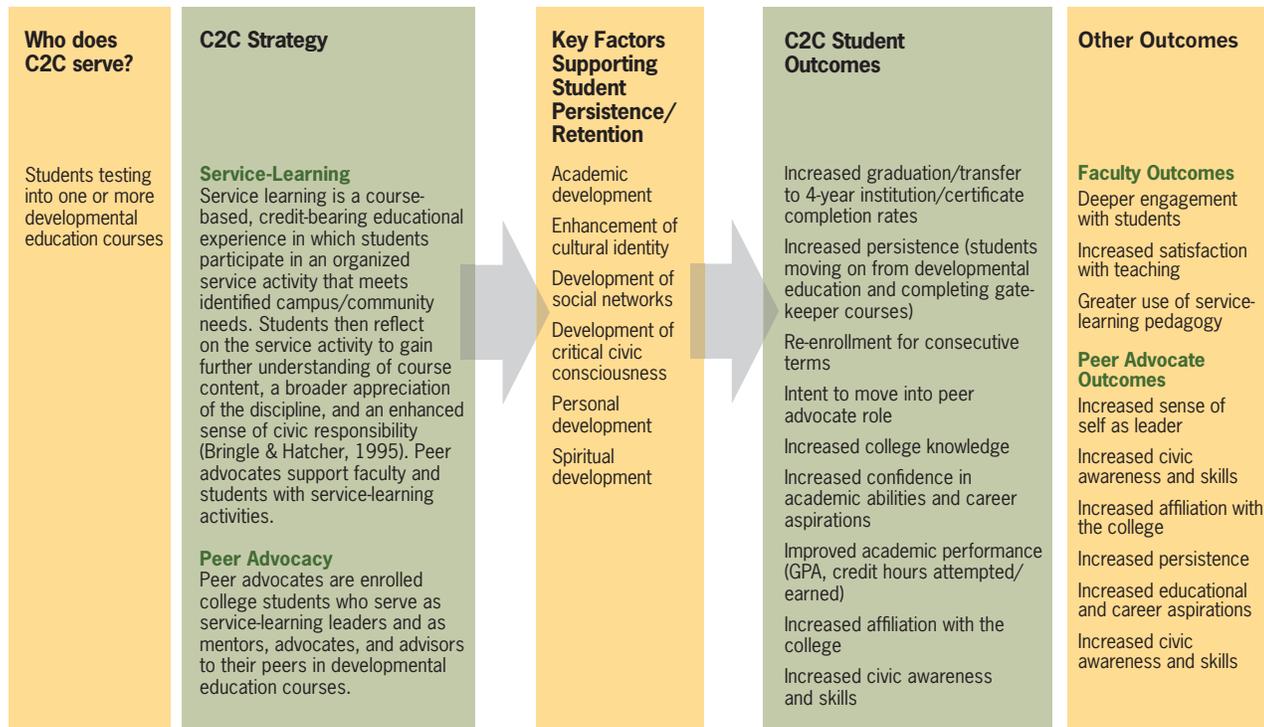
### THE C2C THEORY OF CHANGE

The integration of service-learning and peer advocacy is a promising approach for student success because these practices foster key factors known to improve student persistence: academic, personal, and spiritual

development; development of social networks; and development of students’ cultural identity and critical civic consciousness.

The C2C “theory of change”—the theory and assumptions underlying the program—examines these factors as they relate to student, peer advocate, and faculty outcomes (Figure 1-1).

**Figure 1-1. The Connect2Complete Theory of Change**  
*Theory and assumptions underlying the C2C program, linked to student, faculty, and peer advocate outcomes.*



### EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE C2C MODEL

Vincent Tinto (1993) developed the most widely used sociological framework for understanding student retention. He argues that of the factors that are amenable to intervention and change on campus, a student’s ability to integrate with his or her institution both academically and socially has the most direct influence on that student’s decision to stay at or leave an institution. Bean & Eaton (2001) extend this work, exploring the psychological processes that support academic and social integration.

Critics of this assimilation theory argue that because Tinto’s model is based on the experiences of traditional-aged, White, middle-class students attending private residential higher education institutions, it doesn’t adequately address the issues that vulnerable populations and students of color face. Critical retention theory calls attention to the ways that acculturation of students to the dominant college environment leads to maintaining the status quo and may devalue students’ cultural identity. An alternative perspective draws simultaneously on Tinto (1993), Bean & Eaton (2001), and critical retention theory, and calls for focusing on the factors that increase student retention—including academic and personal development and development of social networks—while also enhancing students’ cultural identity and developing students’ critical civic consciousness (Maldonado, Rhoads, & Buenavista, 2005; Yeh, 2010).

The theory behind C2C draws from this broader perspective, examining the impact of its key elements—service-learning and peer advocacy (often referred to as mentoring in the literature)—on all of these retention factors. Table 1-1 summarizes research on retention/persistence, broken down by the critical factors identified above, while Tables 1-2 and 1-3 outline research on the impact of service-learning and peer advocacy on these critical factors.<sup>1</sup> Although spiritual development has not been widely studied as a factor for increasing retention, it is included here because it has a clear impact on psychological health and resilience for low-income and culturally diverse populations.

