

2009

Expanding Horizons for Community College Students: A Travel and Transfer Initiative on the Road to a Baccalaureate Degree

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Capstone Project Proposal:

Expanding Horizons for Community College Students:

A Travel and Transfer Initiative on the Road to a Baccalaureate Degree

Submitted by: Pauline Moreau

1/19/09

LOS 689: Capstone Project

FINAL APPROVAL FORM

University of Southern Maine

Master of Arts Degree in Leadership Studies

January 16, 2009

We hereby recommend that the thesis of Pauline Moreau entitled Expanding Horizons for Community College Students: A Travel and Transfer Initiative on the Road to a Baccalaureate Degree be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.



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A Review of the Literature

Statement of Purpose

The college experience is one that not only affords to opportunity for academic learning but is also a time of substantial personal growth. The core college experience can be further enhanced by the added experience of living and learning in another academic environment, often resulting in even great learning and personal growth. Students who travel as part of their college studies learn to adapt to new surroundings, learn first-hand about various cultures, develop new relationships away from their current familiar surroundings, and gain confidence, especially when positive experiences result in students' willingness to embrace further challenges.

This literature review will address issues of travel and transfer affecting community college students. The review begins with a comprehensive summary of community colleges and their students on the national, state, and local level, including quantitative and qualitative data regarding transfer. The next section will examine methods used by colleges to encourage students to broaden their experiences through various travel and transfer initiatives - student exchange programs, study abroad programs, and transfer programs. Following this will be the assessment of existing off-site student experiences currently available to local community college students and possible barriers for students considering various travel and transfer options. The last section will focus on the proposed project, a detailed plan for implementing a program that provides an opportunity for Central Maine Community College (CMCC) students to have learning experiences away from the CMCC campus, ones that also encourage transfer from the two-year college to a four-year college. The intent of this review of literature is to propose implementation of the best option for CMCC students at large.

Community Colleges and their Students

Nationally, the impact of two-year colleges is greater than most would estimate. This country's nearly 1,200 regionally accredited two-year colleges currently enroll 6.5 million students annually in college credit programs, accounting for nearly half of all American undergraduates, and another 5 million students in non-credit courses (Report of The National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008). In general, the two-year college mission has two distinct purposes: to provide opportunities for career training and technical education for immediate use in the workforce and to prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities to earn bachelor's degrees. As a result of this mission, two-year colleges offer a great diversity of programs.

The majority of the nearly 1,200 two-year colleges are publicly-funded community colleges that are intent on keeping tuition costs low while providing quality education. Annually, community colleges award 550,000 Associate Degrees and 270,000 Certificates. Community college graduates earn almost double the earnings of high school dropouts, \$37,990 compared to \$19,915 (Report of The National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008).

Nationally, many of the students served by community colleges are low-income, minority, first-generation, immigrant, and also work full-time (Report of The National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008). Community colleges attract both traditional-age students, directly out of high school, as well as non-traditional students, those who have first experienced the working world prior to seeking higher education. "For individuals, particularly those from low-income or minority backgrounds, community colleges can open the door to opportunity through the surest route to personal security and income growth, an associate or a

bachelor's degree" (Report of The National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008, page 23).

Maine Community College System (MCCS)

The Maine Community College System's (MCCS) seven community colleges and nine off-campus centers are located within twenty-five miles of ninety-two percent of Maine's population and provide over three hundred career and transfer programs, continuing education, and customized training, serving over 13,000 students (Maine Community College, 2007). For much of its 45-year history, MCCS has focused on providing post-secondary vocational education as the state's technical schools. Beginning in 1998, in response to a growing concern about low college participation and degree attainment and the need for a low-cost option, MCCS began offering Associate of Arts (AA) degrees. The AA degree offers the first two years of a liberal studies program, preparing students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. In 2003, to continue addressing the same concerns as those in 1998 and to join the nation as one of the last states to offer its citizens a true community college, the technical colleges became Maine's comprehensive two-year community colleges. This change has brought about a five-year period of tremendous growth for Maine community colleges, both in terms of enrollment and student demographics. As indicated on the MCCS 2007-08 Fact Sheet:

- enrollment up 55% since transition to community colleges;
- of the 5,966 first-year degree students enrolled in 2007, 34% came directly from high school;
- 58% of first-year students are 21 or under;
- the number of students entering directly from high school has grown 61% in five years;

- approximately 2,500 Maine community college transfer students are currently enrolled at one of the state's public universities, an increase of nearly 50% since fall, 2002.

Although Maine only recently adopted a true community college model, MCCS students are much like community college students throughout the country. Many are first-generation college students with low to modest incomes who are increasingly realizing the importance of post-secondary education in order to compete for good jobs and good wages. These students are inclined to stay in Maine, not only for their education but also after graduation: 93% of MCCS graduates find jobs in Maine (Maine Community College fact sheet, 2007).

Central Maine Community College (CMCC)

Established in 1963 and opening its doors the following year as Androscoggin State Vocational Institute, CMCC had modest beginnings. The school enrolled forty-eight students in four programs and was staffed initially by thirteen employees, seven of which were instructors. Six students earned diplomas in the first graduating class in 1965 (Central Maine Community College catalog, 2008). Currently known as Central Maine Community College, the college has undergone several name changes and additions to its mission over its history. Although its foundation of programming remains strong in the area of vocational and technical training, a growing focus is on providing education for transfer to baccalaureate programs.

Since 2003, CMCC has shown similar growth patterns to that experienced by the Maine Community College system. Enrollment in career and technical programs has remained steady and the college has experienced a 25% increase in students enrolled in Liberal Arts, the program designed to prepare students for transfer to baccalaureate programs. As of fall, 2007, of the 1,880 students enrolled in degree programs, 35% were enrolled in the Associate of Arts option

(Central Maine Community College factbook, 2007). (Although growth in this transfer option has occurred, this growth has not automatically meant comparative growth in the number of students who actually transfer, as will be discussed in further detail later.)

Similar to the MCCC average, 53% of the student population is age 21 and under. Slightly over half the population attends full-time and 73% of the students are from three of states sixteen counties, Androscoggin, Oxford, and Cumberland.

Pursuit of the Baccalaureate Degree

Nationally, the need is clearly documented for more baccalaureate-level graduates, especially in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math, otherwise referred to as the STEM programs, in addition to graduates with degrees in elementary and secondary education (Report of the National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008). This need is critical to the country's ability to "meet workforce needs, maintain international economic competitiveness, and improve the quality of life for all Americans" (Report of the National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008, p. 37).

The need for more graduates with bachelor degrees also applies to Maine. Recent news accounts have reported that a decline in enrollment at Maine's universities over the past five years is partially due to more students enrolling in the community colleges due to their lower cost, convenience, and their expansion of liberal arts programs (Rhoades, 2008). Given current economic conditions, this trend is likely to continue. Students who are taking advantage of the community college opportunity, however, are not necessarily making the connection of continuing their education to earn a bachelor's degree.

Although Maine has shown substantial improvement in the percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees, from 19% in 1998 to nearly 27% in 2006, nationally it still ranks 24th in the

nation (Maine State Planning Office, 2008). The national average is 28% (with the recommendation to increase bachelor degree production by an additional 20%) and the New England average is 36% (Maine State Planning Office, 2008; Report of the National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008). Currently, Maine's goal is to increase the level of baccalaureates degrees to 30% by the year 2010.

In Androscoggin County, the figures are even lower. The percentage of residents with bachelor degrees is slightly over 14% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). At CMCC, although there has been a 25% growth of students enrolled in the Associate of Arts program, there has been no growth shown in recent years in the number of students choosing to continue their education. In fact, a drop has occurred. From 2003 to 2006, the average percentage of students continuing their education was 7.5%. In 2007, the percentage dropped to 4% (Central Maine Community College factbook, 2007, pg. 23). However, the percentage of students who are employed and continuing their education has shown a slight increase since 2005.

Efforts have been initiated at CMCC to address transfer issues. Beginning in 2007, CMCC established a five-year grant funded Center for Retention and Transfer. The center includes the services of a full-time transfer counselor who provides one-on-one counseling for Associate of Arts degree students, coordinates bi-semester transfer fairs, and off-site college visits. The transfer counselor is also the key contact for continuing collaboration with four-year schools on articulation of courses and programs.

What May Be Causing this Gap?

In my roles over the past five years, first as an Admissions Representative and currently as Regional Director for the Early College for ME program, I have had the opportunity to meet with and informally interview hundreds of students who are either considering or are attending

Maine community colleges. These conversations have enabled me to probe students about their motivation to attend college along with any apprehension they may have regarding furthering their education. What I have assessed from this process is that many CMCC students are from remote, rural areas of Maine and have not had the opportunity to experience life outside of their immediate surroundings. They tend, therefore, to have a limited view of the world and be reluctant to venture into the unknown. For many, attending college has been a huge step – one that no one of their family has ever ventured. Many have never traveled outside of the state of Maine. Most critically, many students have limited views of their own ability to take risks and lack the confidence to explore beyond their comfort zone. Their success at the community college level does not seem to provide the impetus for the next step, continuing their education. In fact, students readily admit that they feel a sense of comfort at CM, comfort that they are reluctant to give up. This sometimes results in some students seeking pursuit of a second Associate degree instead of continuing on toward a bachelor's degree.

How might this be resolved? Giving students the chance to experience the enrichment that comes from being away from their comfortable surroundings while continuing their academic studies would, hopefully, result in students having new and expanded perspectives of themselves and the world. Off-site opportunities may be a key component to providing the confidence, motivation, and know-how for students to pursue their education beyond the associate-degree level. Affording students a level of transitional support and the opportunity to actually experience, first-hand, life on a four-year campus for an extended period of time may be the key to promoting transfer of community college students.

Profile: Students who Participate in Student Travel Experiences

Who they are, what they valued, and what they gained

Certainly, apprehension, lack of confidence, and limited worldview are not only common to local community college students but to many college students. Some of the methods employed by colleges to address these issues include offering off-campus travel programs, either short or long-term, that also have academic requirements. A review of quantitative and qualitative data about students who have participated in various student travel programs will be considered in order to assess the best option for local community college students.

