

Reaching Out: A Guide to Increasing College Transfer and Completion with a Community-Based Partner, *On Point for College*



By Lorrie Clemo, Virginia Donohue, Samuel Rowser and Kimberly Stezala

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About the Authors

Dr. Lorrie Clemo

Dr. Lorrie Clemo is the Principal Investigator of the First in the World (FITW) grant awarded to the State University of New York (SUNY) at Oswego in 2014. Her career in higher education spans more than 25 years, most recently as the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at SUNY Oswego. In this role, she developed a worldwide Global Laboratory Consortium, advanced internationalization through collaborative online global learning platforms, expanded active learning and professional practice through cooperative education, grew funded faculty-student mentored research, and developed campus-wide environmental sustainability practices.

In addition to various teaching and leadership positions, she spent a year as an American Council on Education fellow at the University of Rochester where she helped develop a university-wide faculty diversity program. At the national level, as President of the Faculty Athletics Representatives Association, Dr. Clemo played a leadership role in developing the NCAA's strategic plan that set into motion academic reform. Dr. Clemo received both her Ph.D. and master's degree from SUNY Binghamton and bachelor's degree from Le Moyne College. She has a record of scholarship that includes more than 40 paper presentations and publications and 20 grants.

Virginia Donohue

Virginia "Ginny" Donohue is the founder and retired Executive Director of On Point for College (On Point). Ms. Donohue's ideas and implementation of college access and success for very vulnerable students were often on the leading edge in the field. Among her many awards and accolades, the National College Access Network honored her with its 2008 Excellence in Leadership Award, and Encore.org recognized her social innovation with its 2010 Purpose Prize Fellow award.

Ms. Donohue earned two bachelor's degrees (Le Moyne College and SUNY Oswego), and a master's degree in Urban Education from Syracuse University. Ginny received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Le Moyne College in 2014. In a career that spanned from urban teacher to chief financial officer at two multi-million dollar companies, Ms. Donohue left the corporate world and started On Point in 1999. Under her leadership, On Point has secured multiple grants from national funders such as Kresge Foundation, USA Funds, Lumina Foundation for Education and TG. On Point has provided support services to youth and young adults in Syracuse, Utica, and New York city with 5,800 students enrolled in college over 17 years.

Samuel Rowser

Samuel Rowser will be the second Executive Director since the inception of On Point for College. Formerly On Point's Deputy Executive Director, he was also an Admissions Counselor at Onondaga Community College (OCC) in Syracuse, New York, and is an alumnus of OCC. Mr. Rowser earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Columbia College of Missouri in Syracuse, NY. In addition to 26 years of experience in college access and success counseling, he is very involved in the community and is a member of 100 Black Men of Syracuse. He has received numerous community awards for his work with inner city youth including a 2011 Award of Excellence from the National College Access Network. Mr. Rowser participates in the

Institutional Agreements working group and Leadership Group working group of the FITW grant documented in this guide.

Kimberly Stezala

Kimberly Stezala is an organizational development consultant who has devoted nearly 20 years to college access and success. Related to the FITW grant, Ms. Stezala conducted an early-stage process inquiry to document the grant model and create this guide. As President of Stezala Consulting, LLC she helps organizations design, evaluate and improve programs that lead to better educational outcomes for students.

Earlier in her career she was the founding Director of two student outreach programs at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she earned her bachelor's and master's degrees, and a professional certificate in Nonprofit Management. She also was the Director of Milwaukee's Partnership for College Access and Success, an initiative funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education. Of note, Stezala was selected as the lead consultant and editor of the *Scholarship Providers Toolkit* published in 2011 by the National Scholarship Providers Association. Ms. Stezala also is a motivational speaker and author of *Scholarships 101: The Real-World Guide to Getting Cash for College*.

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In addition, the authors are extremely grateful to the following organizations and individuals who contributed expertise during the project:

- Theresa Hadlich assembled and provided hundreds of internal documents for review by the authors, some of which were written by On Point staff such as Carolyn Beyers, Tiffany Rush, Tanya Eastman and other current or former staff members. Thanks to all for their contributions.
- Tiffany Rush provided leadership for site visits and tours by the authors to see first-hand how On Point advisors interact with students on community college campuses.
- Karen Valentino, FITW Grant Manager at SUNY Oswego, helped the authors understand the totality of the grant. She provided access to working groups at a grant retreat, provided historical documentation about the grant and participated in an interview.
- Cathy Engstrom volunteered to interview students, and, along with her colleague Ann Coles, granted permission to use an excerpt from their excellent qualitative study *Changing Syracuse Degree by Degree: How On Point for College is Transforming the Lives of Underserved Young Adults*.
- Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (TG) also granted permission for use of excerpts from *Changing Syracuse Degree by Degree*.
- The following leadership and staff participated in formal interviews or conversations about the partnership, sharing their experiences, wisdom and lessons learned to help other communities understand how the partnership operates. Participants are listed in alphabetical order. These titles were accurate at the time of their interviews:
 - Nicole Adsitt, Interim Director, Student Engagement and Academic Advisement, Cayuga Community College
 - Tealye Carrington, Transfer Advisor, On Point for College
 - Dr. Casey Crabill, President, Onondaga Community College
 - Lu Pway Doh, Transfer Advisor, On Point for College
 - Jeanine Eckenrode, Director of Advising and Counseling, Onondaga Community College
 - Susan Johnston, FITW Transfer Success Advisor, Mohawk Valley Community College
 - Ushona McClean, Transfer Advisor, On Point for College
 - Melissa Menon, former Director, College and Career Access, On Point for College
 - Colette Montgomery, Transfer Advisor, On Point for College
 - Rosemarie Puppato, FITW Transfer Success Advisor, SUNY Oswego
 - Tiffany Rush, Director, College Advancement and Completion, On Point for College
 - Dr. Randy Van Wagoner, President, Mohawk Valley Community College

Foreword

The U.S. Department of Education's First in the World (FITW) grant gave our college and our partners the opportunity to put into practice a community-based advising model that enhanced the transfer experience for hundreds of students.

As principal investigator on the grant, and as Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at the State University of New York at Oswego, I had the privilege of working alongside other college officials and staff members who were dedicated to improving student retention and transfer, and were willing to consider new methods to reach very vulnerable students.

While there are four components to our model, it is the On Point for College advising piece that makes our grant unique compared to other grantees in the same award cycle. I was first introduced to On Point for College more than a decade ago, as the organization grew and became recognized as an award-winning service provider to the college students that many other programs overlook or do not quite know how to handle: youth who have aged out of foster care, students who are new to this country, young people who may have dropped out of college but want to come back, or those who find themselves needing bare essentials such as food or shelter, yet yearning to earn their college degree. These are, in fact, the exact types of students for whom On Point was designed.

The leadership and staff of On Point have “trade secrets” and operational acumen of how to navigate the higher education system, as friends and advocates, to produce better results for these types of students.

Many times in the months leading up to the grant application, and certainly in the early years of implementation, we listened intently as they schooled us, their higher education partners, in how to increase retention, transfer and graduation. Some of the ideas required policy changes whereas others required administrative solutions but, ultimately, more students will succeed in earning a credential or degree because of the collective effort of On Point for College and our three partner community colleges.