**Table 1-1. Key Factors Supporting Student Persistence & Retention**

<p><b>Academic Development</b></p>	<p><b>Academic integration:</b> Students who adapt academically to their college environment are more likely to persist. Academic integration involves understanding the norms and unwritten rules relevant to the dominant culture of the institution. For example, grade performance, a key retention indicator, is a reflection of student ability and performance according to the institution’s preferences for particular styles of academic behavior (Tinto, 1993).</p> <p><b>Intellectual growth:</b> Students who feel their learning has relevance and who become involved in the learning process itself find greater meaning in their education and become more motivated to finish college (Yeh, 2010).</p> <p><b>Academic and critical thinking skills:</b> Writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are among the academic competencies that foster academic success. Students who are critical thinkers are more actively engaged in their own learning and better able to connect their academics to their experiences (Maldonado et al., 2005; Yeh, 2010).</p>
<p><b>Enhancement of Cultural Identity</b></p>	<p>Academic success involves some degree of adapting to the dominant culture of the institution, but it does not have to involve a loss of one’s own cultural identity (Tierney, 1999; Karp, 2011). Colleges can develop ways to affirm, honor, and incorporate students’ identity into the campus culture (Maldonado et al., 2005). When students’ connections to their cultural identities are strengthened, they perform better and are happier and more engaged (Tierney, 1999).</p>
<p><b>Development of Social Networks</b></p>	<p>Developing social networks occurs primarily through informal peer group associations, semi-formal extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty and administrative personnel. Successful experiences in these areas result in social communication, friendship support, faculty support, and collective affiliation and increase the likelihood that a student will feel connected to and stay in college (Tinto, 1993; Maldonado et al., 2005; Karp, Hughes, &amp; O’Gara, 2010; Astin, 1977).</p>
<p><b>Development of Critical Consciousness</b></p>	<p>Students who develop a critical view of social issues speak passionately about the purpose and meaning of classroom learning and are empowered to succeed (Wylie, 2014; Yeh, 2010). In particular, when students challenge college social and institutional norms that limit the success of vulnerable student populations, they are more likely to be retained (Maldonado et al., 2005).</p>

Continued on the following page >

1. The bibliography for Tables 1-1 to 1-3 can be found at the end of this section.

<p><b>Personal Development</b></p>	<p><b>Psycho-social growth:</b> The development of self-efficacy, effective coping behaviors, and internal loci of control are important psychological processes for academic and social integration and, therefore, retention (Bean &amp; Eaton, 2001).</p> <p><b>Interpersonal skills:</b> Possessing leadership attributes and interpersonal abilities enhances the prospects of first-generation college students for academic success (Logue, Hutchens, &amp; Hector, 2005; Astin, Astin, &amp; Associates, 1999).</p>
<p><b>Spiritual Development</b></p>	<p>The process of making meaning of one’s experiences, examining values, and searching for purpose is often associated with spiritual development (Astin, 2004). Spirituality is a significant factor in the psychological health and resilience of low-income and culturally diverse populations (Constantine, 1999; Rouse, Bamaca-Gomez, Newman, &amp; Newman, 2001).</p>

**Table 1-2. Impact of Service-Learning on Key Persistence & Retention Factors**

<p><b>Academic Development</b></p>	<p>Service-learning promotes improved academic performance (Lockeman &amp; Pelco 2013; Kamuche, 2006; Strage, 2000; Astin et al., 2000; Fredericksen, 2000).</p> <p>Service-learning is a highly engaging, active, and collaborative educational experience that stimulates students’ curiosity, helps students identify their strengths and interests within the academic environment, allows students some control over their learning, and applies learning to real-life situations (Brewster &amp; Fager, 2000; Gallini &amp; Moely, 2003; Vogelgesang et al., 2002; Lockeman &amp; Pelco, 2013).</p> <p>Service-learning develops key academic skills and abilities, including a deeper understanding of course content, problem analysis, complexity of understanding, critical thinking, application of knowledge, and collaboration (Bringle, Hatcher, &amp; Muthiah, 2010; Eyler &amp; Giles 1999; Conrad &amp; Hedin, 1991; Strage, 2000; Markus, Howard, &amp; King, 1993; Astin et al., 2000; Yeh, 2010).</p>
<p><b>Enhancement of Cultural Identity</b></p>	<p>When students participate in service projects with communities that share social locations similar to their own, the experience helps to affirm and integrate identities previously considered contradictory (e.g., racial/ethnic minority and college student) (Wylie, 2014). Service-learning highlights interdependent norms (more common to first-generation families) rather than independent norms (institutionalized in college), which affirms students’ cultural identity and increases psychological well-being (Lockeman &amp; Pelco, 2013; Fulmer et al., 2010).</p>
<p><b>Development of Social Networks</b></p>	<p>Service-learning promotes strong relationships and interaction between faculty and students (Astin &amp; Sax, 1998; Keup, 2005-2006), encourages social activity and engagement with peers (Wolff &amp; Tinney, 2006), and develops social networks (Yeh, 2010).</p>

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<b>Development of Critical Consciousness</b>	The act of working with vulnerable communities and learning about the systems that affect them through service-learning necessitates awareness that dominant and subordinate cultures exist and gives students the tools to critique the structural inequalities within the dominant culture into which they are expected to integrate (including the college itself). Through service-learning, students develop critical civic consciousness and use their education as a tool for social change (Yeh, 2010).
<b>Personal Development</b>	Service-learning has a positive effect on students' sense of personal efficacy, personal identity, resilience, interpersonal development, ability to work well with others, and leadership and communication skills (Eyler et al., 2001; Astin et al., 2000; Yeh, 2010; Bean & Eaton, 2001).
<b>Spiritual Development</b>	The reflection component of service-learning helps students clarify their values and purpose (Hatcher et al., 2004; Yeh, 2010).

**Table 1-3. Impact of Peer Advocacy/Mentoring on Key Persistence & Retention Factors**

<b>Academic Development</b>	Mentoring and support from family, friends, faculty, and/or staff can shape students' perceptions and attitudes regarding their abilities, thereby influencing their academic performance (Alva & Padilla, 1995; Koring & Campbell, 2005). Mentoring has been found to have a positive impact on grade point average (Pagan & Edwards Wilson, 2003). The role of the peer advocate as a culture broker helps students adapt to the college environment (Berger & Duffy, 2014).
<b>Enhancement of Cultural Identity</b>	Mentoring plays a major role in fostering important connections within one's ethnic community or within the broader community of students of color (Maldonado et al., 2005). Mentors can help students explore their multiple identities, life experiences, and self-concepts to validate their cultural identity and develop a college-staying identity (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012; MDRC, 2012).
<b>Development of Social Networks</b>	Mentoring directly impacts students' ability to feel more connected and engaged on campus through key relationships and support networks (Pascarella, 1980; Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 2009; Crisp, 2010).
<b>Development of Critical Consciousness</b>	Peer advocates support critical reflection on service experiences (Berger & Duffy, 2014). Student-initiated retention activities encourage students to build critiques of the sorts of knowledge, dispositions, and social connections deemed to be of value by the broader collegiate culture (Maldonado et al., 2005).
<b>Personal Development</b>	Mentoring has a positive impact on students' self-confidence, latent abilities, self-actualization, expectations, and future aspirations (Astin, 1999; Mangold et al., 2003).
<b>Spiritual Development</b>	Mentoring relationships involve the provision of career, social, and emotional support for self-exploration (Johnson, 2006).