Although limited, recent literature exists on personality traits indicative of students who participate in college travel programs. In a mixed methodology study of students from a large (four-year) university in North Texas, “quantitative findings indicated that the typical exchange student was (a) 18 to 24 years old; (b) white; (c) single; (d) female; (e) a second generation college student; (f) had a liberal arts major; (g) middle to youngest child; (h) living more than an hour from their birth home; (i) middle income; and (j) first generation exchange student” (Fickenscher, 2006). In another study by Booker (2001), most study abroad participants were middle class, non-minority, female students, and were less likely to be reliant on financial aid and employment (as cited in Fickenscher, 2006). Given these profiles, neither the typical student exchange nor study abroad participants appear to match the profile of typical community college students - minority, first-generation, immigrant, with low to modest incomes, working full-time, and, in Maine, students who are inclined to stay in Maine.

Although national student exchanges and study abroad profiles do not appear to match the community college student profile, much can be gained by reviewing literature regarding what students gained from their exchange and/or abroad experiences. How do students value

the opportunity to study away from their home campus? Whether on student exchanges, a short-term or a long-term study abroad, one of the comments indicative of the value of the time spent by students in a travel experience reflected a boosted self-confidence, “I learned how to go to a place where no one knew me and have people like me for who I am” (Rounds, 2005). For many, the confidence gained from their initial travel experience encouraged them to seek more ambitious experiences.

Another comment was that the experience provided “a time for reflection and time to develop an awareness of their own abilities” (“Campus life”, 1991). However, it should be noted that time for reflection is not necessarily a value gained by students participating on short-term travel tours (Castagnera, 2008). For some, short-term tours may essentially be viewed by students as a vacation instead of a true learning opportunity (although the depth of focused assignments may counter these drawbacks.)

Several factors that influenced students’ decisions in taking part in travel experiences were identified in Booker’s 2001 study. They included the possibilities of taking travel breaks in college, the opportunity to discover themselves and the world, and career enhancement (Booker as cited by Fickenscher, 2006.)

Increases the awareness of cultural differences

In Fickenscher’s 2006 study, study abroad students valued the opportunity to experience a different country and culture while utilizing the coursework in their degree plan. Results from that same study, but from students who participated in a domestic student exchange, included the value of experiencing a new area for future employment or for relocation, for the educational and cultural experience. “Student exchange programs are associated with higher starting salaries and a higher likelihood of opting for postgraduate degrees” (Messer & Woltor, 2006).

Benefits identified in a 2002 journal article on the National Student Exchange program included increased academic opportunities, such as an expanded offering of classes, and more cultural diversity (Lowery as cited by Fickenscher, 2006). Students also reported being revitalized academically and having more motivation to complete their degree (Desmond & White as cited by Fickenscher, 2006).

In addition, articles and studies, as cited by Fickenscher, show that students were challenged to discover who they are by having to make decisions more independently than they would at home, where they are near parents and friends. As a result, they “gained more self-confidence by having to make and live with their own decisions” (Desmond & White as cited by Fickenscher, 2006). Although a limited amount of research exists, it indicates that the experience of off-site educational experiences has definite impact on students’ lives and their future.

Current Opportunities at CMCC

Are student exchange and study abroad realistic for the population at large at Maine’s community colleges, in particular, at CMCC? Although local community college students may not fit the typical profile of students in exchange and abroad programs, similar opportunities do currently exist for Maine community college students.

Currently, CMCC offers limited opportunities for off-campus study and travel experiences. The following programs have a competitive selection process, thereby, limiting the number of participants and, thereby, possibly limiting the appeal to students at large.

The George J. Mitchell Peace Scholarship, offered annually since 1999, selects two Maine Community College students to study in Ireland for one semester. A total of twenty students have participated, six have been from CMCC. The scholarship covers tuition, books,

and fees at the Irish institution, provides a living-expense stipend equal to \$900 per semester, and includes an allowance for on-campus meals. In addition, the Maine Community College System provides a travel grant of \$1,000 (Maine Community College System, n.d.).

“Exploring Vassar” is a five-week summer program offered by Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY, and made available to Maine’s and other state’s community college students. Vassar sponsors this program at no cost to the students and students are selected for this program through a competitive selection process. Vassar has had over six-hundred students attend this program over the past twenty years, with over eighty percent having transferred to four-year colleges (Maine Community College System, 2007). Although highly successful since its inception, participation by Maine community college students has been minimal, since this option became available to them in 2005. Eighteen students from five of the seven MCCA schools have participated in the Vassar program. Central Maine Community College has had no applicants selected to participate. Efforts to gather data regarding the number of students who applied was unsuccessful.

Two additional programs are also worth noting. Maine Community College System’s new agreement with New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) is designed to allow any MCCA student the opportunity to attend NBCC to study a program not offered in Maine at the cost of MCCA tuition. This option is neither an exchange nor typical study abroad program. The students earn a degree by completing program requirements on the NBCC campus while paying the MCCA tuition cost.

Within the next few months, students at CMCC will also have the opportunity to apply for a Disney Travel study and internship program, sponsored by the Walt Disney Corporation.

Open to all college majors, this is a unique “paid living, learning, and earning” program held at Disney headquarters in Florida (Disney College Program Overview, n.d.).

What Factors Hinder Students from Considering Travel Experiences?

As noted earlier, methods colleges might use to encourage students to broaden their experiences are various travel and transfer initiatives – student exchanges, study abroad, and transfer programs. A review of the research on these types of program has identified the following barriers that potentially reduced the likelihood of students participating in these programs.

Awareness of opportunity

In a study done by the California Colleges for International Education (CCIE) examining barriers preventing students from studying abroad, three issues were uncovered: (1) a shortage of programs, (2) a lack of awareness of existing programs, and (3) an absence of long-term planning (Raby, n.d.) Lack of being informed about study abroad programs, “despite extensive recruitment efforts” was also noted in both a 1998 and a 2000 study (Washington; Chieffo, both as cited by Fickenscher, 2006). Although these studies focus on study abroad programs, the same likely holds true locally. Students at large do not seem to know about, know the process, or realize that programs such as the Mitchell Peace Scholarship, Exploring Vassar, and others can be realities for them. Students need to be aware that these and similar off-site academic opportunities exist in order to encourage more participation in such programs. Current offerings at CM would reach a wider audience of students at CM with more effective marketing to students at large and a more visible presence in the college’s culture.

Lack of confidence

Responses from students who elected not to participate in either a domestic or international study program included “I have reservations about doing things ‘outside my box’; I think that I could go with someone [else], but I don’t think that I would go alone” (Fickenscher, 2006). Off-site programs may be more attractive to students (and, ultimately, more beneficial to students who participate) if students who have already experienced such programs return to promote these opportunities to other students. In addition, more transitional support may be needed to help students realize they are not alone if they can rely on a “go-to” person while participating in an off-site program.

Cost

In several studies, cost (the primary reason not to participate) was noted as the most critical deterrent to participation (Peterson, 2003; Booker, 2001; Chieffo, 2000; as cited by Fickenscher, 2006). Financial issues, such as the limited availability of scholarships, and grants, the need to secure loans, the need to work were also noted as obstacles. Although scholarship programs exist (Rotary International, Student Travel Scholarships, IIEPASSPORT Study Abroad Funding), these opportunities are awarded to small amounts of select individuals who are motivated and persist through the competitive process.

Cost is also a consideration for some transfer programs. The Summer Study Internship program at Boston University is a twelve-week, combination academic and internship program open to non-Boston University students who have completed at least one year of college and have at minimum 2.7 GPA (Boston University, n.d.). Students can earn from ten to fourteen credits in this summer program. Upon review, however, students are fully responsible for the

cost of the program, which is over \$9,000. No financial assistance is available unless it is provided by the students' home institution.

The cost consideration also includes the students' inability to maintain employment while being away from their home campus. As noted earlier, the typical community college student finds it necessary to work at least part-time, if not more, while attending college. Students may be deterred from participating in an off-site program due to the length of the program and the distance from their place of employment (or their ability to temporarily give up employment.)

One of the reasons students attend community colleges is for their low tuition costs and, for some, the opportunity to save money by living at home. As a result, the probability of participating in an exchange program is less, due to the extra incurred cost of travel and living expenses. Some of the on-campus housing costs could conceivably be covered by financial aid, however, there is a high likelihood that a student would incur loans in order to finance any type of travel or transfer opportunity. As a result, the financial aspect of any off-campus program should be designed to impact students minimally if the program expects to be attractive to the student population at a community college.

Distance

Students who chose not to participate in either study abroad or domestic student exchange also cited concerns of being away from family and friends for an extended period of time, even mentioning that email and phone contact were not enough (Fickenscher, 2006). "Students who decide to study at the university parent's place of residence already express a certain degree of restricted mobility" (Messer & Wolter, 2006). Much of the same can be said about community college students. Many choose to begin their education at a community college to be close to home or to live at home. As stated earlier, 73% of CMCC students are

from counties close to CMCC. An off-site experience for these students needs to balance their need for relative proximity while affording enough distance to make their experience unique in order to derive the aforementioned benefits of being away.

Age

“The older the student, the lower the probability of participating in an exchange program” (Messer & Wolter, 2006.) Among the reasons found in a study by Robert Surridge in 2000 on why adults, twenty-five years or older, did not participate in study abroad were “multicultural indifference, institutional shortcomings (failure to promote multicultural awareness), family responsibilities, and financial responsibilities” (as cited in Fickenscher, 2006).

The design of an off-campus experience, therefore, for Maine’s community college students should, therefore, capitalize on the recent enrollment growth of the younger student population (ages 18 to 21) and focus on their needs. A program for non-traditional-age students could be similar but would need to address different issues, as indicated in the above studies.