A special thanks to my counterparts at Cayuga Community College, Mohawk Valley Community College and Onondaga Community College for their openness to change, ability to contribute expertise, and willingness to put structures in place to support this unique model. This guide is not exhaustive, nor could it be at this stage of our grant, but it is an attempt to increase awareness of this special student population, and what can be done, definitively, to increase success rates.

Also, I send a heartfelt thank you to Ginny Donohue, founder of On Point, and Samuel Rowser, its second Executive Director, for their uncompromising leadership, and generosity, in sharing their ideas and program model with the partnership. My involvement with On Point has been one of the highlights of my career in higher education.

I sincerely hope that other communities will use this guide to adopt the model so that more people can earn their degree and reach their full potential in America's civic and economic landscape.

— by Lorrie Clemo, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at SUNY Oswego

Abstract

In September 2014, the U.S. Department of Education made its first round of awards under the First in the World (FITW) grant program. According to the Department of Education, the intent of the program is to support the development, replication, and dissemination of innovative solutions to address the persistent challenges at-risk students face when earning a post-secondary degree.

Nearly 500 higher education institutions submitted proposals for the initial FITW grant. Of those, the U.S. Department of Education awarded 24 grants to colleges and universities across the country including a \$2.88 million award to the State University of New York at Oswego (SUNY Oswego).

SUNY Oswego's FITW "Transfer Gateways and Completion" grant has four major components defined as 1) institutional agreements, 2) program pathways, 3) preparatory and transition courses, and 4) advisement and support.

The college uses a collective impact¹ model in the FITW grant to improve transfer, retention and completion from two-year community colleges to a four-year college. Partners include three New York state public community colleges – Cayuga, Mohawk Valley and Onondaga – and one independent community-based organization, On Point for College (On Point).

On Point is a nationally-recognized nonprofit organization based in Syracuse and Utica that is noteworthy for culturally-relevant advising and proactive support services to very vulnerable youth and young adults. The organization has a long history of community-based recruitment, beyond high schools, of individuals with college potential that traditional college access and success programs often overlook. They recruit through 27 community locations such as homeless shelters, Boys and Girls Clubs, municipal housing, libraries, refugee schools, etc.

Most On Point participants are 17- to 29-year-old high school graduates who are under-employed and who thought college was out of reach for them. On Point is the organization upon which the advisement and support component of the grant is based. On Point has built organizational acumen and solutions specific to the challenges of low-income and first-generation college students who frequently have additional risk factors, such as students who:

- Lack an active parent in his or her life
- May be a single parent
- Have aged out of the foster care system
- Face homelessness or housing insecurity
- Struggle with hunger or food insecurity
- Are immigrants
- Have refugee status
- Are court-involved

¹ Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011, 36-41.

In addition to three On Point advisors, the grant includes four transfer advisors located at the partner institutions. On Point has provided training to these transfer advisors who are staff members at the participating institutions. The institutional staff has reciprocated and trained On Point staff with information and resources pertinent to their particular colleges.

Since the implementation of the grant, the stakeholders have learned from other FITW grantees and grant officers that partnering with a core service provider such as On Point, for the advising component and its valuable volunteer network, is unique among the grantees.

Based on early inquiry performed by the authors, separate from the ongoing independent evaluation, stakeholders find that On Point provides critical support, beyond “business-as-usual” advising, to students who are navigating the nuances of the college enrollment, course selection, financial aid, and transfer process. This early-stage inquiry also provides valuable cross-institutional lessons in implementing college practices that support very vulnerable students – all with the purpose of improved transfer and retention. The open communication, relationships, trust, and willingness to make changes, are all seen as bedrocks of the collaboration.

This guide summarizes this particular FITW model, the case for using such a model, and early lessons and opportunities for other communities that wish to adopt a similar model.

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I. Background

In September 2014, the U.S. Department of Education made its first round of awards under the First in the World (FITW) grant program. According to the Department of Education, the intent of the grant program is to support the development, replication, and dissemination of innovative solutions to address the persistent challenges at-risk students in earning a post-secondary degree.

Nearly 500 higher education institutions submitted proposals for the initial FITW grant. Of those, the U.S. Department of Education awarded 24 grants to colleges and universities across the country including a \$2.88 million award to the State University of New York at Oswego (SUNY Oswego). SUNY Oswego is a public four-year regional comprehensive college with 7,000 students.

The grantee uses a collective impact model for its FITW grant. Partners include three New York state public community colleges and one independent community-based organization, as follows:

- Cayuga Community College, Auburn, NY
- Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica, NY
- Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, NY
- On Point for College (On Point), Syracuse and Utica, NY

The grant has four major strategies all directed at the primary absolute priority of *increasing community college transfer rates to four-year colleges*. These strategies include:

1. Institutional agreements, defined as dual enrollment agreements and articulation agreements, that are created, defined, refined, and communicated to all parties.
2. Program pathways, defined as transfer connections conferences for faculty across institutions to discuss challenges and solutions for transfers; community college advising guides called “Passports to Oswego” for students to clearly see the sequence and courses needed to maximize all credits in the transfer process; and a focus on the most popular transfer majors to help expedite and implement better transfers earlier in the process.
3. Preparatory and transition courses, defined as a professional-skills preparatory course (workplace readiness, interpersonal skills, career and self-assessment, leadership styles, etc.) at each community college, and a transfer success course at SUNY Oswego which is a one-credit first semester pass/fail course for new transfers.
4. Advisement and support, defined as proactive family-style advising by a caring adult based on the On Point model. This type of advising helps to uncover not only the academic challenges but probe for the financial, social, emotional, medical and basic needs issues that could prevent students from successful matriculation to and through the community colleges and the four-year college.

The four major programs are displayed in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: Four Major Programs of the FITW Transfer Gateways and Completion Grant



The approach to advisement and support, delivered in partnership with On Point, is the most unique of these four components. Instead of waiting until the end of the grant program for evaluation results, the stakeholders invested in an early process inquiry conducted by a third-party consultant to discover opportunities for program refinement, and to share effective practices and lessons learned in this unique model.

To prepare this document a consultant completed a review of program documentation and a review of hundreds of On Point operational documents, participated in a FITW grant retreat hosted by the grant coordinator, and conducted interviews with 13 individuals ranging from frontline advisors to college presidents, including the three other co-authors of this guide.

Student perspective of On Point has been captured extensively in previous On Point studies, which also were reviewed to create this document. In addition, a professor from Syracuse University has volunteered to conduct in-person interviews with a small sample of FITW students for interim feedback, and the third party evaluation team will conduct comprehensive student interviews as part of their process.

As of June 2016, the partners had completed three full semesters of programming under the FITW grant. Records for the first two semesters show that more than 1,000 students have been served by the program with nearly 300 students officially included in the FITW evaluation study.

II. First in the World Proposed Model

Each component of the FITW model presented here is based on established best practices in the transfer process. A brief description of the total model is provided below to assist the reader in understanding the larger context of how On Point's model fits in and is supported by the other elements.

While the four main components meet the primary absolute priority of *increasing community college transfer rates to four-year colleges*, the grantee established another objective: *to create an*

effective collaborative relationship between partnering institutions. This objective has been a hallmark of the implementation of the grant and multiple stakeholders have stated the importance of the collaboration itself.

To build the partnership, SUNY Oswego hosted general grant planning meetings during the first year of the grant and has since held two comprehensive retreats that included multiple representatives from all participating institutions of higher education, On Point, the evaluation team and consultants related to the project.