## INSTITUTIONS & STUDENT POPULATIONS THAT CAN BENEFIT FROM C2C

In order to reach the largest population of low-income, underprepared students, Campus Compact piloted the C2C model with community colleges. The model has also garnered interest from 4-year colleges, however, and is certainly replicable beyond the community college setting.

As the goal of C2C is to support vulnerable students, developmental education and college success courses are logical sites for the C2C program. Some 4-year colleges may not use the term “developmental education” but have similar courses designed to support underprepared students. In this guide, we use “developmental education students/courses” as a catchall term.

Many states are passing laws that limit developmental education courses or make them optional before the impact of reform initiatives (e.g., course redesign) has time to take effect. For example, in 2012, Connecticut passed legislation restricting remedial courses to one semester per student. In 2013, Florida lawmakers approved legislation allowing many students at the state’s public colleges to skip developmental education classes and move straight into college-level classes. In some states, 4-year colleges and universities are being mandated to phase out remedial programs, leaving community colleges as the sole providers of developmental education courses.

In order to reach the most vulnerable students in states and institutions where developmental education has been limited, C2C may be integrated into the “gate-keeper” or introductory college-level math and English courses where developmental education students have been mainstreamed, as well as into the developmental education courses that remain.

## The C2C Approach

### ESSENTIAL PROGRAM FEATURES

C2C brings new value to traditional approaches for improving student success by employing an incredibly underutilized resource—students themselves—to partner with faculty while developing student leaders in the community college setting. The C2C program model, implemented by college campuses and supported by Campus Compact, is defined by seven essential features:

1. The college integrates service-learning and peer advocacy into developmental education or college success courses.
2. The college serves students enrolled in at least one developmental education or similar course designed to support underprepared students with getting ready for college-level coursework.

### KEY DEFINITIONS

Following are several definitions that clarify how certain terms are used within the C2C context.

**C2C students:** Low-income college students who have tested into one or more developmental education courses.

**Peer advocates:** Enrolled college students who are service-learning leaders as well as mentors, advocates, and advisors to fellow students in developmental education and college success courses.

**Developmental education course:** A course designed for students who are not college-ready in a given subject area. Because community colleges have a commitment to open-access admissions policies, their student populations have varying levels of academic preparedness. On enrollment, students typically take a placement test in reading, writing, and math and may be placed in one or more developmental education courses based on the results. About 68% of all community college students and 40% of students at 4-year open-access colleges take at least one developmental education course (Jaggars & Stacey, 2014). These courses, also referred to as college prep, transitional education, and foundational education, are generally not credit bearing.

**College success course:** A course that addresses skills such as note taking, test taking, and time management, while helping students explore their learning styles and develop plans for college and careers. While these courses are not themselves considered to be developmental, many colleges require developmental education students to take them. In such cases, college success courses are a logical site for C2C.

**Low-income:** For the purposes of the pilot phase of the C2C program, low-income was defined as being Pell-eligible and/or receiving other need-based financial aid.

3. The college establishes a system to provide faculty training and professional development focused on service-learning and peer advocacy.
4. The college provides service-learning and peer advocacy training for peer advocates.
5. The college utilizes at least one of the following methods for paying peer advocates: a) Federal Work-Study, b) campus scholarships, c) wages for students without Work-Study, or d) AmeriCorps Education Awards.
6. The college identifies existing staff or hires staff responsible for program coordination.
7. The college develops a program that can support students for multiple semesters. After the first semester, the program uses co-curricular approaches to maintain continuity and connection.

C2C is a flexible model crafted with essential elements that can be adapted for different types of courses and campus cultures. Moreover, it is a strategy that can be integrated into existing college structures, initiatives, and goals.

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### *The C2C Program Coordinator*

The C2C program coordinator is responsible for organizing, planning, implementing, and managing the C2C program. The C2C program coordinator leads a C2C design team, which includes all appropriate stakeholders from across the college and most importantly faculty members and students.

The coordinator's program implementation responsibilities include working with staff and faculty to recruit, train, and provide professional development for faculty; coordinating the peer advocate recruitment and application processes; developing orientation and training for peer advocates; supporting peer advocate and faculty pairs; supervising peer advocates; and working with Institutional Research staff to support program evaluation.

### *Faculty & C2C*

To select courses and faculty for C2C, C2C program coordinators/design teams use one or more of the following strategies:

- Examine institutional data and identify developmental education courses with historically low pass rates.
- Identify developmental education and college success faculty interested in incorporating service-learning into their courses and working with peer advocates.

Civic engagement staff and service-learning faculty liaisons help faculty integrate service-learning pedagogy into their courses by offering campus-based fellowship programs, professional development, or mentorship opportunities. Campus Compact, through its national organization and state and regional Compact affiliates, can support these efforts.<sup>2</sup> Paid release time and stipends enable faculty to take on C2C learning and leadership roles.

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2. Seeing faculty professional development and support as key to C2C's success, during C2C's pilot phase, Campus Compact created a national Faculty Fellows Community of Practice with two faculty members from each participating campus. Campus Compact facilitated phone calls, set up an online forum, and convened meetings for the faculty fellows. Through collaborative experimentation and reflection, the faculty fellows adapted C2C practices to institutional and classroom contexts; worked together to improve curricula; and helped achieve the critical goal of faculty buy-in by serving as C2C ambassadors, persuading other faculty to consider implementing C2C in their classes.