Degree completion

Completing a degree on time due to a scholarship award or other financial reasons and wanting to complete a formal education in a most efficient time frame are also considerations of students. Comments included “(it) did not work well with my major and time”, “my first priority was to finish college” and “the fact that I have only a year or so of college” (Fickenscher, 2006). These are also valid concerns for the community college student. An off-site program, therefore, needs to also be sensitive to and minimally impact the extension of earning their associate’s or bachelor’s degree.

Weighing the Off-site Options for Community College Students

Are options such as student exchanges and further study abroad programs viable options for CMCC students? Will these options likely result in more students participating? Will more students then transfer toward bachelor degree programs?

In-country student exchanges provide students the opportunity to experience a different culture and may be a good option for those students who do not have the courage or money to do a study abroad program (Fickenscher, 2006). When comparing some of the characteristics of typical study abroad participants from a four-year college to those of the typical community college student, a domestic exchange seemed to be a better fit. As a result, the initial goal of the proposed project was to seek established models of domestic exchange programs, review them for best practices, and propose the best fit for implementation at CMCC. However, after much research, email correspondence, and personal communication, domestic exchange programs among community colleges do not seem to exist. Two of the country's most comprehensive programs from which such a program might exist are National Student Exchange (NSE) and American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

NSE assists colleges and universities with student exchanges within the United States and Canada. The organization includes almost 200 college and universities in the U.S. and Canada and has provided exchange opportunities to more than 90,000 students since 1968 (National Student Exchange, n.d.) Several campuses of the Maine University System participate. NSE requires in-depth training for campus coordinators who then provide comprehensive services to exchange students on their campuses. NSE membership, however, is open to four-year colleges and universities only. Beyond the information found on its website, additional information was gathered by correspondence with NSE's President, Bette Worley. She indicated that NSE's

governing boards last reconsidered community college exchanges about four to five years ago. Some of the major concerns included the availability of housing, the short duration of associate degree combined w/specificity of technical program requirements, and student and college interest in exchange. A project expansion of this kind by NSE could take two to three years, several staff members, and a considerable amount of funding would be needed to adequately get a program like this up and running. Due to the magnitude of the start-up, NSE would also seek to have a number of community colleges commit to being pilot schools.

In addition to these obstacles, the issues of risk management, liability issues, and coordinator training are extensive. Currently, expanding exchange programs to community colleges is not a priority for them. Instead, NSE's current initiative is to develop corporate sponsorship through their 90,000 plus alumni, which is a large, long-term project that is consuming the energy of its entire staff.

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the other resource contacted regarding the availability of domestic student exchange program models. Although they provide extensive resources and assistance with study abroad programs, they, too, do not work with in-country exchanges. They are, however, beginning to work with the Institute of International Education to determine the type of role AACC could play, with establishing a domestic exchange program.

As a result of in depth conversations and correspondence with both NSE and AACC, there does not appear to be any national or regional organization or any two-year colleges that provide a framework or assistance with coordinating in-country, community college student exchanges.

Transfer programs

The purpose of college transfer programs is to bring together students who have attended two-year colleges to expose them to a four-year college environment and academic experience. They are short-term in duration, typically less than six weeks, and are usually held during the summer. Students live on campus, participate in group activities, and attend courses for college credit. In some programs, courses are specially designed and have an interdisciplinary approach; in others, an internship may be included. Although no such programs were found on four-year college campuses in Maine, students from Maine community colleges may take part in “Exploring Vassar” at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY, as described previously, or at a number of other similar programs in New England and throughout the country.

Rationale: CM/USM Collaboration

As a result of the documented need to increase the community college transfer rate while also affording more students the opportunity to study off-site, the feasibility of creating and adding a unique option to the existing transfer program between the Central Maine Community College and the University of Southern Maine (USM) will be the focus of this proposed project.

The establishment of this program will be based on the literature found in three major areas:

- existing two- to four-year college articulations programs;
- the work of the Community College Baccalaureate Association;
- Maine Community College System’s “Advantage U” program.

The following four major themes will be used to provide the guiding rationale for this proposal.

Expanding Students' Perspectives

This program would provide CMCC students with the opportunity to attend and live on campus at USM, thereby allowing them to broaden their experiences and to provide the

motivation to pursue transfer to a baccalaureate program. As previously stated, opportunities for students to experience education and life away from familiar environments leads to personal growth as well as new and expanded perspectives of themselves and the world. The experience of urban-living in Maine's largest and most diverse metropolitan area, even if that experience is only fifty miles away, may provide the impetus for encouraging students to transfer. Although living and attending USM is certainly not comparable to regional, national, or international travel, given the need for more of Maine's population to earn four-year college degrees and given the typical profile of community college students, this proposal of a CMCC/USM collaboration seems to be a logical and practical proposal.

Capitalizing on Growth

Even with the valuable efforts recently initiated at CM, more can be done to increase the transfer rate, thereby raising the education levels of the local population, the economic growth of the area, and the income levels of the area population. The most recent five-year growth in enrollment at community colleges must be capitalized upon to ensure that these percentages rise. One of the three recommendations posed by the National Commission on Community Colleges includes the need for cooperation among leaders to ease transfer for community college students (Report of the National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008). As stated by Helm & Cohen (2001), "first-generation, low-income, and/or minority students often need more assistance to persist and to transfer." Programs to ease and encourage transition from community colleges to universities are needed in Maine as well and that is the intent of the proposed program being initiated by this project. The time that students would spend on the USM campus would, therefore, be designed to support and encourage community college

students to explore this somewhat unknown experience, first-hand, and realize that transfer to a four-year institution is a sound, practical, and realistic goal.

Building Support through Partnerships

The proposed program would not only provide an additional link for students to continue their education at Maine's universities but would also continue to build cooperation between the universities and the community colleges. As stated in the Report of the National Commission on Community Colleges (2008), "not only is student transfer only one of several community college missions, it is, in fact, a partnership with four-year colleges and universities" (p.30). Thus, the creation of this program is entirely dependent on the willingness, cooperation, and flexibility of key staff at both institutions. The proposed program would serve as an extension of Advantage U by using the strength of the existing two- to four-year academic articulation while incorporating an opportunity for students to spend a semester or a short term on a four-year campus.

Breadth of Opportunity

"An effective community college *must see itself and be seen* as an institution dedicated to serving the needs of its community, whatever those needs may be" (Report of the National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008, p.6). The "need" identified through this review is to increase the number of residents with bachelor degrees. An education and skilled workforce is tied to the region's economic growth and not only attracts new industry but also inspires growth of existing businesses and industry. This likely means higher wages, better benefits, more challenging jobs, and a higher standard of living for the people of Maine, the residents of Androscoggin, and area counties.

The proposed collaboration can be viewed as a win-win opportunity. More students are afforded another option for an off-site experience while also exploring the notion of transfer, the community college enhances its transfer mission, and the university potentially increases its transfer enrollment.

Project Proposal

Expanding the horizons of community college students is the primary goal of the proposed initiative, a one-semester opportunity for community college students to live and study at a university. The program model is designed specifically to support and encourage community college students to continue their education toward a baccalaureate degree. By providing exposure to university campus life, students would experience:

- ~ the personal growth and enrichment that comes with adapting to new surroundings
- ~ exposure to another academic institution with a larger campus, student body, expanded campus life and activities
- ~ new connections outside of their current location
- ~ confidence and motivation to continue their education

To assure success of these goals, three key components are essential:

1. ongoing mentoring/advising before and during the study-away semester
2. reduced tuition and fees for the study-away semester, either by a fixed-dollar scholarship amount or pricing conducive with that of the community college
3. a live-on-campus requirement (at full cost to students)

The initial proposal is a pilot program, a collaborative between Central Maine Community College (CMCC) and the University of Southern Maine (USM.) However, once established, the goal would be to expand the program and offer it at other Maine community colleges and universities. This semester-away opportunity is proposed as two distinct options: Proposal A, a semester-away while the student is still attending the community college, and Proposal B, a semester-away after the student has graduated from the community college.

The following description of the proposed model and supporting addenda primarily address three areas; key roles and relationships of the participants, the process, and the timing. Additional considerations that need further evaluation with regard to the model will also be identified and briefly explained.

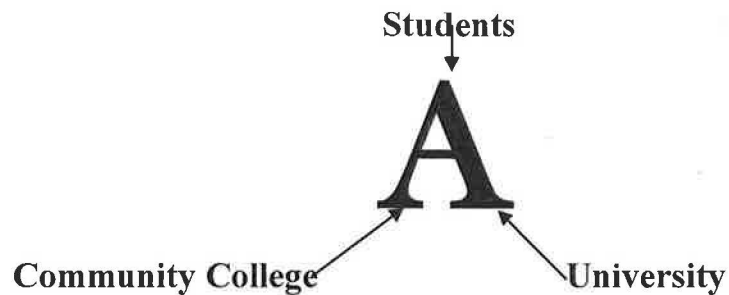
Proposal A

Semester-away while attending community college

Proposal A, a semester-away opportunity for community college students while still enrolled and matriculated at the community college, is centered on the support of mentors, both at the community college and at the university. The support of mentors is one of the vital components of this project proposal and is what makes the project unique. Successful mentoring will also help to ensure retention of the student to eventual completion of a baccalaureate program.

The concept is essentially the same as a study abroad or student exchange, where students spend a semester, either fall or spring, at another campus. However, with this program, the mentoring component exists to provide students with assistance, support, and help students gain confidence and direction toward continuing their education. Mentoring would be a collaborative

effort provided by staff or faculty at each institution. The relationships which are essential to Proposal A are illustrated with the triad below and summarized in Addendum 2:



STUDENTS

Students applying to participate in this program before having earned an Associate degree must have a minimum 2.7 GPA and at least 24 credit hours (at the time of program application.) The minimum credit hours may include transfer credit, credit earned through high school articulation agreements, or credit earned through dual enrollment; however, the amount of these credits should be a pre-determined minimum. In addition, credits hours for remedial courses are not included in the minimum.