As another function of an effective collaboration the partners agreed to create seven working groups with a cross-section of representatives on each working group related to their area of expertise or specialty, as follows:

- Advisement and Support
- Evaluation
- Institutional Agreements
- Leadership
- Preparatory and Transition Courses
- Program Pathways
- Sustainability

In addition to the working groups, planning meetings, and retreat, IRB approval was obtained for each partner, and memoranda of understanding and subcontracts were created and signed.

Institutional Agreements

Beyond the memoranda of understanding and subcontracts, the grantees sought to secure updated dual enrollment/admissions agreements and articulation agreements.

Dual enrollment or 2+2 admissions agreements ensure that students who earn an associate's degree at two-year colleges will be admitted to the four-year partner college of their choosing, at the time the student begins at the community college. The student will be required to maintain a certain grade point average and will be advised on courses that will transfer best to the four-year college. The articulation agreements help document the partnership and which credits in specific programs will apply toward a baccalaureate degree at the four-year college. Both serve the purpose to maximize the transfer process for the student.

Since the inception of the grant, dual enrollment agreements were completed between each community college and the four-year college. One strength that helped expedite the implementation of the grant is that two of the community colleges had fairly recent articulation agreements with SUNY Oswego. The general articulation agreement with Onondaga Community College was completed earlier in the grant and the other two are in process and will be completed during the lifespan of the grant.

Program Pathways

The strategy of *program pathways* is more comprehensive than general course alignment. The partners improved the guidance of students through the various curricular pathways by adopting

a three-pronged approach focused on planning with and buy-in from faculty, discipline-specific workshops and user-friendly guides for students.

The grantee hosted two planning meetings, one each in fall and spring semesters, that included faculty from partner institutions to openly discuss transfer challenges.

As a result of the two planning meetings, the grantees subsequently hosted two “transfer connections” workshops targeting faculty across institutions, in certain disciplines, to discuss transfer issues. The grant coordinator offered First in the World faculty members an incentive of \$200 to participate and share their wisdom and discipline-specific experience at a pre-workshop meeting. As of June 2016, a total of 39 faculty had participated in planning meetings and/or the transfer workshops, and 54 other staff members such as transfer advisors, coordinators or support staff had attended workshops.

Two First in the World graduate students assisted with the creation of community college advising guides called “Passports to Oswego,” so that community college students could clearly see the sequence and courses needed to maximize all credits in the transfer process. The initial focus of program pathways at that stage of the grant was based on data collected about the most popular transfer majors. The grantees took this approach to focus their resources and expedite the benefits of transfer for eligible students. Overall, the targeted majors include:

- Accounting
- Broadcasting and Mass Communication
- Business Administration
- Human Development
- Psychology
- Public Justice

Preparatory and Transition Courses

The partners recognized that the transfer process could be confusing for first-generation students or others who are unfamiliar with the process. They also realized the benefit in helping students think more broadly about career options, professional skills and soft skills.

The content of each community college’s career preparatory course was aligned with the *Professional Skills Preparatory Course* at SUNY Oswego. The curricula were developed and refined during the summer between the first and second grant year with staff trained and ready to deliver it to students in the second year of the grant.

Specific topics include career and self-assessment, leadership styles, interpersonal skills in the workplace, professional etiquette, career attire, basic business communication and possible cross-cultural differences.

Career Fitness Program textbooks were loaned to enrolled students to reduce the cost burden on students and ensure consistency in what the FITW students were learning.

Upon transfer to SUNY Oswego students can enroll in a *Transfer Success Seminar*. While not mandatory, enrollment is strongly encouraged and there is significant outreach to FITW students,

as well as other transfer students. This course reinforces what was offered at the community college level but also introduces students to the academic, personal and professional resources available on the four-year campus. The course provides one upper-level credit that is a quarter-long course, graded on a pass/fail basis. Its design is purposeful so that as students launch into their four-year college experience they are surrounded by other transfer students with whom they may have common issues or interests.

Advisement and Support

The method of advising included in this FITW grant goes beyond “business-as-usual” advising that typically occurs on campus. While advisors on campus may have expertise in their specific area, or the campus may even have a “one-stop shop” where students can seek assistance on a variety of issues, the domain of that advising is still focused on the typical college experience for the majority of students. The FITW advisor positions are modeled after On Point advisors, merging traditional academic advising with the unique model On Point has developed after many years of work with vulnerable students. Stakeholders have used a variety of terms to describe the On Point advising as follows:

- Culturally-relevant advising
- Family-style advising
- One-on-one unconditional support
- Proactive advising
- Robust student advisement

The types of students with whom On Point works may also have multiple issues outside of school that could threaten their success. Breaking down barriers, is in fact, part of the On Point mission, shared here: *“We develop the programs and cultivate the relationships to change the lives of traditional and non-traditional, 17- to 29-year-old students by breaking down barriers through access to training, college, and careers for success in life. We work with students from application to graduation, and beyond.”*

The On Point and FITW advisors do something different than what traditional college advisors do. They fill the gaps of knowledge and services that may be out of the scope of the traditional advisors. They also have developed relationships on campus and work on a system of mutual referrals to help students solve problems and move closer to earning their associate’s degree and transferring to the four-year college.

On Point also offers the type of support that a family might provide to a student such as basic supplies including bedding, cleaning products, rides to and from campus at the beginning and end of the semester, and even eyeglasses, if necessary. In addition, On Point also includes career preparation, advising and connections, beyond what partner colleges provide, and it leverages its large network of trained committed volunteers to benefit FITW students.

Not only does On Point provide direct advising to eligible students, but their support is reinforced by affecting change at the higher education institutions. For example, On Point collaborated in the creation of FITW transfer advisor job descriptions, participated in the FITW transfer advisor selection process, provided cross-institutional diversity training, and offered policy recommendations to institutional leaders that could alleviate some of the barriers vulnerable students may face.

The ethos of On Point advising is captured in this mantra that permeates their culture: “Find a way to say yes.”

On Point Ethos:
Find a way to say yes.

The grant partners believe that not only will this comprehensive advising and support benefit the students, but it will increase understanding about at-risk students among higher education stakeholders, it will increase the number of degrees earned and transfers completed, and it will benefit the broader community by contributing to an educated and skilled workforce.

III. Uniqueness of Community Partner Approach

On Point is described in detail in this grant document because no other FITW grantee, at the time of the award, had such a model.

While the partner colleges have student support programs and two have Educational Opportunity Programs (EOPs) on campus, several stakeholders acknowledged that typical campus advisors may have boundaries, rightfully so, around what they discuss with students based on their area of expertise, or their scope of advisement. Likewise, On Point provides a constellation of support services but may direct a student back to campus staff for academic questions about course selection, or questions specifically for a professor, or to make an appointment with a licensed counselor. To understand this entire constellation of services is to truly understand the holistic extent of On Point’s approach.

The stakeholders in this FITW grant chose the On Point model based on significant research that supports proactive one-on-one advising and the acknowledged best practices used by On Point when working with under-represented, low-income, first-generation students who may face many risks on their road to success.