## Peer Advocates

Peer advocate recruitment primarily involves developing the capacity of C2C students to take on the peer advocate role and identifying other academically successful students who demonstrate leadership potential through referrals from faculty, staff, and other peer advocates. Peer advocates complete a written application and are interviewed by a committee of key program stakeholders before being hired.

Peer advocates serve as mentors as well as service-learning leaders for C2C students in the developmental education or college success courses with which they are matched. As mentors and advisors, peer advocates help C2C students develop a “college-staying identity”; build relationships with peers, faculty, and advisors; learn about and use both academic and non-academic resources; understand academic expectations and college systems, or the “unwritten rules” of college; and develop strategies to successfully engage in course content. Support from peer advocates is distinct from what faculty and staff can provide specifically because it comes through the lens of the student experience. As service-learning leaders, peer advocates work closely with faculty and community engagement staff to introduce C2C students to service-learning, develop and maintain relationships with community or campus partners, and facilitate reflection. Peer advocates receive ongoing training to support them in both of these roles.

Peer advocates carry out these roles in a number of ways. They attend course sessions, where their regular classroom presence creates a familiar, reliable, and accessible point of contact for C2C students. Peer advocates also meet with students before, after, and outside of class time in informal settings, during service-learning activities, during office hours, and at campus events. In addition, colleges create welcoming C2C spaces within Offices of Civic Engagement or Student Success Centers for peer advocates to meet with C2C students. Peer advocates also connect with students through email, phone, text, social media, and course learning management systems.

### *The Peer Advocate–Faculty Relationship*

After peer advocates are hired and faculty are recruited, the C2C program coordinator partners each faculty member with a peer advocate. Partnering decisions are based on a combination of factors, including peer advocates’ schedules, course times, and faculty and peer advocate preferences. Once partnered, peer advocates meet with faculty on an ongoing basis to co-design the peer advocate’s integration into the course.

To support the process of developing the faculty–peer advocate relationship, colleges hold “meet and greet” sessions, where all C2C faculty and peer advocates interact with one another and pairs meet up to launch their work together. Colleges may also include faculty in the peer advocate orientation to build community and provide an opportunity for faculty and peer advocates to work together.

## THE C2C CLASSROOM

The structure for supporting peer advocates in the classroom is determined by the C2C program design team, including faculty members and peer advocates. The peer advocate role may be standardized across courses or decentralized so that decisions, while consistent with C2C program guidelines, rest primarily with each faculty/peer advocate pair.

Standardization across courses may occur through common activities such as “service-learning in a box” (see Boxed-Up Service-Learning in Developmental Math, at the end of Section 2) that can be used across course levels and disciplines. The C2C coordinator may also work with peer advocates and/or faculty to design standardized workshops (led by peer advocates) and resources on service-learning and success skills that are implemented across all C2C courses. Standardization can also occur through common calendars so that, for example, all faculty implement service-learning activities in the first month of the semester to encourage student connections, or so that workshops are implemented at set times throughout the semester.

Colleges may also implement a hybrid approach, with a combination of standardized workshops and those created by each faculty/peer advocate pair to address the unique needs of students and the course. Returning instructors and peer advocates with several semesters of experience may be especially well positioned to fine-tune the work to address student needs.

## EXTENDING THE BENEFITS OF C2C

Since research demonstrates that students benefit from support for multiple semesters, C2C programs develop strategies for providing support beyond the first course-based semester. These approaches include regular outreach by peer advocates and the C2C program coordinator, co-curricular service opportunities, lunch gatherings, social media groups, and “reunion” events. To formalize and track this work, colleges maintain lists of current and past C2C students.

## Service-Learning 101 for C2C

This section reviews basic service-learning terms and concepts central for C2C implementation. Those newer to service-learning are encouraged to review the Campus Compact bookstore (<https://www.e2e-store.com/compact/>) for comprehensive service-learning and engaged campus resources.

Many of the service-learning projects described here are drawn from the service-learning experiences of Professor Donna Duffy of Middlesex Community College, a contributor to this volume, as an instructor, scholar, and leader of faculty professional development.

## DEFINITIONS & STRUCTURES FOR INTEGRATING SERVICE

**Service.** Service can be understood in a wide variety of ways. Students may engage in direct service such as working at a campus-based food pantry that serves students or mentoring students at a nearby elementary school. Students may also participate in indirect service such as creating a brochure for an agency or learning about a community issue of interest to students and developing a plan to publicly educate stakeholders about the issue. The relative value of using direct or indirect service depends on content, structure of learning, and desired learning outcomes.

**Service-learning.** A course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students:

- Participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and
- Reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bingle & Hatcher, 1995).

A rigorous service-learning course follows these guidelines:

- Faculty require all students to participate in service-learning activities.
- Critical reflection occurs before, during, and after service activities.
- Service and civic engagement activities are connected to coursework.
- Coursework incorporates civic learning outcomes.
- Learning is assessed and documented through writing, art, or other artifacts appropriate for a specific activity.

**Co-curricular service.** Co-curricular service involves participation in an organized activity that is not directly linked to a credit-bearing course but that meets identified community needs or interests and helps

students gain an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. Such activities may emerge from student leaders at college clubs or other settings on campus. Incorporating reflection before, during, and after an activity helps students expand their learning about an experience and supports increased engagement on campus. Reflection approaches also lead to a more seamless integration of curricular and co-curricular learning for the entire college community.

## ADVANTAGES OF SERVICE-LEARNING FOR C2C

Although both service-learning (course-based) and co-curricular service programs (not course-based) provide rich student learning experiences, a course-based approach has particular advantages that support the success of developmental education students:

**It reaches students where they are.** Service-learning reaches students where they already are—in the classroom. The more that C2C-related activities can be integrated into courses, the more successful the student and community outcomes will be, as developmental education students often have heavy work and family responsibilities that limit their time for activities outside the classroom.