Students must demonstrate readiness for college-level courses and have no demonstrated need to complete remedial coursework. Students must also be in good academic standing as defined by the community college.

Students remain matriculated at the community college. While at the university during the semester-away, students have the same opportunities as students attending the university on exchange programs.

The design of this program is not only dependent on collaboration between the two institutions but is also reliant on the initiative of students. Students who meet participation requirements have already demonstrated a successful college experience and are expected to take

charge in managing, following through, and tracking the process of acceptance into the program. They are also responsible for attending meetings, scheduling meetings, and keeping their mentors apprised of their experiences at the university and with the program.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Community college transfer coordinator

The community college transfer coordinator is the community college designee who assists students with transfer issues from the community college to other colleges and universities.

The transfer coordinator's role includes involvement with planning the program's implementation and marketing. The transfer coordinator is the community college contact person for the program; all paperwork and tracking for the program is done by the transfer coordinator. As the key contact person for the program, it is important that the coordinator is updated by the mentors and the students; however, aside from the aforementioned duties, day-to-day issues need to be managed by the mentors and the students.

Upon implementation of the program, the coordinator's role includes an initial meeting with students to assess the feasibility of a study-away semester. Once the feasibility is determined, students are required to attend a program presentation in order to learn about the timeline of the application and approval process. All the forms completed by students are submitted to the coordinator who reviews them for initial approval and forwards them to the university transfer coordinator. Ongoing communication with the university transfer advisor is essential. Transfer advisors from both institutions also oversee the selection and training of mentors.

Community college mentor

The community college mentor is a staff or faculty person selected by participating students and with whom the students have a pre-existing relationship. The mentor's role is greater in the planning stage in anticipation of students' semester-away. While students are away, they continue to maintain contact with their community college mentor; however, the mentor's role is diminished.

Specifically, the community college mentor provides an initial statement of support as part of a student's application; reviews the application and supporting documents prior to submission; and, agrees to provide guidance and advising before the off-campus experience, including advising with the selection of courses at the university. In providing assistance with course selection, other community college and university staff and faculty (i.e., the student's program chairperson or advisor and the community college's registrar) must also be consulted.

During the off-campus experience, the community college mentor's advising role is one that encourages the student to work through any transition issues with the appropriate university resources. During this time, the mentor's role is expected to be secondary to the role of the university mentor. However, the student is required to stay in contact with the community college mentor by providing a monthly update and a mid-term academic progress report.

The community college mentor is expected to facilitate meeting(s) between the student and university mentor prior to the study-away, and stay in communication with the university mentor as necessary during the study-away.

Community college advisor

The advisor is the student's current academic program advisor, as assigned by the community college. Once the student has met with the community college mentor and the

university mentor regarding the selection of courses at the university, the student's advisor provides assistance with assessing the transfer of courses back to the community college, within the student's current designated program, in order to satisfy requirements for degree completion. Confirmation of university courses as transfer courses toward student's associate degree also requires confirmation by the community college's registrar.

UNIVERSITY

University transfer coordinator

The university Transfer Coordinator is the university designee who assists students with issues of transfer from other post-secondary institutions.

The transfer coordinator's role before the exchange includes planning the program's implementation and marketing. Upon implementation, the coordinator's role includes reviewing the student's initial application and supporting documentation for program acceptance. The coordinator also serves as the liaison to the university mentors by forwarding this information to them (who then select a student to mentor.)

The university transfer coordinator is the university contact person for the program and all paperwork for the program is submitted through him/her. As a key contact for the program, the coordinator needs to be updated by mentors and students; however, aside from the aforementioned duties, day-to-day issues will be managed by mentors and students.

University mentor

The university mentor is a staff or faculty person who meets with and advises students prior to the semester-away, specifically, from the time students are initially approved to participate in the program and throughout the time of the student's semester-away at the university.

At the initial planning stages and in anticipation of the semester-away, the university mentor begins to establish a relationship with the student. Establishing this relationship early in the process is key to a successful experience and outcome for students, mentors, and, ultimately, for the university. Providing that a positive relationship has already been established, students are more likely to be responsive to meetings with their mentors once they are on the semester-away, thereby accessing assistance, support, and connecting to university services. The relationship should be built on clear, consistent communication with students and the development of trust with positive encouragement and support. It is also important that expectations and responsibilities be discussed.

Once students are attending the university, university mentors have a greater role in advising as well as providing support and direction for students. If students decide to transfer to the host university, mentors would continue to assist students with the actual transfer process by directing students to the appropriate university resources and being a liaison, as needed. University mentors also maintain periodic communication with community college mentors.

Mentors could be one person and/or a team of university staff/faculty/students who lend ongoing support to study-away students, primarily during the study-away semester, as students adjust to and successfully transition to university life. Mentors answer questions and/or direct students to the appropriate resources for assistance. Mentors, therefore, need to have good communication skills and a comprehensive knowledge of university resources.

Following completion of the semester-away and once students fully transition successfully to the continuation of their university studies, the mentor's role would likely diminish (however, it may continue informally, if both parties choose.) The university mentor role ends if the student does not transfer to the same university.

University student mentor

Student mentors are university students who live on campus and serve as positive role models for the study-away students. Mentors must have a minimum of 30 credit hours, a GPA of 2.7 or higher, and been recommended by two university staff or faculty members.

Student mentors provide informal but ongoing support and encouragement, especially with day-to-day campus life and activities. As with university mentors, establishing a positive relationship with program participants prior to them attending the university is vital. Students, then, tend to be more responsive to meetings with the mentor once they are on the semester-away, thereby accessing assistance, support, and connecting to university services. However, unlike university mentors, the student mentor's role is more informal and is geared primarily (but not exclusively) toward connecting students and helping them adjust positively to campus life. Assistance with academic concerns may be part of their role; however, referral to other campus resources is anticipated.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Human resources

The initial implementation of this program is proposed without the addition of staff. As a result, consideration must be given to the additional work assumed by the transfer coordinators, mentors, and advisors as well as the support personnel at the colleges (registrar, financial aid, business office, and housing.) The mentors have the longest ongoing commitment, approximately seven months. Union contracts are one of the factors that must be reviewed in order to address any restrictions. If, for instance, faculty contracts require payment for services rendered outside of classroom teaching and preparation, stipends (similar to what advisors receive) may be a resolution.

Several additional considerations are also worth noting. First, one important aspect to implementing this program without additional staffing is ensuring that the responsibilities are as evenly distributed among the key roles as possible. This sharing of responsibility was carefully considered within the structure of the program's proposal.

The second aspect to successful implementation regarding human resources is the importance of marketing this program to college personnel, clearly and pervasively throughout the community college and the university. By doing so, personnel are more likely to become involved and the responsibilities are more likely to be widely shared across each of the organizations. Establishing, maintaining, and growing a transfer culture depends on complete and ongoing endorsement from the higher echelons of each institution. This culture also needs to permeate throughout each institution, especially since the program relies on the altruistic spirit of the existing faculty and staff. Further marketing details are addressed in a separate caption below.

The third aspect to consider is initial and on-going training. Although the community college and university mentors will likely be familiar with providing support, encouragement, and general advising, it is important that there be consistency in the manner in which the mentoring is done. Mentors also need to know about the various services and resources at their respective institutions in order to properly advise and/or refer students as needed. Student mentors would also benefit from training. On-going opportunities to share ideas, communicate issues, and evaluate the program are important to sustaining and growing this collaborative effort.

Academic

Students need to work closely with their advisors, mentors, and with the Registrar's Office to confirm that courses they select will satisfy degree requirements for graduation at the community college. In addition, students must not exceed the 25% transfer credit limit at the community college. If students already have transfer credit on their transcript, including early studies courses completed at other institutions and/or credits earned through articulation agreements, careful consideration is needed to ensure that the semester-away credits do not result in over 25% of total transfer credit toward their Associate Degree. (Dual enrollment credit is not included in the 25% limitation.)

Students also need to be aware that, in some instances, completion of their community college degree requirements while participating in this program may not be possible and may, therefore, extend their degree program at the community college.

Financial

In light of current budget issues and the recommendation that the initial phase of this proposal be limited to a small number of students, this proposal is designed to be implemented (initially) without additional staffing, as stated previously. As a result, the success and growth of the program is reliant on the support from the executive staff and deans of the community college and the university. Again, establishing, growing, and maintaining a community college transfer culture depends on complete and ongoing endorsement from all levels of each institution. Although this proposal does not make provisions for additional staffing, union contracts may require remuneration, such as stipend allowances, for personnel who are taking on mentoring roles. In addition, a small budget would be needed for program start-up and ongoing costs such as employee travel, supplies, training, and hosting, etc. After a successful initial

phase has been completed, the growth of the program may be evaluated and consideration given regarding the need and the cost of securing additional, designated staffing and funding.

The other major funding component is the scholarship or reduced-tuition rate component. This component is essential in order for students participating in this program to off-set the higher tuition cost to attend the university for this one semester. This also provides a major incentive for students to actually participate and, after having positive experiences, to eventually transfer to the university. Although there is an upfront expense for the university to supplement the students' cost of attendance, the end result should be more students attending subsequent semesters at full tuition (This is similar to the loss-leader concept in the business field: a product or service sold at a discount with the goal of attracting customers and building long-term loyalty.) Although a tuition break may be an initial loss for the university, financial benefits may result with additional income off-set by room and board income, especially if students attend during the spring semester when housing is not usually maximized.

For the community college, the loss of tuition and, in some cases, room and board income, for one semester is also acknowledged as a financial cost.

For students and the institutions, financial aid is a major consideration. Financial aid models already in place at the University for student exchange and study abroad programs should be examined for possible use with this program. Consideration should also be given to the effects of the reduced-tuition cost options listed above. For example, how would reduced-tuition versus a scholarship affect the students' aid?

Marketing

Marketing of this program is proposed in three distinct phases. As stated earlier, successful implementation of this program requires that marketing begins first with the

presidents and deans of the institutions. Their initial and ongoing endorsement and support is vital to stimulating acceptance of this program and for creating a more extensive transfer-culture campus-wide. A second wave of marketing is proposed to include the staff, faculty, and university students in order to build campus-wide knowledge and understanding of the program and to attract potential mentors for the program.