On Point is unique for several reasons. First, they recruit students from community centers and community-based outlets in addition to high schools. This allows them to connect with a population of students that is not typically touched by college admissions counselors. About 60% of the participants are not in high school upon joining On Point – most are high school graduates who are under-employed, or working part-time, and thought that college was out of reach for them. Some students are G.E.D. graduates and others may be refugees or immigrants educated in another country.

Beyond regular financial aid and college application advising, On Point’s reach is extensive. They provide college access-to-success and workforce transition assistance, with several wrap-around services, all free for participants. On Point is well known in Syracuse for providing college supplies and transportation. In addition to bus or train tickets, 160 volunteer mentors drive students to and from school at the beginning and end of the school year, and on breaks, for a total of 190,000 miles in one year.

Each student also receives an on-campus visit from On Point staff during the first three weeks of each semester. Staff members visit more than 75 colleges in the state to make sure students have their books, have food, and have been informed about or introduced to their “campus angel.” Visits from advisors continue monthly at two-year colleges, and weekly for local community colleges in Syracuse, Utica, Herkimer and New York city. On Point helps students re-enroll if they

temporarily withdraw from college, called “stopping out,” and it helps with transfer advising, job placement and certificate programs.

The organization has worked with Le Moyne College, a private Jesuit college, for the past 15 years to secure free summer housing for homeless youth. On Point also has helped students without any financial resources to secure eyeglasses, dentistry and winter coats. The extent of services is further described in the next section of this document.

Further, the On Point model was selected based on its results. In an extensive qualitative study conducted through a TG Public Benefit Grant, *Changing Syracuse Degree by Degree: How On Point for College is Transforming the Lives of Underserved Young Adults*,² the authors Coles and Engstrom included time-to-degree findings about the students in their study.

The most significant finding was included in the study’s executive summary: “*Analysis of academic transcripts showed that On Point students interviewed for the study earned degrees at higher rates than students nationally, and at substantially higher rates than students from low-income backgrounds. This is especially remarkable for two-thirds of students in the study who began college at two-year institutions, 84% of whom went on to earn bachelor’s degrees or were in the process of doing so. Nationally, only a third of community college students transfer to four-year programs, and even fewer earn bachelor’s degrees.*”

In interviews during the process inquiry, several stakeholders gave accolades for how On Point works with partners, in terms of building and maintaining relationships, not only with students but campus staff and executives. They also have the infrastructure to support such an undertaking and the independence to adjust strategically, and quickly, when needed. As one person said, “They are a consistent high-quality high-performer.” Several partners viewed On Point’s approach, in fact, as *the difference* in how this transfer and retention effort is different from others.

IV. On Point for College Model

On Point is a nationally-recognized nonprofit organization based in Syracuse and Utica. It was started in 1999 in the streets of Syracuse, out of the trunk of a car, by its founder Virginia Donohue. On Point has a long history of community-based recruitment of individuals with college potential that traditional college access and success programs may overlook.

Recruitment is targeted at 27 community locations including Boys and Girls Clubs, settlement houses, homeless shelters, libraries, municipal housing sites, refugee schools, G.E.D. sites, Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs) and others. Most On Point students are in their twenties, 30% of them have no active parent in their life, and about two-thirds of them start their higher education journey at a community college.

On Point has built organizational knowledge and solutions specific to the challenges of students who are low-income, the first in their family to attend college, and may be facing additional risk factors such as:

² Coles, A., & Engstrom, C. (2012). *Changing Syracuse Degree by Degree: How On Point for College is Transforming the Lives of Underserved Young Adults*. Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation: Round Rock, TX.

- Lack of an active parent, due to parental incarceration, estrangement, death, drug or alcohol abuse, family separation due to immigration or war, or a myriad of other issues.
- Have aged out of the foster care system and are legally independent, often out on their own without a safety net.
- Face homelessness or housing insecurity, which jeopardizes their personal safety, and academic, social and emotional well-being.
- Struggle with hunger or food insecurity, which affects their ability to concentrate in class and causes additional stress as they strive to meet their basic physical needs.
- Are immigrants, with a strong desire for a college degree but unfamiliar with the U.S. system of higher education.
- Became refugees from unstable or war-impacted countries, with little documentation of their educational status in their country of origin.

Special Traits:

- ✓ Aged Out of Foster Care
- ✓ Court-Involved
- ✓ Homeless Experience
- ✓ Immigrant Experience
- ✓ Refugee Status

Sometimes the policies and practices on a college or university campus cause extreme burdens on these types of students who may, in many cases, just want to give up.

Through building trust with students and investing in personal relationships, where advisors get to know a student's background and familial situation, On Point advisors can often provide direction, advice, referrals to resources, and more, that is beyond the advising typically provided on college campuses.

Beyond direct advising, On Point also teaches students how to navigate higher education, and teaches other campus advisors about the hidden roadblocks that may affect successful transfer and retention. Specific to the FITW grant, advisement occurs in small groups and with "one-on-one unconditional support."

On Point also serves as an advocate for policy changes, large and small, to help institutions better serve first-generation, low-income students. Stakeholders at multiple levels have mentioned how On Point always tries to find a way to support its students, and that its staff are very resourceful people. In fact, many of the On Point staff share traits and backgrounds similar to the participating students and they indeed understand their struggle.

First in the World Target Students

On Point has an extensive network of other community organizations with which it works in Syracuse and Utica. Whether students were first introduced to On Point in the community, or on a college campus, they are all considered "On Point" students before, during and after their interaction with On Point.

On Point has no barriers to entry and does not require a minimum grade point average. If a student does not have a high school diploma, On Point will help that student enroll in a G.E.D. program, beginning the pipeline. As several people stated in their interviews to prepare this guide, “On Point meets the students where they are at.”

For the purposes of the FITW grant, the parameters for student eligibility are as follows:

- First-generation college student status **or** Pell grant recipient (many are both);
- Minimum of 18 years’ old; and
- Full-time, first-time, degree-seeking student.

Students are recruited through On Point’s regular mechanisms in the community or through on-campus transfer workshops at the FITW partner colleges, email outreach to eligible students identified by institutional research teams, campus orientation and open house events, transfer fairs where the option to transfer is featured, and through transfer and advising centers on campuses.

Staffing

The FITW grant funds four full-time FITW transfer success advisors that are employees of the colleges with one at Onondaga, one at Mohawk Valley, and two at SUNY Oswego, although one of those advisors splits her time between SUNY Oswego and Cayuga Community College. Additionally, there are three full-time On Point advisors, two based in Syracuse and one based in Utica, who visit the community colleges once a week, twice a week, or once a month, based on the volume of students at each campus. These individuals are supported by On Point’s core staff in the Syracuse and Utica offices.

All FITW advisors received training in the On Point model, although to varying degrees depending on when they were hired. Much training also occurs on-the-job as more seasoned advisors work through scenarios with other advisors who may need additional support.

At this stage of the grant, the transfer advisors employed by the colleges and the transfer advisors employed by On Point refer students to each other as needed. The colleges’ “business-as-usual” advising is primarily focused on academic concerns. The reason a student is struggling may not be addressed by the campus advisor, however, the factors behind *why* a student is struggling, and possible solutions, are On Point’s specialty and area of expertise.

In most cases, the On Point advisors purposely situate themselves at a table in main corridors or hallways to “catch” students as they pass by and check in with them. They take advantage of traffic flow, to reach as many students as possible. On Point advisors use email, phone and text messages during normal business hours and during evenings and weekends, if a student needs them. This is not the model used by most traditional college-based student advisors, and again, may not be realistic for how their positions are structured.

