Maryland’s ABCs for Student Success: A System-Wide Approach to Peer Mentoring

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University System of Maryland

APLU-CIMA Summer Meeting
Monday, July 15, 2024
University System of Maryland
Student Success in the USM
Maryland’s ABCs for Student Success

• Postsecondary Student Success Grant Program 2023 – Early-phase project
  ▪ $4 million over 4 years
• Challenge: Improve retention and graduation rates for underserved students
• Response: *Maryland’s ABCs for Student Success: Advising, Belonging, and Coaching*
• 11 USM partner institutions
Project Design & Implementation Plan
Maryland ABCs Project Logic Model

**Theory of change**: Non-academic peer mentoring focused on developing sustained, personalized relationships help underserved students navigate complex college systems by connecting them with academic and non-academic supports that equitably improve postsecondary outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-term Outcomes</th>
<th>Mid-term Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and expertise of</td>
<td>USM will:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• USM leaders</td>
<td>• Convene professional communities of practice</td>
<td>• 11 campuses identify staff to serve on team</td>
<td>Increased system capacity to identify gaps and overlaps in available evidence-based peer mentoring supports across campuses</td>
<td>Increased system capacity to develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Campus teams (data liaison, peer mentor liaison, faculty mentor liaison, advisors)</td>
<td>• Provide mentor training</td>
<td># frequency of project team convenings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plans to adopt Maryland ABC mentoring approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Project Partners (edBridge, Westat, advisory board)</td>
<td>• Create structure to support sustainable, continuous system-wide improvements aligned with strategic priorities</td>
<td># frequency/duration of training for mentors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer mentoring micro-credential</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Department of Ed TA providers</td>
<td>• USM Strategic Plan</td>
<td>Data dashboard created</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mentor training curriculum</td>
<td>• Mentor training</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Federal, state, and local data</td>
<td>• Identify gaps and overlaps in available supports</td>
<td>Process maps detailed student supports and processes on each campus</td>
<td>Campus teams understand services and resources available on their campus for peer mentors to provide integrated supports to underserved students</td>
<td>Increased capacity of campus teams to</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Federal, state and local policies</td>
<td>• Use data to continuously improve peer mentoring services</td>
<td># types/frequency of disaggregated data are reviewed</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Coordinate student supports across offices</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Research about effective evidence-based peer mentoring approaches</td>
<td>• Recruit and support training for ≥ 10% of mentors</td>
<td># mentors recruited</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Recruit and train additional peer mentors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contribute baseline, implementation and outcome data to the evaluation</td>
<td># mentors earn microcredential</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Campus teams will:</td>
<td># mentor trainers participate in COP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify gaps and overlaps in available supports</td>
<td># students taking survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use data to continuously improve peer mentoring services</td>
<td>Survey results</td>
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<td>• Recruit and support training for ≥ 10% of mentors</td>
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<td>• Process maps detailed student supports and processes on each campus</td>
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<td>• Evaluate baseline, implementation and outcome data to the evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Campus teams will:</td>
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**Long-term**

- Underserved students make continued progress meeting the requirements to complete their degree
Convene Communities of Practice

Improve Data Collection & Sharing

Implement Student Support Interventions

Peer Mentoring

Holistic Advising

Effective Advising for Postsecondary Students
A Practice Guide for Educators

College Access: Research & Action
Creating Post-Secondary Pathways

University System of Maryland
ABCs Peer Mentoring

- Relationship between project design and evaluation
  - Intervention is *different enough* from the comparison
  - Intervention is *similar enough* across the universities

- Impact on peer mentoring program
  - **Distinctness** of ABCs peer mentoring program
  - **Standardization** of ABCs peer mentoring program

- 11 university contexts
- Tradition of local control
ABCs Peer Mentoring

- Project cornerstones: consensus and collaboration
- Adapting and adopting CARA’s College Allies program
  - Mentors’ training schedule
  - Mentees’ progress milestones
Project Timeline