The third wave of marketing would be targeted to community college students. It is important to first note that although there are various existing programs that offer tremendous opportunities to community college students, many are never realized by students. This may be due to a lack of consistent, ongoing promotion, a lack of a college-wide culture to promote these opportunities to students, or the fact that these opportunities have specific focuses and are not applicable to the majority of the community college population. This proposed semester-away program, on the other hand, is intended for a larger cross-section of the community college population and should be distinguished as such. Although the intent is to start this program on a small scale by limiting the initial amount of students, after this initial phase, the program's marketing needs to be maximized in order to attract the entire community college student population.

As the primary intent of this program is to encourage and support more students to transfer from community colleges to the universities, the naming convention proposed for the semester-away program is *Advantage U Plus*. This is proposed for a number of reasons:

~ The existing Advantage U program has been established as a community college/university transfer collaboration for several years and is widely known by the high school and community college population. This, therefore, provides name recognition.

~ By using an already familiar name, the proposed program is viewed as an extension of what is already in place, as opposed to something that is entirely new. With this connection to an existing program, marketing the program is more easily facilitated.

~ The contact person for the Advantage U program at Central Maine Community College is the Transfer Coordinator, who, under this proposal, would also be the key coordinator overseeing the process for this program.

Miscellaneous

In order to provide consistency in implementing and developing this program, and to ensure that the expectations and spirit of the program's intent be clearly communicated, training sessions for all mentors is key. The transfer coordinators would oversee mentor training, using possibly the existing staff from New Student Orientation, the Office of Residence Life, and/or Counseling Services as resources.

The availability of housing at the university may also be a factor in determining the number of students accepted to participate in this program each semester. Typically, in the spring semester, housing is more readily available on campuses, thereby enabling the university to better accommodate additional students. However, the exodus of students from dorms more heavily impacts the community college with a further loss of revenue when this program takes place during the spring semester.

Proposal B

Semester-away after graduating from community college

Proposal B, a semester-away opportunity for students immediately after they have earned an Associate degree at the community college, is primarily designed, but not exclusive to

accommodating students who earned degrees in technical programs. This alternative is offered primarily for two reasons.

First, students in technical programs must complete specifically-designed technical courses in order to earn Associate degrees. The sequencing of courses in technical programs is not conducive to students spending a semester away at other institutions where the same programs of study are not offered. Students in technical programs at the community college who would interrupt their training by spending a semester away would likely extend their degree completion by an additional year. As a result, these students would benefit from earning their Associate degree first, before experiencing a semester-away program.

For many students in technical programs, earning an Associate degree and, subsequently, working in their degree field is their immediate goal. These students should also be encouraged and supported to continue their education by learning more about careers available to them by earning a baccalaureate degree and advancing in their technical fields. They could also capitalize on the transfer agreements for technical programs already established between the community college and the university.

Secondly, whether or not students are in technical or non-technical programs, not all students feel confident or ready to take advantage of Proposal A during their second year of study at the community college. However, once they have graduated, this option gives them an opportunity and the incentive to “try” university life with the advantage of mentoring support and a one-semester reduced tuition rate.

Like Proposal A, Proposal B is centered on the support of mentors, both at the community college and at the university. The support of mentors is one of the vital components of this project proposal and is what makes the project unique. However, due to the timing of

Proposal B, that being after the student has left the community college, the mentor roles are different from those described in Proposal A. The relationships symbolized with Proposal B illustrate that the community college's role is to connect students to the university, similar to the existing transfer process, however, with the addition of a mentoring component. The primary mentor role is assumed by the university.



Unless noted below, all previous descriptions under Proposal A apply to Proposal B. The following sections highlight the exceptions applicable to Proposal B.

STUDENTS

Students applying to participate in Proposal B have graduated with an Associate Degree from the community college with a minimum 2.7 GPA. This minimum GPA must be met at the time of the application to the program and at graduation.

Students who want to participate in the semester-away program under Proposal B, must apply for the program as well as apply and be accepted to the university as a matriculated transfer student, following the same timeline as other transfer students.

Transfer students participating in this program have the advantage of having mentors and the benefit of a scholarship or reduced tuition for the first semester.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Community college mentor

With Proposal B, the role of the community college mentor is not as extensive as that in Proposal A. All the provisions listed in Proposal A would apply except for the following. Once

the student graduates from the community college, as they are no longer officially affiliated with the college, they no longer have a community college mentor. (However, if both parties agree, informal contact may continue beyond graduation.)

UNIVERSITY

University mentor

As a result of the limited role of the community college mentor, the role of the university mentor becomes more important. Therefore, it is the intent of the program that university mentors develop a relationship with the students before students graduate from the community college. An established relationship between students and university mentors will help to ensure students' successful transition to the university. The successful transition will, subsequently, help to ensure retention of students to completion of a baccalaureate program. It is recommended that this relationship begins at the time of students' application to the program, continues (more intensely) throughout the first semester experience, and may continue informally after that time if both parties agree.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Academic

With Proposal B, as students have already graduated from the community college, there is no longer a concern about selecting courses that satisfy the requirements of the Associate Degree. However, students should be more aware of selecting courses applicable to their intended baccalaureate degree major.

Financial

Although students in Proposal B have officially transferred to the university, this proposal continues to support the scholarship or reduced-tuition component. Even though

students' financial aid will be based on the entire cost of attending the university, the benefit of a scholarship or tuition reduction is still an important incentive in attracting students. As stated previously, although there is an upfront expense for the university to supplement the students' cost of attendance, in the end, retention of these additional students would benefit the university. (Again, this can be likened to the loss-leader concept in the business field: a product or service sold at a discount with the goal of attracting customers and building long-term loyalty.)

With this model, the community college is no longer affected by the loss of revenue as there is no longer any expected income from graduated students.

Marketing

As stated previously in Proposal B's description, in order to attract more students, especially from technical programs, to consider spending a semester-away, information needs to be provided regarding the additional career opportunities available to them by earning a baccalaureate degree.

Miscellaneous

Housing at the university may be more of an issue with Proposal B, as students would be primarily attending in the fall semester. This is when housing is usually at maximum capacity at most post-secondary schools. However, as participating students are matriculated transfer students under Proposal B, they should, therefore, be included in overall university planning for housing.

Program Implementation and Development

PROCESS

Details of the process and a proposed timeline are illustrated in Addendum 3. Please note that Proposal A is illustrated and, although a semester-away may occur during the fall or the

spring semester, this Timeline/Flowchart represents the student experiencing the semester-away during a spring semester. The diagram also includes an important program introductory phase which allows for key personnel from each institution to identify, meet, collaborate, and craft the details of the program's initial implementation and to then develop a marketing plan. This six-month period is critical to a successful launch of the program.

Students' involvement begins after this initial planning period and is highlighted as follows:

1. Students are solicited (through pre-planned marketing efforts) to attend presentations at the community college. These presentations are held at the community college but are hosted by both community college and university representatives.
2. Assessment of the feasibility of participating in the program is done by students and the community college transfer advisor.
3. Program representatives follow up with interested students.
4. Part 1 of the application process begins with students' selection of a community college mentor, completion of a program application, and submission of letters of recommendation.
5. Upon review by the program representatives, students receive Approval 1;
6. The application process continues with Part 2, which includes meetings with mentors, course selection and approval.

Key dates

The following due dates are proposed for implementation of Proposal A. Please note that timing adjustments may be needed to coincide with the university's course registration process and/or other factors.

Timing of Proposal A Semester-Away
Spring semester Fall semester*
 (Illustrated in Addendum 3)

Application and documents due	October 1	March 1
Approval #1	October 15	March 15
Course selection, approval #2	November 1	April 1
University course registration begins	November 10	April 10
Approval #3 (confirmation of min.GPA)	December 30	May 30
Orientation and university mentor mtgs.	January	September
Transfer application and FAFSA	February	February
Progress reports due	March 15	October 15
Application to Graduate due	March **	March**
University fall course registration	April	April
Community college graduation	May**	May**

* Not included, but applicable to students attending during the fall semester, is spring course registration at the community college in November and return by students to the community college in January.

** Timing is dependent on fulfillment of courses required for graduation.

As previously stated, students who apply to the program must take the initiative to track the process through approval. All signed forms are submitted to and reviewed by the community college transfer advisor.

Pilot Stage

The pilot phase proposes implementation of Proposal A as a collaboration between Central Maine Community College and the University of Southern Maine. It would initially be

open to a limited amount of CMCC students in the Liberal Studies and General Studies programs who meet the criteria described previously:

A minimum (cumulative) GPA, 2.7;

No need of remedial coursework;

Completed a minimum of 24 credit hours (at the time of program application)

Proposed Expansion Phases

1. The next phase continues to be a collaboration between CMCC and USM; however, the program would become available to students in all academic programs and Proposal B would be added as an option.

2. The program is then presented to the other six Maine community colleges as an option for students at their colleges to attend a semester-away at USM.

3. The program is presented to the entire Maine university system as an option to attract community college students to experience a semester-away at their campuses. During this phase, CMCC students are offered the option to participate in a semester-away at the Maine universities who opt to participate in this program.

4. The above option is offered to students at the other Maine community colleges who have opted to participate in this program. Ideally, during this phase, students at all Maine community colleges would have the opportunity to participate in a semester-away at any of the Maine universities.

KEY CONTACTS

To facilitate implementation of this program, an initial list of key contact people at both Central Maine Community College and the University of Southern Maine is included on Addendum 4. The names preceded by an asterisk (*) denote that these contacts have some

knowledge of the broad concept of this program. The contact with these individuals was initiated primarily via email and began approximately seven months ago.