Particularly noteworthy is On Point’s use of the Harrison Assessment³ in their hiring process. Over the years, On Point leaders have identified the traits of candidates that make successful advisors in the On Point method and culture. For example, they seek people who are assessed as

³ A proprietary tool that can be accessed at <http://www.harrisonassessments.com/>

“helpful” with “warmth and empathy,” who are “cause-motivated” and “persistent.” These traits are consistent with descriptions of On Point advising gathered during the interviews for this guide.

Core Principles

In the previously mentioned study, *Changing Syracuse Degree by Degree*, authors Coles and Engstrom identified eight core principles that guide the work of On Point. According to Coles and Engstrom, “the reliable, consistent enactment of these values by staff and others, and how students in turn make meaning of them, are key to understanding On Point’s success.” The principles, reprinted here with permission, are:

1. A passionate commitment to enhance the lives of urban youth and an unwavering belief in their potential for success.
2. A conviction that college can be transformational for students, their families and the community.
3. A commitment to serve vulnerable youth who have slipped through the cracks.
4. A commitment to respond to the individual needs of the students they serve.
5. The provision of unconditional support, encouragement and guidance.
6. Dedication to promoting students’ development and maturity by encouraging accountability and respect.
7. A commitment to developing relationships with students that are “real,” reliable and lifelong.
8. A commitment to enhance the community they serve.

These core principles permeate the delivery of On Point services to students, including those who participate in the FITW grant.

Services

On Point’s service delivery model has matured through the years, and relies on best practices combined with deep knowledge of the special needs of under-represented student populations. Many partners interviewed for this guide heralded the ingenuity and resourcefulness of On Point.

The entire field of college access and retention has been professionalized over the past two decades with millions of dollars spent on college access advisor training and colleges’ institutional retention efforts. One leading organization in the field, the National College Access Network, has recognized On Point and its founder Virginia Donohue, with a prestigious best practice award.

On Point offers a circle of support to its students that is holistic and leaves nothing to chance. While On Point reaches out to elementary, middle and high school students through its *Early Awareness* programming, the focus of this guide is their *College Access and Success* programming.

Partners interviewed for this guide noted that it would be difficult for a small or low-capacity organization to manage the multitude of college access and success services provided by On Point. On Point staff also stated in interviews that while there is a sequence to the college-going process, they accept students “where they are at,” at any point in the continuum.

While certain steps in the college process require a linear approach, On Point staff is adept enough to “circle back” if necessary, especially when emergencies or unforeseen circumstances threaten to derail a student. The staff is quick to intervene to minimize the risk and get students back on track.

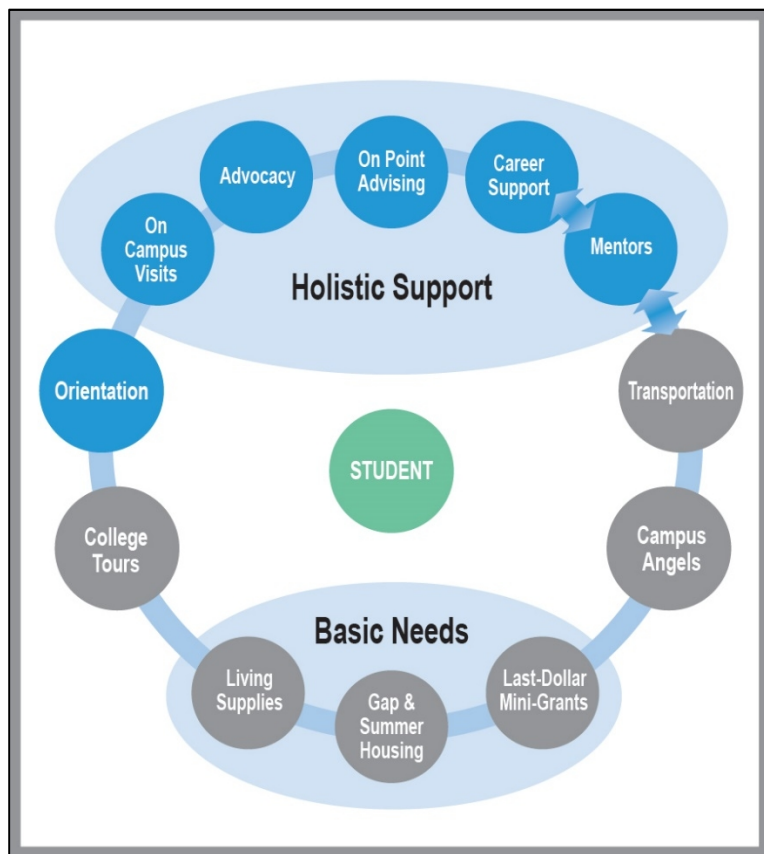
On Point conducts community-based and campus-based recruitment. After students complete an application, providing details about their stage of career and college preparation, they enter the On Point family. On Point has open enrollment throughout the year with no minimum academic requirements. To date, no student has ever been turned away.

On Point provides:

- Orientation for first-time college students and for transfer students
- Comprehensive college access and success advising (application, enrollment, financial aid)
- Advocacy at an individual and institutional level
- On-campus visits to current college students
- Career services and support
- Mentors
- Transportation to and from college
- Campus angels
- College tours for potential college students and transfer students
- Basic living supplies/kits including room supplies and clothing (and food, if needed)
- Gap and summer housing for students without alternatives
- Last-dollar mini-grants

The constellation of services provided by On Point is summarized in Diagram 2 on the following page.

Diagram 2: Constellation of Services and Support Provided by On Point for College



The items in blue in the diagram are those provided to FITW students through the grant and the items in gray are provided to all On Point students but are not funded through the grant. In cases of replication of this model, funding would be needed to provide the support services not covered by the grant.

Note that some supports may seem like a regular part of the college experience, but it is the comprehensiveness of the supports, when combined, provided by staff with a high level of cultural competency and experience, that makes it unique. **A brief description of each type of service, why it is provided, and examples, are provided below.**

Orientation

The starting point for entry to On Point's college success services is its orientation. A three-hour orientation is offered twice a week in June, July and August, and a few times in January of each year, for students who start college in January. It includes On Point-specific information and describes mutual expectations between the program and the students.

This orientation also includes what students can expect on a college campus and covers topics that people more familiar with college may already know, but first-generation students certainly may not. Topics include preventative problem-solving on time management, living in a residence hall, roommate issues, diversity issues, etc. It also includes the consequences of a student's choices and effects on grants, loans, and other forms of financial aid.

The orientation is a combination of lecture and interaction and students are surrounded by other people like them who are facing similar issues. The regular freshman orientation provided by a campus may assume a certain level of understanding from students, whereas On Point assumes the student does not know college terminology, rules and social norms on a campus. A few examples from the orientation presentation include:

Credits Attempted vs. Credits Earned

At the end of your 1st semester you **MUST HAVE 3 credits earned to be eligible for TAP (NY's Tuition Assistance Program) your 2nd semester.**

- ▶ 15 credits before your 3rd semester
- ▶ 27 credits before your 4th semester

If you withdraw from any of your classes they will count as credits attempted *and not earned*.