**It unearths students' assets.** Service-learning can help students find and use unique talents that often go unrecognized in a traditional classroom setting. This may provide one valuable source of motivation. Service-learning draws on and values a range of learning styles and skills. In particular, developmental education students often bring a unique awareness of and experience with issues addressed through service, as they may come from vulnerable communities themselves. Students' own lived experiences with inequities may give them an advantage when engaging with the community and analyzing issues and community assets.

**It reaches students who may not otherwise seek support.** A model that recruits C2C students through enrollment in courses will reach students who might not otherwise seek support (and are therefore likely to be the students most in need of support). Participation through course enrollment also avoids the need to recruit C2C students through labor-intensive processes.

**It builds connections with faculty.** A model where instructors are a central part of the service-learning and peer advocacy activities creates an opportunity for C2C students to develop a potentially stronger connection with a faculty member—one key to keeping students in college.

**It makes classroom learning relevant and purposeful.** For students who are tentative about being in college or who question the relevance of math or writing courses, having a link to the community as part of the curriculum can engage them by providing concrete examples of how math and writing are useful in a range of settings. Likewise, students who develop a critical view of social issues through service-learning speak more passionately about the purpose of classroom learning and are more motivated to succeed.

**It increases participation in community engagement.** Connecting community engagement to classroom outcomes and grades increases participation for C2C students.

**It's cost effective.** A co-curricular approach requires some level of support from external support services, which incurs a cost. As a result, programs may not scale to a larger number of students. Costs decline when funds are directed up front to train developmental education faculty in service-learning and put systems in place to support them. One program found that by “locating student learning and student support within the curriculum and classroom, the cost per student is significantly less than that of various models based on outside counseling and support services, while the intensity of support increases” (Navvaro, 2012).

## INTEGRATING SERVICE-LEARNING & CO-CURRICULAR SERVICE ACTIVITIES

An ideal goal for C2C colleges is to infuse service-learning in courses of varying disciplines and levels, including developmental education courses, and integrating these courses seamlessly with complementary co-curricular service programs. This approach allows students to experience community engagement as central in all of their campus encounters. In addition, when service-learning and co-curricular activities are integrated, community partners (or one community partner that works deeply across the campus) can more easily navigate and benefit from the full range of resources available to them on campus, including student volunteers.

Reaching such a goal is a process that will take time and emerge in different ways at different colleges.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF RIGOROUS SERVICE-LEARNING

### *Civic Learning Outcomes*

Civic learning is an important outcome of service-learning. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) defines civic responsibility as “active participation in the public life of a community in an informed, committed, and constructive manner, with a focus on the common good” (Gottlieb & Robinson, 2006). The AACC’s *Practical Guide for Integrating Civic Responsibility into the Curriculum* ([http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/horizons/Documents/cr\\_guide\\_2nd.pdf](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/horizons/Documents/cr_guide_2nd.pdf)) contains excellent examples that can be adapted into courses or co-curricular settings.

Many colleges now have an institutional learning outcome focusing on civic learning and require more courses to include objectives designed to meet this outcome. Faculty may need to add or revise objectives to include a civic component. For example, a developmental writing instructor may create objectives that align with civic knowledge or values, while a developmental math instructor might consider an objective aimed at developing civic problem solving.

Faculty integrating service-learning into their courses will want to consider how the content in a specific course might instill civic knowledge, civic skills, or civic values.

### *Reciprocal Partnerships*

Most colleges have outreach programs, and faculty, staff, and students generally have some idea about some of the college activities taking place in the

### COLLEGE EXAMPLE: INTEGRATING SERVICE & SERVICE-LEARNING

At Chandler-Gilbert Community College, club projects (service programs) can easily become course-related projects (service-learning) and both can become sites for compensated or uncompensated student leadership development. (See more examples in *The Community’s College: Indicators of Engagement at Two-Year Institutions*, Campus Compact, 2004.)

### COLLEGE EXAMPLE: CIVIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

Professor Higgins, who teaches developmental math courses, receives a request for volunteers to assist with a tree survey in a local community. He reflects on the topics of his course and creates assignments that apply some of these topics to the tree survey project.

Students who participate in the tree survey learn basic math concepts, address a concrete concern in a nearby town, and reflect on the community partner’s presentation on the role community groups have had—at times in opposition to local politicians—in greening the urban landscape. In this reflection activity, students learn about the power of community to create change, a civic learning outcome.

### COLLEGE EXAMPLE: DIALOGUE AMONG PARTNERS

The student leaders of an immigrants’ rights program on campus have specific requirements regarding how outreach is conducted with this student population. Students or faculty organizing a service-learning project focused on developing outreach materials for the program will need to collaborate with these leaders in order to support the broader goals the leaders have envisioned for this work.

community. Working with community partners in reciprocal partnerships involves envisioning a new model, however. Zlotkowski et al. (2004, p. 72) note:

Civic and community engagement, we found, cannot simply be equated with successful outreach. True engagement assumes a fundamental shift in the way a college regards the community in which it is embedded. In this model, the college does not act unilaterally on matters affecting the community, however benign its intentions. Instead, it recognizes the community as its complementary equal, fully entitled to speak out on and to participate in all matters of common concern.

The key idea is that partners discuss the roles that each will play in a particular project and maintain feedback and dialogue as a project progresses. Such dialogue is also important when service is taking place on campus.

### Critical Reflection

An important first step in designing a reflection activity is reviewing course objectives or program goals to decide which ones fit best with work in the community. Often professors are already using activities in their courses that can be converted to a community setting with minimum effort.