January 2024: Grant Awarded

Spring–Summer '24: Planning & Kickoff

AY '24–'25: Year 1 Pilot Program Implementation

Ongoing Data Collection

AY'25–'26, AY'26–'27: Full Program Implementation

December '27: Grant Period Ends

Spring '27: Data Analysis, Final Reporting, Dissemination
Evaluation Plan
The evaluation functions at two levels:

Looking at the **intervention for peer mentors** (level 1) and its effect on the **outcomes for student mentees** (level 2)
Treatment Group – Peer Mentors

Comparison Group – Peer Mentors

Shared characteristics:
- Mentors are *students*, not faculty, staff, consultants, community members, etc.
- Not academic tutors

Difference: Treatment Group will participate in (and complete!) ABCs training *distinct from* existing campus-specific training already in place at each university
In order to get as many students as possible (for as much statistical power as possible), we’ll be pooling students (mentors and mentees) from treatment groups and comparison groups at every participating university. This means we won’t be able to estimate treatment effects for each university, only for the treatment group as a whole, across the whole System.
Who are the students being mentored?

- **First time in college**: first-year undergraduates, first-year graduate students, transfer students
  
  → *our term and definition*

- **Underserved students**: students living in poverty, students of color, Native American students, English learners, disabled students, LGBTQ students, pregnant/parent/caregiver students, first-generation students, students enrolling for the first time over the age of 20, full-time working students, Pell-eligible students, students with limited basic skills and/or English proficiency
  
  - PSSG’s *term and definition* – see Notice Inviting Applications, Federal Register Vol. 88, No. 142, p. 48224
Three Study Components: Aligned with WWC Standards

1. Confirmatory evaluation
   - Quasi-experimental design
   - 3 student cohorts assigned to peer mentors who receive
     - USM training (treatment)
     - BAU (comparison)
   - Matched samples of
     - Peer mentors
     - Students

2. Exploratory evaluation
   - Descriptive analysis of evidence-based early indicators peer mentoring is producing the expected increases in progress and achievement in college

3. Implementation evaluation
   - Measurement framework aligned with logic model
   - Quantitatively scored fidelity indicators support continuous improvement
## Proposed Confirmatory Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To what extent do students who receive support from PD-trained mentors accumulate more college credits compared to their peers after 1, 2 and 3 years?</td>
<td>Progressing in college</td>
<td>College-level credit accumulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do students supported by peer mentors who receive PD persist in college at higher rates relative to students who receive support from mentors that do not after 1, 2 and 3 years?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enrollment (same/different school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are there differences in academic outcomes among students who receive support from PD-trained peer mentors relative to students who receive support from peer mentors that do not after 1, 2 and 3 years?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Proposed Exploratory Questions

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<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the PD-trained mentorship experience improve students’ sense of belonging after 1, 2 and 3 years?</td>
<td>Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>Student survey data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5. How are early indicators of achievement and progression distributed among subgroups of students at the end of each cohort’s first year? | Pass required math and English courses | • Race/ethnicity  
• Gender  
• Pell-eligible students  
• Non-traditional students (24 years or older, work full-time) |
# Proposed Implementation Questions

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<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. To what extent is the Maryland ABCs model implemented as intended?</td>
<td>Fidelity</td>
<td>• Project documents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• LMS platform data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Student survey data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does PD-trained peer mentorship increase students’ use of existing academic and non-academic resources and supports after 1, 2 and 3 years?</td>
<td>Service use</td>
<td>• Student ID swipe data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Student survey data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcome Data

1. Confirmatory evaluation
   - Progress in college (credit accumulation; enrollment)
   - Academic achievement (college GPA)

2. Exploratory evaluation
   - Sense of belonging (student surveys)
   - Pass required math and English courses (pass rates among subgroups)

3. Implementation evaluation
   - Fidelity (project documents, LMS data, peer mentor logs and student surveys)
   - Service use (student surveys and swipe data)
Thank you! Questions?

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