- ▶ If your ratio of credits earned vs. credits attempted is not within the current guidelines, then your state and federal financial aid may be **negatively affected**.

Being a good roommate demands effort from everyone involved...

- ▶ Sign a Roommate Agreement!
- ▶ Communicate
 - How clean/messy are you?
 - When do you go to bed?
 - Do you share clothes?
 - Do you share music/ books?
- ▶ Don't Be A Doormat
 - Be responsible
 - Be respectable

On Point shares their credo with students, which is: “Once an On Point student, always an On Point student.” This means that wherever they are in their educational journey, including if they delay college, or “stop-out,” they are welcome back at any time. On Point has no minimum grade point requirements and advisors are trained to proceed with the premise that “everybody can go to college.” Students are told that whether they “stumble or soar” On Point is there for them. This non-judgmental unconditional support is another hallmark of On Point.

“Once an On Point student, always an On Point student.”

Upon completion of the orientation, students are eligible for a “basic needs” shopping trip, organized by and paid for by On Point. These basic items are described later in the guide.

On Point also provides *transfer-specific* orientation to break down the steps necessary for successful transfer, and educate students about the myriad of issues that can prevent a successful transfer.

On Point also has successfully advocated with students for reverse transfer. This is the process by which students combine credits from both the two-year and four-year institutions and apply the credits toward an associate's degree from the two-year institution. It is worth pursuing if it results in an associate's degree on record for the student.

In orientation, On Point covers its least favorable type of transfer, which is a lateral transfer from a two-year to two-year college or a four-year to four-year college. On Point's students tend to lose focus or lose credits in these scenarios. Students sometimes choose this option if the first college was not a good fit, the workload at the first college seems too difficult, or students choose to move home and commute to college. On Point advisors can help students evaluate the situation and help them focus on the investment they have already made, encouraging them to reconsider completion at their current institution.

On Point Advising

On Point has highly-trained advisors who, in most cases, were also first-generation students from lower-income families or refugee groups. The credibility and trust of the advisors with the students are essential to building and maintaining the relationship through which the advising is delivered. Students also are informed by On Point staff of the requirement for mutual respect and integrity to maintain the relationship.

On Point seeks to teach each student about the nuances of the higher education system, financial aid, placement tests, course selection, etc. This approach is based on the reality that although family members may support the students in their efforts, few are likely to have detailed college know-how.

In all cases, On Point advisors provide culturally-relevant proactive advising to get to the root of problems that may deter academic success. Students often don't understand the unintended consequences of their actions such as dropping a class and becoming less than full-time, which then results in a reduction in their financial aid package.

In one example, On Point advisors noticed a student was not doing well in class and her grades were slipping. Through probing for answers, the staff determined that the student had a significant health issue. On Point was able to help the student manage the health problem and get treatment. The result was fewer days missed and less chance of withdrawal from school.

Probing questions are an accepted and encouraged method in the On Point way. Advisors might open a conversation with a student with a general question such as, "How's it going?" but they do not accept vague answers such as, "Yeah, it's okay," because the meaning of "okay" from student to student could vary greatly. One student may be thinking "It's okay, I have a B average," and another may be thinking "It's okay, I only failed one class this semester." Examples of probing questions asked by advisors might be:

- "Are you keeping up with your assignments?"
- "Are you using the study skills that we identified that work for you?"
- "Have you used the writing center or tutoring yet?" followed up with "How did that work out for you?" or "If not, why not?"

On Point advisors have been known to physically walk a student to a resource center or office on campus to immediately address the issue a student is facing or to personally introduce them to a campus advisor or another staff member. This reduces the fear, stress or intimidation of the

“unknown,” increases knowledge about campus resources, and increases the likelihood that the student will sign up or use the resource because they are physically there.

For sensitive issues, such as homelessness or housing insecurity, advisors would never begin by asking, “Are you homeless?” Instead, advisors are trained to ask a series of questions at different interactions. Examples include:

- “Where are you staying over break?” to discern if a student has shelter when campus shuts down.
- “Do you have a quiet place to study for exams?” to help uncover if their living situation is stable or unstable.
- “Will you live at home for the first semester?” to figure out their living situation, or if they have a home, upon starting college.

The answers to those questions trigger other interactions and support services of which the student may not be aware.

On Point advisors are trained to look for signs of stress, depression, anxiety, self-harm and other mental health issues. On Point refers students to on-campus counselors or other resources on a case-by-case basis.

In its College Success Manual, On Point states, *“It is important that advisors (i) encourage students’ ability to navigate the academic rigors of the social landscape of college and (ii) challenge students’ decisions and actions if they are negatively impacting their ability to be successful in school.”*

On Point offers drop-in advising at their offices, on the FITW partner campuses, and at dozens of community centers and other organizations that support at-risk or vulnerable youth.

The flexibility, mobility, and geographically abundant access to On Point advising is another unique aspect not offered by traditional campus advising offices.

Advocacy

Campus, state and federal policies related to academics and financial aid in higher education may unintentionally harm the most vulnerable students. Addressing those policies at the root, instead of advising around them or making accommodations for them, will increase rates of retention, transfer and graduation. In fact, at one college campus in New York, On Point advocated for a policy change on graduation requirements that increased graduation by 10% in one year. This not only helps On Point students but *all* students.

While On Point has advocated and provided testimony at a state level on issues that cause barriers for students, much can be done at a campus level with little or no cost to the college, and it can be done expeditiously.

Students are taught and encouraged to advocate for themselves, especially because their distinct needs may be under-addressed on campus. Examples of issues that On Point advocated for on FITW campuses, to increase transfer, retention and completion rates, include:

- Books

Problem: Securing required textbooks in time to start class when financial aid checks are not disbursed until a month after classes start. While this scenario may not pose a hardship for a student who has access to their own savings, or access to a parent's money, it poses a hardship for the most financially vulnerable students.

Solution: On Point initiated an expedited financial aid process so students could get their books more quickly, which they need right away at the beginning of each semester.

Cost: No additional financial cost; minimal staff time to inform book store employees and the FITW students that college officials agreed to an expedited process.

Benefit: All students, regardless of income level, can start the semester with required textbooks, increasing the likelihood of success.

- Transcripts

Problem: Students need an official copy of their student transcript for transfer, scholarship applications, or other reasons, but it costs \$5 per transcript. This small amount is often an impediment to timely acquisition of a transcript, often needed by a certain deadline. A student truly may not have \$5, \$10 or \$15 to spare at the time.

Solution: Colleges waive the transcript fees for low-income students; if for any reason that is not possible (students who may be near but do not meet the "low-income" definition) On Point uses its own funds to cover the cost.

Cost: Miniscule revenue loss on campus from transcript fees, which are not a major source of revenue compared to the college or university's total budget.

Benefit: Students can complete the transfer process at an opportune time vs. waiting until they have available funds which could be an entire semester later. Students can use their transcripts where needed, for other opportunities.

On-Campus Visits

Starting at a new school can be stressful for any student and for many first-generation students the initial acclimation to a campus is simply overwhelming. The situation is compounded for those with no parental guidance. On Point knows that students are most vulnerable in the first few weeks of starting classes and makes an attempt to visit every student during that time.