Reflection provides an effective approach to capturing how student learning may change in a more multifaceted learning situation. Hatcher and Bringle (1997) suggest:

Reflection activities engage students in the intentional consideration of their experiences in light of particular learning objectives, and provide an opportunity for students to:

- Gain further understanding of course content and discipline
- Gain further understanding of the service experience
- Develop self-assessment skills as a life-long learner
- Explore and clarify values that can lead to civic responsibility

Most faculty and staff reflect with students informally on a regular basis; the difference for more formal reflection is the *intentional* review of experiences in light of *particular learning objectives*. How does an activity expand the ways a student understands a topic or situation? A student in a psychology course reflected on her experiences working in a special education classroom:

*I realized that for this case, it wasn't black and white, like in the book. The child I wrote about didn't have the symptoms of one disorder. He had a few of many. But how could this be? If he doesn't completely fit into one category, where does he go? This was a problem I thought about all semester.*

This student's dilemma shows the value of interacting in an authentic situation and her written reflection can serve as documentation that she is addressing the critical thinking outcome in the course.

### Multi-Faceted Assessment

Traditional class assessments such as tests and papers provide specific data, but such measures may not reflect the skills of diverse students at a community college or the ambiguity present in most work settings.

#### COLLEGE EXAMPLE: REFLECTION TO MEET LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In a Math Connections course, students met with staff at a nearby national park and used data on tourism and volunteerism to analyze information on topics such as recycling at events, tourism at a specific museum, or participation in special festivals. The student summaries were then shared with staff at the park.

The math professor used this project to meet course objectives relating to data presentation and analysis. The student reflection centered on their interpretation of real data and helped to meet a broader objective of helping students gain a greater appreciation for their community and its history.

(See more course examples of community college collaborations with national parks at the National Park Service website, [http://www.nps.gov/lowe/learn/education/upload/TLC\\_guidebook.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/lowe/learn/education/upload/TLC_guidebook.pdf))

The case example in the box to the right took place a few years ago at a community college and illustrates the ongoing concerns with creating student assessments that are fair but still honor each student's unique style of learning. (Duffy, 2004)

Huba and Freed (2000) suggest that “an exemplary assessment task is one that involves college students in addressing enduring and emerging issues and problems that are ill-defined and of current relevance in their disciplines” (p.224). They assert that an exemplary assessment task demonstrates eight characteristics: it is valid, coherent, authentic, rigorous, engaging, challenging, respectful, and responsive.

Service-learning demonstrates each of these characteristics, but it is especially effective in engaging and challenging students. There are few “right” answers in responding to community settings; students have to make inquiries, try multiple solutions, and persevere.

The assessment dilemma of Joanne and Mark is a clear example of respectful and responsive characteristics. Huba and Freed (2000) define a respectful task as one that “allows students to reveal their uniqueness as learners” (p. 224). Joanne’s effective written communication and her more limited interpersonal and collaborative skills contrasted with Mark’s marginal writing proficiency and impressive critical thinking and interpersonal skills.

The authentic setting was responsive to these students by giving them feedback that could lead to improvement. Mark’s success on the job may motivate him to develop better writing skills, while Joanne may begin to realize that writing well is only one component to being successful in a work setting. A traditional classroom setting would acknowledge Joanne’s writing effectiveness but probably would not illuminate the mismatch with her interpersonal skills in an applied setting. Similarly, Mark’s sharing and critical thinking in discussions may have been noted informally but may not have been reflected in his course grade. Mark’s limited writing skills interfered with his ability to demonstrate the critical thinking in his paper that he showed in class discussions and may have been a source of discouragement. The service-learning assignment provided different ways both to assess and to enhance each student’s unique approach to learning.

### COLLEGE EXAMPLE: THE ASSESSMENT DILEMMA

*The setting:* Joanne and Mark, students in a psychology course, spent two hours each week for 11 weeks at a therapeutic horseback riding farm assisting clients who had ADHD, autism, or other diagnoses. The students helped clients prepare horses for riding, assisted them as they rode, and reviewed their progress each day. The course assignment required students to connect their observations and reflections from the horse farm to course material in specific, detailed ways. Supervisors at the farm completed written evaluations based on students’ ability to work with clients, contribution to the program, and general level of responsibility.

*The dilemma:* Joanne wrote a strong, well-organized paper but received poor evaluations from the supervisor: “does not relate well to individuals, difficult to work with, has a negative attitude toward clients.” She did not contribute ideas to class discussions and often seemed annoyed about having to participate in collaborative projects. Mark wrote a marginal paper yet received stunning comments from the supervisor: “incredible in connecting to clients, anticipates problems in the setting, would hire him tomorrow.” He shared observations from the horse farm in class and demonstrated strong critical thinking in reviewing various comments from his classmates.

The marked disparity among the paper grades, class participation, and the supervisor’s evaluation reflects an ongoing assessment challenge involved in working in the community. How do you incorporate multi-faceted aspects of a student’s work to create an accurate assessment?

## Peer Advocacy 101 for C2C

This section provides a deeper exploration of the areas in which peer advocates support C2C students, a review of what the peer advocate does not do, and a description of how peer advocates are integrated into the classroom.

### OVERVIEW OF THE PEER ADVOCATE ROLE

Below are the processes in which peer advocates engage their peers to encourage positive outcomes (Karp, 2011; Minor, 2007). Peer advocates carry out this work both during and outside of class sessions.

### *Coordinate & Lead Service-Learning Activities*

Peer advocates work with instructors to take leadership roles in facilitating service-learning in a number of ways. Some examples follow:

- Develop campus/community partnerships.
- Act as liaison between faculty, the Office of Civic Engagement (if one exists), and campus/community partners.
- Organize orientations with campus/community partners for C2C students.
- Facilitate pre-reflection with students prior to service, as well as ongoing reflection and post-reflection/evaluation after the service experience.
- Organize service activity logistics (calling students, organizing transportation).
- Train and supervise students engaged with campus/community partners.
- Troubleshoot for C2C students and with campus/community partners.
- Work with faculty to co-facilitate workshops on issues such as oppression, diversity, power, privilege, and the root causes of community problems.
- Facilitate students' participation in co-curricular educational experiences that supplement in-class instruction.