Conclusion

The essence of this project is to have more students at community colleges continue their education and earn a baccalaureate degree. This aspiration is concurrent with Maine's goal to increase the level of baccalaureate degrees to 30% by the year 2010. Having previously identified some of the potential reasons why community college students may be apprehensive about continuing their education beyond the associate degree level, this project proposal incorporates key components to address these reasons. One of these components is mentoring. The notion of collaboration between Maine's community colleges and universities is the core to establishing a cross-campus mentoring program. A well-defined mentoring program is essential to encouraging, guiding, and supporting students through a transition from small campus settings to larger ones; and, from short-term academic and career goals to expanded horizons, ones that may provide unforeseen future opportunities for more Maine students.

Addendum 1

Definitions

Application Part 1 – a written application which includes why the applicant wants to participate, two recommendations / letters of support from faculty who have taught the student in their class (one from a faculty in their major), the selection (by student) of a mentor from the staff or faculty of the Community College currently attending, confirmation of and statement of support from selected mentor.

Application Part 2 – a written list of university courses requested and approved by the student's community college advisor, the community college transfer advisor, and the community college Registrar.

Application Part 3 – student's proposed budget, approved by the community college Financial Aid Director.

Approval #1 – date by which community college transfer advisor advises applicant of initial approval and assigns a university mentor to the student.

Approval #2 – date by which applicant submits the list of university courses, approved by his/her community college advisor and the community college Registrar, to the community college transfer advisor.

Approval #3 – date by which applicant receives final approval for participation in the program. Applicant must show evidence of contact with university mentor (through email or phone journal documentation) and must meet minimum GPA requirement at completion of current semester.

Community college (CC) – initially, Central Maine Community College; expansion of the proposal would include additional Maine Community Colleges

Community College advisor – the student's (current) academic program advisor, as assigned by the community college. The advisor approves the student's course selection with regard to satisfying the requirements for completion of the associate degree.

Community College mentor – a staff or faculty person selected by the student and with whom the student has already established a positive, professional relationship.

Community College Mentor's role – the mentor assists the student with the initial stages of the planning and anticipation of the student's semester away. He or she, along with the community college's transfer advisor, is the student's primary go-to person. While the student is away, the student continues to maintain contact with this mentor periodically by phone or email. The intention is that the mentor's role is greater initially and then diminishes once the student is attending the university.

Credit hours – hours earned for completion of academic courses and for transfer credit previously accepted by the community college, as listed on students' transcript. Students must have completed a minimum of 24 credit hours as of the completion of the semester prior to participation in the program.

Expansion phase 1 – the growth period characterized by participation of Central Maine Community College students from all programs who will participate in this program at the University of Southern Maine. Proposal B is also added during this phase.

Expansion phase 2– the growth period characterized by participation of students from the other Maine Community Colleges who will participate in this program at the University of Southern Maine

Expansion phase 3 – the growth period characterized by participation of students from Central Maine Community College who will participate in this program at one of the other Maine public universities

Expansion phase 4 - the growth period characterized by participation of students from the other Maine Community Colleges who will participate in this program at one of the other Maine public universities.

GPA – grade point average; the minimum cumulative GPA required to be considered for participation is 2.7

Good academic standing – not on probation or suspension

Matriculation – the college or university where the student is enrolled with the intent of earning a degree. In Proposal A, the student is matriculated at the community college. In Proposal B, the student is matriculated at the university.

Pilot phase – the initial implementation period characterized by participation of students in the Liberal and General Studies programs at Central Maine Community College who will participate in this program at the University of Southern Maine

Proposal A - Semester away while attending community college

Proposal B – Semester away after graduating from community college

Remedial courses – community college courses below the 100 level. Students must show no need for remedial courses in order to participate.

Student – Maine Community College current student or graduate who seeks to experience a semester on-campus at a Maine University before officially transferring to that university.

Student Mentor – a university student who lives on campus, is a positive role model, has earned a minimum of 30 credit hours, a GPA of 2.7 or higher, and has been recommended by two university staff or faculty members.

Student Mentor's role – to provide informal but ongoing support and encouragement especially with day-to-day campus life and activities. Ideally, three or four students would share responsibilities as a team. The primary goal of the student mentor team is to help the transfer student successfully adapt to university life through inclusion and connection to university resources of interest. Student mentors, therefore, need to be active in campus life and successful role models, both in and out of the classroom.

Timing, Proposal A – the semester away is after the community college student has earned a minimum of 24 credit hours and before earning an Associate degree at the community college.

Timing, Proposal B – the semester away is the semester immediately following graduation with an Associate degree from the community college

Transfer Coordinator – the designated person(s) at the community college and at the university who assist(s) all students with issues of transfer from the community college to the university.

Transfer Coordinator role - provides the student with an initial assessment of the feasibility of a semester-away. Once feasibility is determined, advising includes assistance with the selection of university courses.

University – initially, the University of Southern Maine; expansion of the proposal would include additional campus of the Maine University system.

University advisor – the student's academic major advisor, as assigned by the university. Under Proposal B, the advisor approves the student's course selection with regard to meeting pre-requisites and satisfying the requirements for completion of the baccalaureate degree.

University Mentor – a staff or faculty person who agrees to meet with and advise the student from the time of Approval #1 through student's initial semester at the university.

University Mentor's role - at the initial stages of the planning and anticipation of the student's semester away, the university mentor begins to establish a relationship with the student. Once the student is attending the university, this mentor plays a greater role in advising as well as providing support, encouragement, and direction for the student. If the student decides to transfer to the host university, the mentor would continue to assist the student with the transfer process by directing the student to the appropriate university resources and with being a liaison, as needed. Mentors, therefore, need to have a comprehensive knowledge of university resources.

Students

Community college students who are interested in the possibility of transferring to a college or university to earn a baccalaureate degree. They must have:

- ~ have a min. 2.7 GPA;
- ~ earned a min. of 24 credit hours;
- ~ have no need of remedial courses.

Community College

Transfer Coordinator – the designated person(s) at the community college who assist students with issues of transfer from the community college to other colleges and universities.

Mentor - a staff or faculty person selected by the student and with whom the student has already established a positive, professional relationship.

Community College advisor – the students' (current) academic program advisor, as assigned by the community college.

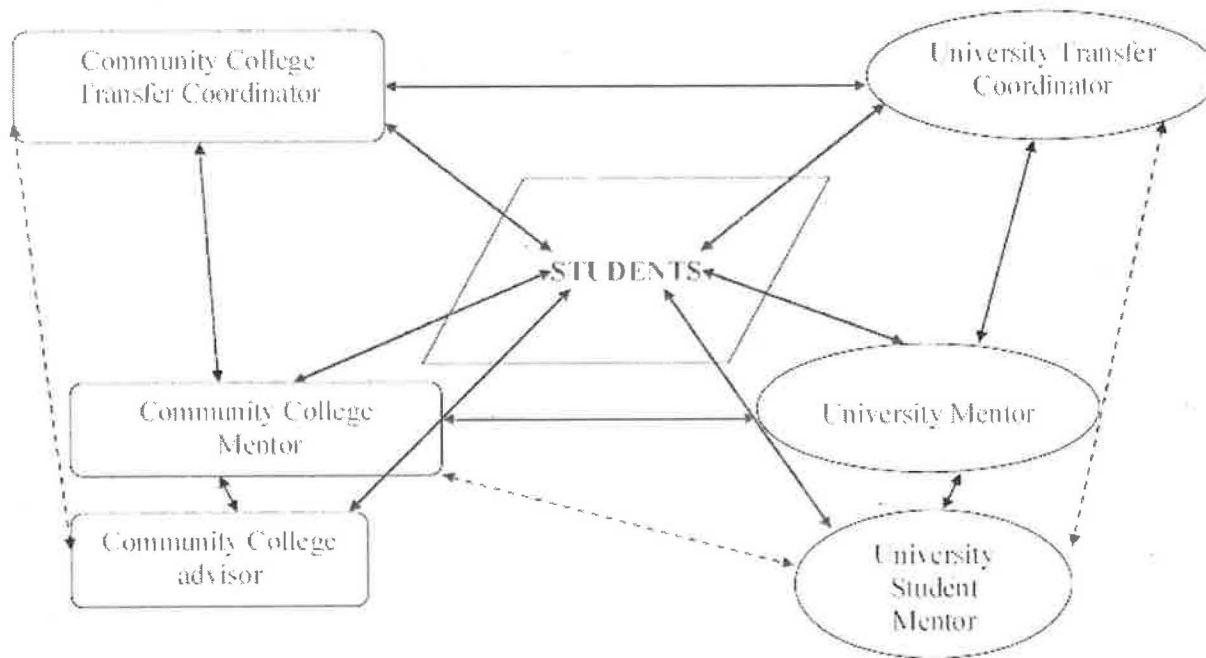
University

Transfer Coordinator – the designated person(s) at the university who assist students with issues of transfer from other post-secondary schools to the university.

University Mentor – a staff or faculty person who agrees to regularly meet with and advise the student from the time of application through student's initial semester at the university.

Student Mentor – a university student who lives on campus, is a positive role model, and who provides informal but ongoing support and encouragement especially with day-to-day campus life and activities.