Advisors, and in some cases volunteers, check in with students during the first two or three weeks each semester at all campuses where students are enrolled. This process is easier at the FITW grantee institutions because staff is already assigned there, but On Point conducts campus visits for all of its students who attend any college or university across New York state. Students who are attending college out-of-state are checked on with phone calls or Internet-based video chatting.

**Campus visits
at beginning of
each semester:**

**Got Books?
Got Food?**

Check-in includes asking questions and problem-solving around common issues that if left unresolved could seriously impact student success and retention. Once again, the On Point advisors go beyond academics to assess the total college experience.

This is the checklist used by On Point college success and transfer advisors each September and January:

Beginning of semester checklist:

- ☐ Ensure that the student's financial aid is in order
- ☐ Ensure that the student is adjusting well
- ☐ Ensure that the student has their books and other supplies
- ☐ Ensure that there are no problems with the student's meal plan and they have adequate plans for food while on campus
- ☐ Update contact information

Additionally, the advisor or volunteer will check on accommodations for students with physical or learning disabilities and introduce the student to on-campus resources. All students are informed about or introduced to their “campus angel,” who is a caring adult to whom they can turn for help.

On Point also trains staff on common first-year challenges of college students and provides a manual that includes specific advising strategies to address those challenges, with topics such as:

- Difficulty managing course load
- Financial aid delays or processing issues
- Roommate conflict issues
- Poor academic performance and appeals

A student that has someone else in the family who attended college may have easier access to advice to solve these issues. As many staff stated, students living in poverty may have multiple challenges that can have a domino effect in their lives, and college becomes a lower priority. In the On Point model, there is a whole team of savvy advisors to help keep students in school and on track to graduate.

Career Services and Support

The comprehensive career support that On Point provides to participants was designed based on two key factors about this student population:

- Students may not have professionals in their lives to guide them; and
- Students, especially recent immigrants or refugees, may not be aware of cultural norms in the U.S. business world.

On Point builds familial relationships with students that serve as the base for having crucial conversations to convey the “unwritten rules” of the business world and to address students’ fears

or uncertainties. The advisors coach students on soft skills, professional courtesies, supervisor and subordinate roles, and more.

Part of the On Point ethos requires staff to know participants as valuable people with assets that can contribute their skills to the community. The students may be at a disadvantage if they do not have career-experienced people in their life to offer guidance, discuss career strategy or model professional behavior and attire. Conversely, On Point helps build each student's confidence by reinforcing his or her advantages in problem-solving, persistence and resourcefulness.

They may have the skills, technical expertise or knowledge to do a job, but need assistance understanding how to navigate the hiring process or how to network within their industry, based on American cultural norms. Simple gestures such as eye contact, handshakes, posture, non-verbal cues, and more, are discussed with students on a case-by-case basis.

On Point's advisors are trained to be culturally sensitive and understanding about non-westernized cultures. In the case of something as sensitive as personal hygiene, an on-campus career advisor may not feel comfortable talking with a student about the issue and the expectations in a business setting.

One example is the subject of body odor. In some cultures, natural odor is totally normal and expected and people do not try to mask it. On Point acknowledges the normalcy of that trait in that culture, affirming the student and making them feel comfortable. The advisor then may explain how the U.S. business culture differs and it would be appropriate and expected to wear deodorant to an interview, or once employed, if that is the cultural norm of the business setting.

On Point staff that participated in interviews about the FITW grant shared examples of using humor to break the ice about sensitive subjects, and because On Point has built up goodwill and social capital with the students, their guidance is usually well-received.

Students that participate in On Point's career services also can gain access to professional attire through agreements that On Point has secured with clothing banks and through personal donations. If a student needs a required uniform but lacks the funds to purchase it, On Point will provide funding.

Lastly, On Point believes that it is essential to build global and cultural fluency so that their students experience what other job candidates may already have experienced such as trips to the opera, theater or fine dining. In many cases, students in the career services component are matched with a volunteer mentor who can provide those experiences to the students, and support the staff's efforts at building career-ready candidates. Traditional on-campus career advising may include mentorship opportunities, but they tend to be focused more on industry knowledge or connections, and in most cases do not account for coaching foreign-born students on U.S.-centric business culture. Throughout the process On Point teaches students how to use and assemble the resources available to prepare for the workforce, with advisors acting as guides in the process.

Students can access career services with an On Point advisor by making an appointment or requesting help on a drop-in basis. The program allows for both options to accommodate student schedules, while also acknowledging that if a student has secured an interview, they may not have time to book an appointment to get the services they need in time for the interview. On Point maintains a career services coordinator position, but in the case of drop-in students, any staff is

available to provide immediate assistance, while informing the coordinator of what has transpired.

Mentors

Mentors have been, and continue to be, a crucial part of On Point's infrastructure. They are not an add-on or afterthought. On Point recruits, trains, and invests in retaining its mentors, just as robustly as it does for its employees. Mentors are recruited from a variety of sources, including the business community, churches, service organizations and the pool of retired teachers. Staff members want students to interact with successful people in a low-stakes environment, where the conversations can be informal in the short term but impactful in the long term.

On Point provides mentors to support student retention and career services. More broadly, it leverages a large volunteer population that contributes to building an educated workforce through the mentors' volunteerism with vulnerable students who have career potential.

Most mentors provide rides to and from campus and help students get settled in their housing. Most recent figures show that approximately 160 mentors drove students 190,000 miles in a 12-month period. On Point has extensive evidence that ride time is cherished by both the student and the mentor.

Beyond rides, mentors also regularly help On Point gather college supplies, volunteer at its annual golf tournament and celebration dinner, and hold "friend-raiser" events to introduce On Point to new people in the community. They are often regular donors to the organization, too.

People of influence, including the former mayor of Syracuse, have served as mentors to On Point students. **On Point improves the community in which it operates and pulls people together.**

"I can state unequivocally that there is no organization in Syracuse that has done more to decrease violence than On Point for College."

— Syracuse Chief of Police, Frank Fowler

More recently, mentors have played an increasingly significant role in the On Point career services, helping with résumé workshops, mock-interviews and participating in mentoring, empowerment and networking events, which pair professional people from the community with program graduates in a business networking/mentoring setting.

As for implementation, when an On Point student makes a request for help (transportation, tutoring, job shadowing, etc.), that student's name and contact information are passed on to a mentor via email or phone, and the mentor makes arrangements with the student. On Point maintains volunteer insurance and conducts background checks on all mentors.

On Point maintains a mentor manual that outlines subjects such as dealing with inclement weather, handling reimbursements, protocols for pick up and drop off at campus, conversation starters, sharing career stories, and the types of situations (evidence of depression, dropping out, family conflict) where a mentor should call staff for assistance.

Many mentors have developed friendships with their mentees that have extended long beyond the period that the student received On Point services, and they have, on occasion, opened their lives and homes to On Point students considering them members of the family.

Transportation

What started off as simple rides to college became the vehicle, literally, for mentoring and advising by caring adults. One of the most unique aspects of On Point, which is not funded by the FITW grant, but is provided to every student who needs it, is transportation to and from college at the beginning and end of the academic year, and on Thanksgiving, winter, and spring break. Everyone pitches in – volunteer mentors, paid drivers and staff.

This is at its core the simplest form of college access, transfer and retention provided by On Point. These rides are a hallmark of the program treasured by students and drivers alike. Students may not have any other transportation available to them, which could prevent their attendance at all. It may seem logical for their family to transport them but family members or friends may not have money for trip expenses, may not be reliable, or may not have safe, reliable transportation, or any transportation available.