### *Orient Students to Campus and Other Services*

Peer advocates engage in activities that help to connect and orient C2C students to services and resources, both on and off campus. Peer advocates form relationships with key personnel on campus and introduce C2C students to this support network. When appropriate, they also attend meetings with the student and staff until the student is comfortable navigating resources on his or her own.

Some key on-campus support services that peer advocates help students navigate include academic support, service-learning support, financial aid, disability services, counseling services, library resources, assessment, language lab, transportation, child care, career services, and student advising.

### *Help with Socialization*

Peer advocates encourage C2C students to develop relationships that build social and relational capital and a sense of community. They work to help students forge connections with them as advocates and with others on campus:

**Peer advocate:** Develop activities for C2C students to get to know them. Students are unlikely to accept offers of support if they don't feel comfortable with or trust their peer advocate.

**Peers:** Encourage friendship and collaboration among classmates, participation in service-learning activities, and participation in college clubs, extracurricular activities, etc.

**Faculty:** Encourage C2C students to approach their professors with questions and concerns; connect students to the helpful/friendly faculty on campus.

**Advisors/staff:** Connect C2C students to their advisors and key campus personnel.

### *Serve as Advisors*

Peer advocates engage in activities that help C2C students develop college know-how, such as understanding norms and expectations, procedural and cultural demands, and the unwritten rules of college. Some examples include:

- Knowing when and how to ask for help.
- Understanding how to participate in class appropriately.
- Knowing how to navigate bureaucratic systems.
- Understanding the importance of attending class.

Peer advocates also guide students in ways that make daily life easier and more manageable, including help with time management, scheduling, and balancing school with work and family responsibilities.

Peer advocates use an *intrusive advising* approach, with check-ins at regular intervals and at critical times regarding particular topics (early alert around grades/attendance, mid-term and final exams, etc.). One C2C pilot college describes its version of intrusive advising this way: “We ask peer advocates to call, text, meet face-to-face, connect on social media, and knock on their door if need be. We even entice with food. Peer advocates use any and all strategies to show the student we care and are paying attention.”

### *Serve as Mentors & Role Models*

As mentors, peer advocates engage in activities that help C2C students develop a commitment to college and clarify their aspirations. Some examples include:

- Helping C2C students explore their personal identities, life experiences, and self-concept to develop a “college staying identity” (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012). (See Appendix 3-2, Peer Advocate Training: Sample Lessons for Improving Student Success.)
- Sharing their own knowledge, experience, and lessons learned.
- Helping students explore “possible selves” through video vignettes of other students pursuing various career paths.
- Engaging students in service-learning activities that give purpose to their academic work and connect them to career options. (See Making Work Connections, Section 2, p. 40.)

As role models, peer advocates model the behavior of a dedicated learner. This can be even more powerful when the peer advocate shares characteristics with C2C students (e.g., being a first-generation student or a member of a racial/ethnic group).

### *Organize Activities/Events*

Peer advocates organize social and educational activities, study groups (meeting in the same place to study), and study buddy arrangements. They also bring students together to attend campus-based social and educational programs and events.

### *Guide Skill Development*

Peer advocates help students *increase their ability* and *develop strategies* to engage successfully in course content. This part of the peer advocate’s role may include actions such as clarifying questions related to assignments, sharing student perspectives with faculty in ways that improve student learning, demonstrating use of electronic discussion boards, conducting workshops on cultural competency, sharing time management strategies for completing a long-term assignment, and seeking opportunities to encourage leadership skills (Smith, Rabbitte, & Robinson, 2009).

## **WHAT’S NOT INCLUDED IN THE PEER ADVOCATE’S JOB**

Peer advocates do not provide services that duplicate resources or activities already available to students on campus. Their role is to connect C2C students with these resources and to provide additional targeted support.

### *Tutoring*

Peer advocates are not tutors. College campuses have academic support centers that offer tutoring services. Instead of helping a student with a math problem or editing a paper, a peer advocate can connect the student to the appropriate campus resource.

### *Serving as Teaching Assistants*

Peer advocates are not primarily teaching assistants for faculty; this means they do not grade papers, proctor exams, or take over administrative tasks such as passing out papers and taking attendance. Peer advocates may help faculty in preparing service-learning activities or workshops, but their primary purpose is to serve C2C students.

## **PEER ADVOCATES IN THE C2C CLASSROOM**

### *Defining Specific Roles*

Peer advocates attend (though are not enrolled in) the developmental education classes with which they are matched. Their presence serves to assist C2C students; they are not treated as students taking the course.

The role of peer advocates in the classroom is determined by a collaborative partnership between the faculty member, the peer advocate, and the C2C program coordinator. The goal of the partnership is to share knowledge and explore how best to fulfill the interrelated responsibilities of teaching students, providing support to peers, and coordinating the C2C program.

The peer advocate and the instructor work together to respond to students' needs and cement their working relationship, and the C2C coordinator is charged with supporting the pair. Once a sense of trust between the peer advocate and the instructor has been established, the peer advocate may be given some flexibility to experiment with his or her role, as long as it is consistent with the instructor's vision and assessment of the peer advocate's capabilities.

In addition to the concrete roles peer advocates play in the classroom, their regular presence in class increases their accessibility to C2C students and provides an opportunity for C2C students to build trust and develop the foundation of a relationship that can deepen in informal settings outside the classroom. Peer advocates' regular presence in the classroom also empowers them to share with the instructor their own and their peers' perspectives and experiences with the course while learning the factors that affect instructors' decisions.

Peer advocates make weekly visits at a minimum to ensure that they are appropriately integrated into the course. For some visits, peer advocates show up briefly to make announcements (e.g., about campus events, important deadlines, or resources), while other visits require the entire class period for facilitating skill workshops or service-learning reflection activities. Visits may be more frequent and lengthy at the beginning of the semester when relationships are being established and at critical points throughout the semester.

### *Advancing Peer Advocate Capabilities*

Table 1-4 describes example roles for a peer advocate in the classroom at three different levels of competency in the areas of peer assisted service-learning and peer advocacy: novice, developing, and accomplished. Each peer advocate's developmental process is very different; some will progress from novice to accomplished over the course of a semester, while others may start out already at the developing stage yet take several semesters to become accomplished.