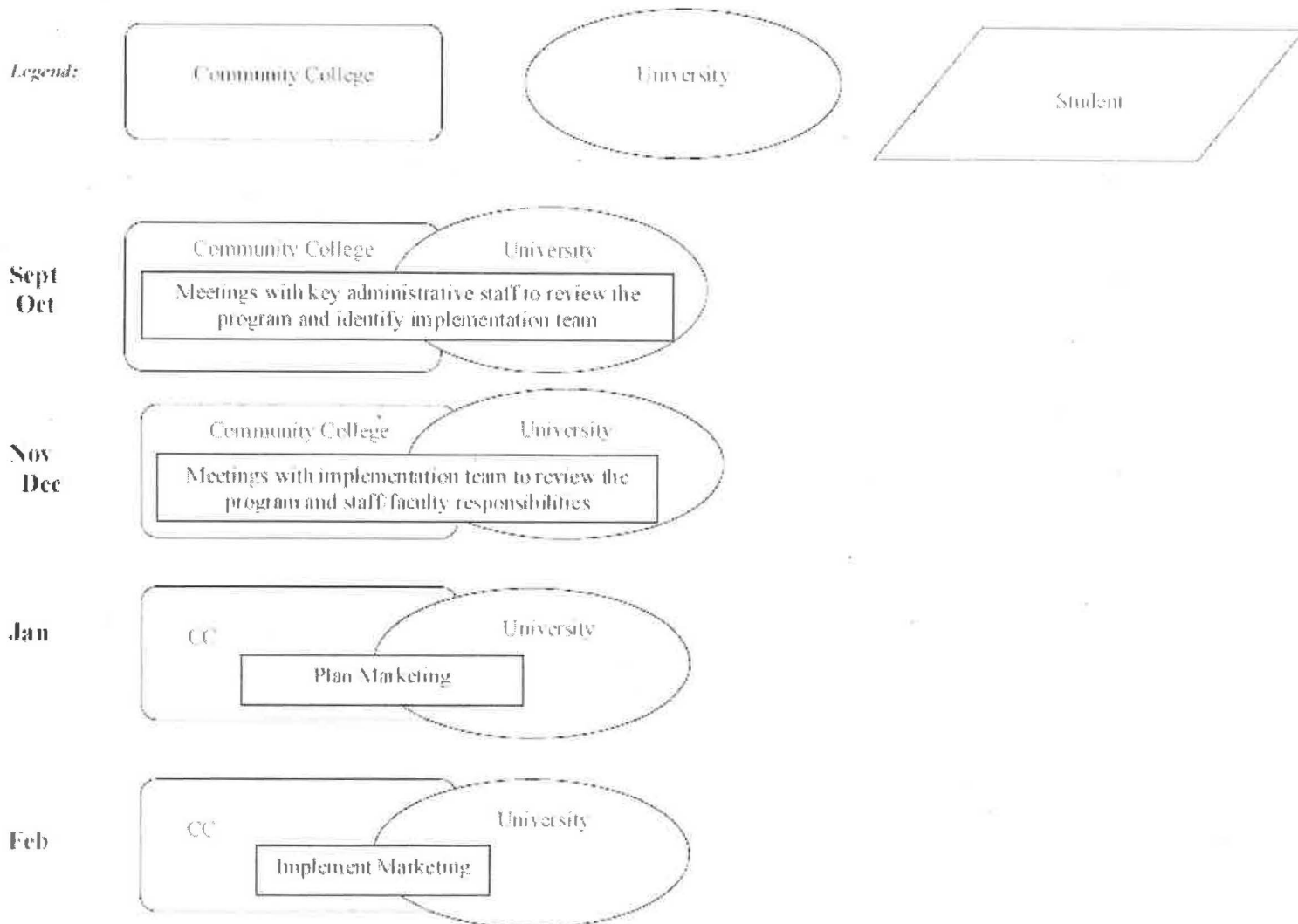
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Addendum 2
b. Key Relationships

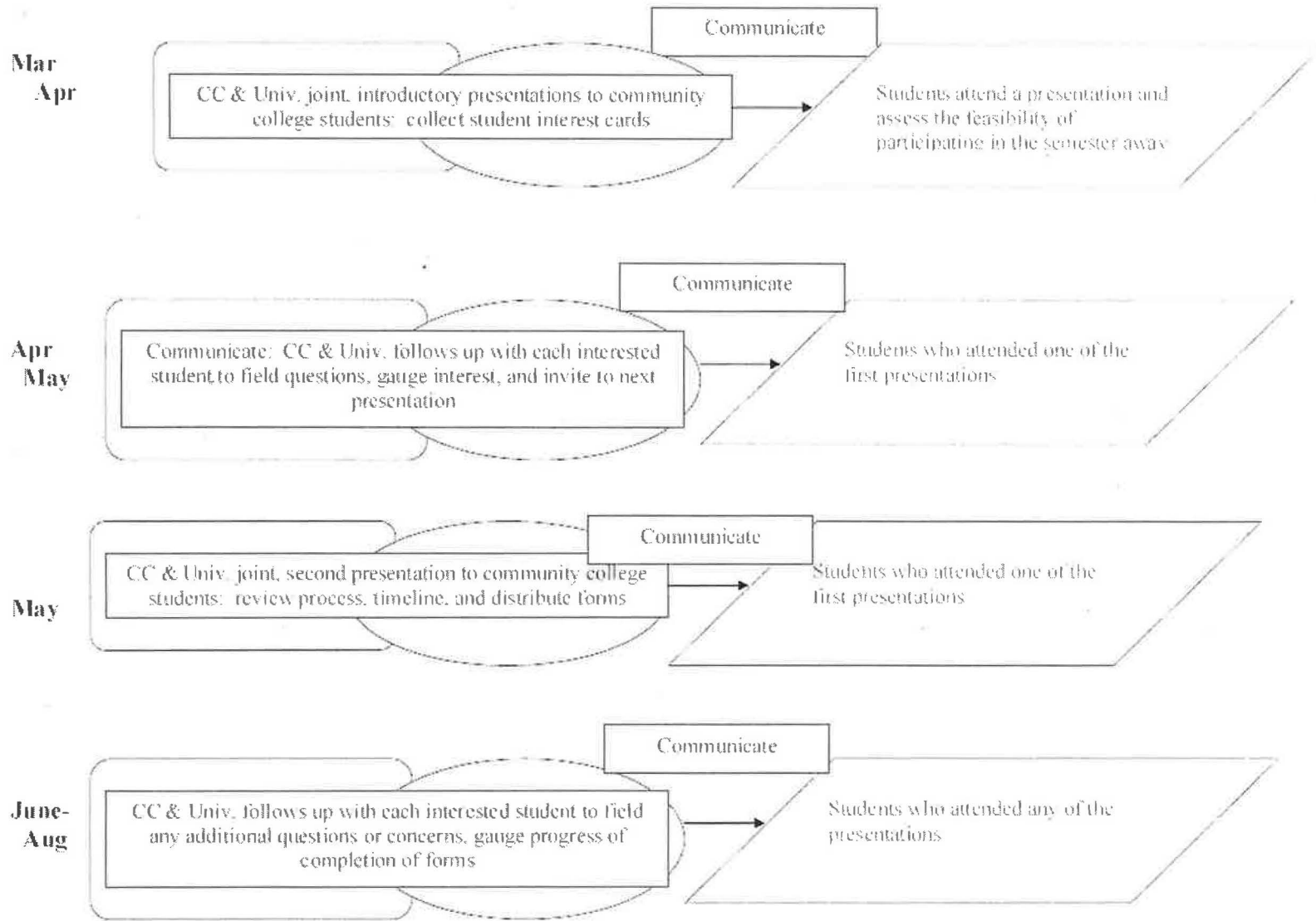


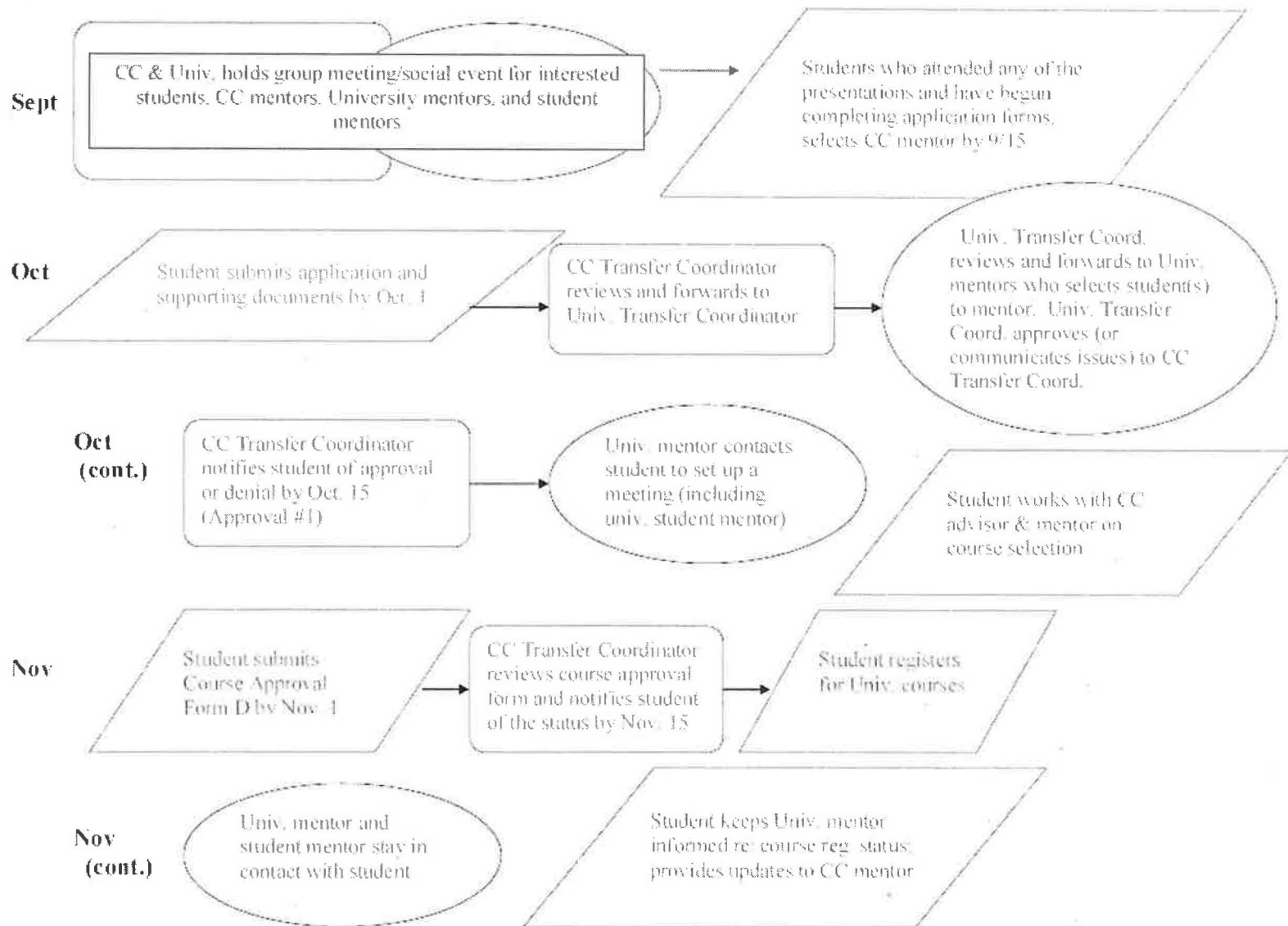
↔ direct communication
- - - communication as needed

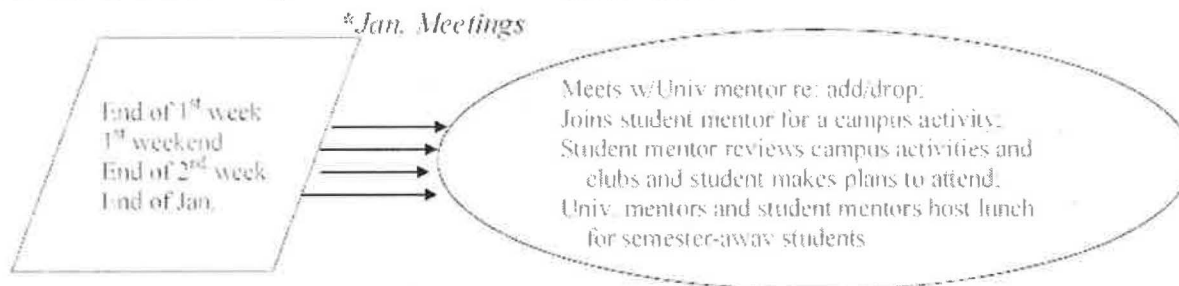
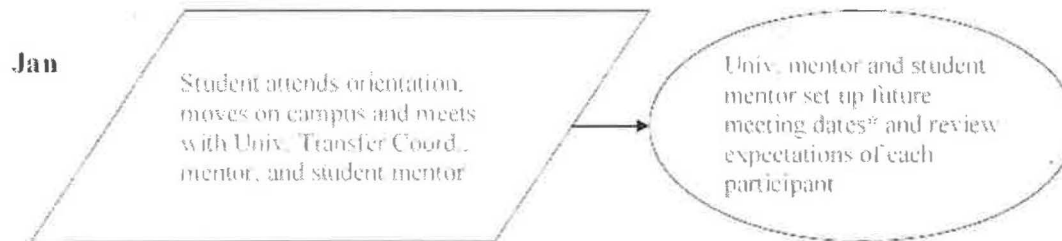
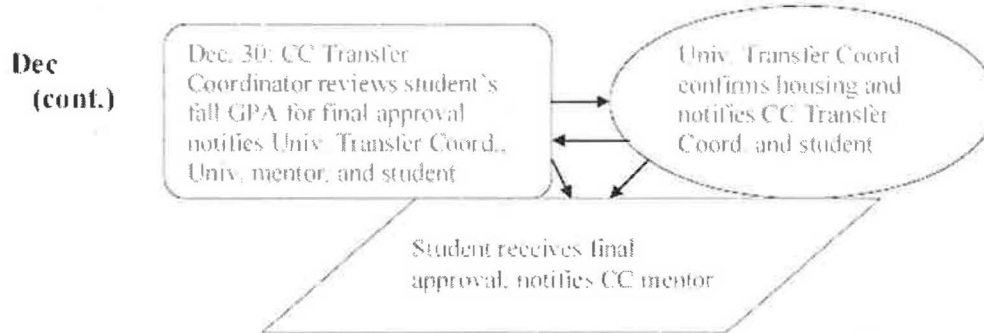
Timeline/Flowchart, Proposal A (attending spring semester)

Addendum 3

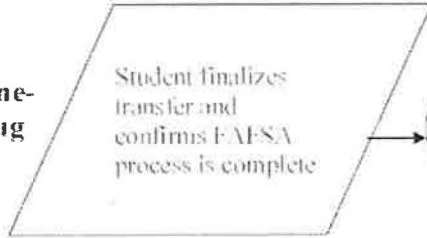




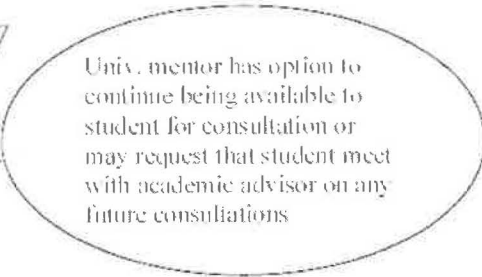




**June-
Aug**



Sept



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Addendum 5
Case, Proposal A

Riley's Road

Riley heard about the Advantage U program in high school and decided to attend the local community college. She knew she wanted to live at home and be in familiar surroundings while continuing her education; however she didn't have a solid plan of what she wanted to study as her major or if she wanted to continue school after two years at the community college.

Riley's transition from high school to college is, on the surface, uneventful, but she confides to a faculty member in the Writing Center that she is struggling with all the work required of college courses. She's used to doing all of her high school homework in study halls and is not used to everything she has to get done outside of classes here at college. She works hard and earns a 2.5 for the first semester. Now into her 2nd semester, she feels more comfortable about the workload and is intent on doing better.

One day, on their way to the "caf," she and her friends stumble upon a college transfer fair in the hallways of the community college. They had no idea what all those people were there for but deciding to check out a few tables; after all, some of her high school friends went to some of these schools and she thought that maybe the college reps might know them. None of them do, but she finds out a bit more about the schools, some of the majors they have, and all the activities happening on campus. Sounds cool, but she feels comfortable at the community college and isn't at all ready to think about going somewhere else.

Although she has done well in college so far, she is apprehensive about transferring to another college or university and thankful that she can put off planning it for another year. She thinks she wants to try living on a college campus but still doesn't want to be too far from home. As to what to study, she's enjoyed humanities and social sciences at the community college but is unsure about what majors might be available at other colleges and what careers might be applicable to her broad interests. She thought that she would have had a better idea of her direction by now and is thinking that maybe she won't continue her education after earning an Associate's Degree. Besides, the thought of going to a big, expensive school, where she doesn't know anyone or know who to go to with questions, is daunting.

One of her favorite Psychology instructors tells Riley about a new program, Advantage U Plus. It's a program that helps students "try" college at a university to see if that's what they want to do. Students have mentors at both the community college and at the university who help them adapt to a new campus. Her instructor suggests that she meet with the community college's transfer coordinator to find out more.

Riley talks to one of her friends into going with her to meet the community college transfer coordinator who goes over the basic set-up of the program and its general requirements. Riley meets the basic requirements but her friend does not because she needs to retake a remedial course and work on getting a higher GPA. The transfer coordinator gives Riley a brochure about the program and encourages her to attend an Advantage U Plus presentation next month to meet some of the people involved and other students who are thinking of being part of the program.

At the presentation, she's relieved to see a couple of familiar faces, other students in some of her classes. They find out more about how the program works, the paperwork needed to apply, and a

new enthusiasm about “checking out” university life by doing Advantage U Plus. Over the next few months, she works hard to earn the extra money she’ll need if she goes on this semester-away. She completes the application and asks two of her former community college instructors to complete the recommendation forms. She also asks her favorite Psychology instructor to be her mentor and asks him for a statement of support. With the first part of the application process complete, she’s hoping to hear soon if she’s approved for the program.

By mid-October, she gets an email with good news from the transfer advisor – she’s been approved! Shortly after, she hears from one of the university mentors; they schedule a time to meet to talk about the program and the university’s process for locating and selecting courses. It’s all getting a bit overwhelming for Riley but she has her favorite instructor/mentor to go to with questions. Together with her advisor, they come up with a list of courses that will keep her on track to earn her Associate degree at the community college. She gets confirmation from the Registrar that the courses are the right ones to earn her degree.

Anxiously, she meets her university mentors; a faculty member from the Communications program and a 3rd-year student majoring in Theater. They readily share what it’s like to be at the university and all the opportunities that Riley will have available to experience while she’s there. The student mentor invites Riley to attend a concert on campus with her in December and to stay overnight if she wants. She’d also give her a tour of the campus, see some of the dorms, and get to meet some of her friends.

In the meantime, Riley finds out that one of the courses she wanted at the university is full. In a panic, she is not sure which mentor she should call and calls both. She’s able to find another course that fits her schedule and gets approval again from the community college’s Registrar.

With the fall semester winding down, Riley gets info about the University's new student orientation, moving-in day, the dorm she'll be in, and the roommate she'll have. One good thing - her dorm is right next door to where her student mentor lives. By the end of December, Riley looks up her grades and is happy to see she's earned a 3.0, which now gives her a 2.9 GPA. She's ready for her new adventure (she thinks.)

By mid-January, Riley's busy moving into her dorm at the university, getting to know her roommate, and meeting up with her mentors. At least she knows them and knows her way around, at least a bit. She and her roommate take some time to find out where their classes will be before they start them in a couple days. Her first week is a whirlwind of new experiences, meeting new people, getting around, and adjusting to everything, it seems. But, she soon settles in and gets more comfortable with her surroundings. Classes are interesting and, having had a good start at the community college, the workload is similar. Although some of her classes are a lot larger, they're not much different. What's really different is the wealth of activities happening on campus and in the surrounding communities. She's not sure if she wants to get involved - it would be a lot easier to just stay in her room. Then, her student mentor takes her to an Activities Fair to check out the choices and they make plans to take in a hockey game with others in her dorm.

Although she's a bit homesick, she knows she's close enough to go home on the weekends. Slowly, she adjusts to her temporary home and likes the energy she feels in her new surroundings. By mid-semester, she decides to apply for transfer to the university's Media Studies program. She's more excited about graduating with an Associate degree now that she has a definite focus for the future.

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