Peer advocates move up the skill spectrum with support and mentoring from the C2C program coordinator, faculty, and other peer advocates, participation in formal training, and practical experience gained through working as a peer advocate over multiple semesters. When a peer advocate is able to develop from novice to accomplished, he or she shows increasing competence and skill development, the instructor benefits from deeper support, and student satisfaction increases when student voice is more deeply integrated.

Table 1-4. Roles for Peer Advocates in the C2C Classroom

<b>PEER-ASSISTED SERVICE-LEARNING</b>		
<b>Novice</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Accomplished</b>
<b>PROVIDE INTRODUCTION TO SERVICE-LEARNING</b>		
Assist instructor with developing “service-learning 101” presentation and gathering student input on service activity options relevant to coursework.	Assist instructor with developing “service-learning 101” presentation and activities; co-facilitate.	Develop and lead “service-learning 101” presentation and activities with support from the instructor.
<b>MANAGE CAMPUS OR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS</b>		
<b>Partnership Development</b> Assist instructor with logistics of creating and managing relationship with partner.	Serve as primary liaison between the instructor, the partner, and community engagement office.	Create new partnership with support from the instructor and/or community engagement office and serve as primary liaison with instructor.
<b>Partner Orientation</b> Assist the instructor and partner with developing orientation.	Assist the instructor and partner with developing orientation; co-facilitate the process.	Develop and lead partner orientation with support from the instructor and partner.
<b>Training and Monitoring</b> Assist the instructor and partner with student participation (calling students, organizing transportation).	Assist instructor and partner with student participation, training, monitoring, and troubleshooting.	Serve as point person for instructor in areas of student participation, training, monitoring, and troubleshooting.
<b>Partnership Assessment</b> Participate in mid-term and end-of-term assessment meetings with students, instructor, partner, and community engagement office; share student feedback with instructor (ongoing).	Take leadership role in mid-term and end-of-term assessment meetings; share student feedback with instructor (ongoing); assist instructor in planning and facilitating classroom assessment discussions with students.	Take leadership role in mid-term and end-of-term assessment meetings; share student feedback with instructor (ongoing); plan and facilitate assessment discussions with support from the instructor.
<b>CONNECT COURSEWORK &amp; SERVICE TO CIVIC LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>		
Assist the instructor in designing lessons (e.g., root causes of social problems, power, oppression).	Assist the instructor in designing lessons and co-facilitate.	Design and lead lessons with support from the instructor.

Continued on the following page >

**PEER-ASSISTED SERVICE-LEARNING**

**Novice**

**Developing**

**Accomplished**

**GUIDE REFLECTION**

Assist the instructor with designing before, during, and after reflection questions.

Assist the instructor with designing reflection questions; co-facilitate reflection.

Design reflection questions; lead reflection with support from the instructor.

**PEER ADVOCACY**

**ADVISE/ORIENT TO SERVICES**

Share resources (financial aid, academic support services, public assistance) with students.

Conduct a campus tour to highlight campus resources.

Accompany students to a campus resource to address a personal issue.

Listen to a student share a challenge s/he is dealing with.

Listen to a student share a challenge; help student feel comfortable approaching the instructor or other resource; accompany student.

Listen to a student share a challenge; share personal experiences; help student feel comfortable approaching the instructor or alternative resource; accompany student.

**BUILD COMMUNITY**

**Between PA and Students**

Show up to class early and stay after class to get to know students informally.

Meet with students for a meal.

Organize students to attend a campus event.

**Among Classmates**

Develop ice-breaker and community-building activities.

Develop ice-breaker and community-building activities; co-facilitate with the instructor.

Develop ice-breaker and community-building activities; lead activities with support from the instructor.

**ADDRESS ATTENDANCE CONCERNS**

Listen to a student talk about his/her attendance obstacles; share personal experiences with attendance; help student strategize solutions.

Review strategies developed to improve attendance; develop further strategies and offer additional support.

Conduct supportive check-ins prior to and after class and through text and phone messages.

Facilitate group or class discussions and/or math activities with support from instructor around attendance concerns.

**PROMOTE CONNECTIONS TO COLLEGE LIFE**

Make announcements about campus events, C2C-related activities, and service-learning activities.

Make announcements, bring sign-up sheet, and make follow-up emails/calls/texts.

Create an out-of-class event, make announcements, bring sign-up sheet, and conduct follow-up outreach.

Continued on the following page >

**PEER ADVOCACY**

**Novice**

**Developing**

**Accomplished**

**SERVE AS ROLE MODEL**

Model good student participation skills with punctual and consistent attendance, active listening, and positive interactions with the instructor.

Model good student participation skills with punctual and consistent attendance, active listening, and positive interactions with the instructor; model leadership skills.

Model good student participation skills with punctual and consistent attendance, active listening, and positive interactions; model leadership skills; encourage C2C students to take on leadership roles.

**CONDUCT INTRUSIVE ADVISING**

Check in with students at regular and critical times (especially those receiving early warning alerts); discuss strategies for addressing obstacles.

Check in with students at regular and critical times; discuss strategies for addressing obstacles; conduct ongoing follow-up.

Check in with students; discuss strategies for addressing obstacles; conduct ongoing follow up and check-ins before and after class and through text and phone messages.

**DEVELOP SKILLS**

**Success Strategies**

Help students develop a college-staying identity, self-efficacy, positive motivational beliefs and self-regulation skills. (See Appendix 3-2). Share study skills strategies (e.g. time management) and personal experiences around success strategies and overcoming obstacles.

Assist instructor with developing a skill workshop or utilize a workshop created by C2C staff and co-facilitate.

Develop and lead a skill workshop with support from the instructor or C2C staff.

**Technology Support**

Help students utilize their college email account, the college website, and other campus technology systems.

Help students learn how to use electronic discussion boards.

Help students find resources to further improve their computer literacy.

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