On the rides, students get to meet a mentor, and possibly, other students attending the same college – instantly building a network of peers. Mentors and drivers also introduce students to their “campus angel,” when possible, on the initial visit.

In addition, On Point will transport a student for placement tests, a court appearance, in an emergency, for a funeral, to an important health appointment for themselves, or to visit a significantly ill or hospitalized parent. These are the types of things that families with means would provide to their own children and On Point knows that these are the types of situations that can cause a student to miss school or drop out completely.

On Point supplements the volunteer mentors/drivers with some paid drivers to keep its commitment of providing rides to every student who needs one. In some cases, due to logistics, cost or scheduling, On Point will issue bus passes or train tickets to students. The preference is that mentors are used for all first-time trips to college because students are taking all their school supplies, bedding and belongings. Transportation for subsequent trips can be more flexible, by bus or train, if needed.

Just as it has explicit instructions for mentors, On Point maintains clear detailed instructions and rules for its drivers, and for students, on how to access transportation services. In one example, students are discouraged from visiting home too frequently because On Point has historical evidence showing that students who visit home too much, are actually at a greater risk of dropping out, than students who only visit home on breaks.

Campus Angels

On Point operates a “campus angel” program to ensure that students have someone on campus that they can contact, or see in person, in an emergency. This person also serves as a general advocate and ally for all On Point students on their campus. On Point staff spends time to identify compassionate, proactive on-campus faculty and staff who can serve as a safety net for

students and a liaison with campus officials and advisors should issues arise. In many cases, the campus angels self-select and get approval from On Point.

Campus angels help students adjust to rural life, as one example, or advocate for more flexible meal plans/food cards in another. Campus angels are given clear instructions on student scenarios and requests and how to respond to each, but mostly, On Point relies on the campus angels' wisdom and expertise about their campus.

Angels can be at any level of the college hierarchy but one unifying quality is being able to effectively help students navigate the college system, find resources and solve problems. On campuses where On Point has long-standing relationships, there may be more than one campus angel. There is no direct cost to implementing a campus angel program, however, time and talent are donated by the campus angels.

College Tours

While college tours are not funded by the FITW grant, they are an essential part of the On Point model. According to On Point's records, the majority of their students enroll in one of the colleges they toured.

The purpose is to expose students to college options in the state and help them compare college choices for academics, affordability, location and personal fit. Due to lack of transportation or family college knowledge, many students have never visited a college campus, and for potential transfer students, they are reluctant to transfer to a college they have never seen.

On Point arranges logistics, registration and preparation for college tours, transportation, and breakfast and lunch for participants. Tours are scheduled Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays throughout the year and any On Point student is eligible, including high school students, G.E.D. students, and young adults who are considering college, including transfer students.

Students sign-up in advance, are confirmed by staff and are instructed of their pick-up and drop-off location, which most times is at the On Point office, although transportation can be provided to the On Point office if the lack of a ride would prevent a student from attending the tour.

There is an assigned advisor, backup advisor, and backup driver for every college tour on the calendar. On Point also will provide a College Tour Absence Letter if the student is still a senior in high school so that their time out of class may be counted as an excused absence, although it is at the discretion of the high school to do so.

Staff maintains a Campus Tour Question List, a Campus Tour Rules and Explanations List and has extensive information for staff on how to conduct the tour itself, including the weeks of preparation leading up to each tour. During the ride to each campus, On Point provides guidance to students on how to get the most out of the tour.

On Point prefers its own tours rather than joining regularly scheduled open houses, again, because of the distinct needs of this population of students that regular college tours or open houses may not address. While some campuses host tours for transfer student candidates, most tours are focused on traditional incoming freshman and may not address the needs of G.E.D. students, stop-outs, or students who are parents.

Living Supplies/Kits

Low-income, first-generation college students may not be equipped financially to prepare their new dorm room or apartment where they will live in college, or they may not have basic knowledge about the type of necessities required for independent living or shared living situation. Beyond this challenge, students often face food shortages or food insecurity while enrolled in college, making it hard to study or concentrate in class when they are constantly hungry.

To respond to these basic needs, another hallmark of the On Point model is equipping students with the supplies they will need once on campus. On Point provides backpacks of school supplies, residential kits for those living on campus, and personal kits for hygiene. A snapshot of the list of supplies is provided here:

What's in your backpack?	What's in your "personal kit?"
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electric Alarm Clock• Flash Drive• Dictionary• Index Cards• Five Subject Notebook• Calculator• Highlighters• Pens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toothpaste• Toothbrush• Deodorant• Shampoo• Conditioner• Bar of Soap• Lotion

These kits are supplied by donations or by bulk purchases made by On Point. In addition, after completing the On Point college orientation hosted before the beginning of each semester, students who completed that semester's orientation are eligible for a \$150 stipend to spend at a mall on clothing and related essentials.

Students can buy clothes, shoes/boots, shower shoes, underwear, belts and hats. Some students prefer to purchase typical college-age clothing such as jeans and hoodies, whereas others use it as an opportunity to purchase interview attire. Students are prohibited from buying purses, sunglasses, perfume, jewelry, vitamins, electronics or other non-essentials.

This group "school shopping" experience is reported to be a huge confidence booster for On Point students and it reinforces their new identity as college students. In program documentation, students have said that it helps them start fresh and fit in on their new campuses.

On Point also provides groceries or rides to food banks in emergencies and during breaks, if needed. Emergencies could be caused by cash flow issues due to financial aid delays, or inflexible food purchasing/food card policies, or lack of access to food when campus shuts down.

Gap and Summer Housing

In *Hungry to Learn: Addressing Food and Housing Insecurity Among Undergraduates*,⁴ authors Goldrick-Rab, Broton and Eisenberg documented that 13% of the 4,000 community college students in their study were homeless within the previous year defined as thrown out of their home,

⁴ Goldrick-Rab, S., Broton, K., & Eisenberg, D. (2015). *Hungry to Learn: Addressing Food and Housing Insecurity Among Undergraduates*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin HOPE Lab

evicted from their home, stayed in a shelter, stayed in an abandoned building, or other situations described by the authors. A staggering 52% of the students in their study faced other housing insecurity such as not paying the full amount on rent or utilities, moving twice in a year, doubling up, or moving in with others due to financial problems.

While the information, let alone research, about homeless college students is sparse at best, On Point has always been aware of this issue because it is part of the founder's impetus in starting On Point. She had helped her son's friend, a young man who had been "couch surfing,"⁵ get into college.

Students become vulnerable when they do not have a safe place to live during school or during breaks. When campus shuts down there are not many alternatives. On Point provides relief in helping secure stable housing so that students can focus on college. Much like their elementary and high school counterparts that are homeless, college students often find that school is the only stable place in their life.

In addition, community college tuition in New York, where this FITW grant operates, is based on county of residence. Students may face higher (or lower) tuition depending on where they live. On Point has managed to help many students stay in school, and it has helped colleges increase retention for students experiencing significant housing issues. Strategies used by On Point include:

- Providing free summer housing for homeless students by negotiating with a private college for donated dorm space, food from a local food bank, and access to campus laundry facilities during summer break.
- Negotiating with a local rescue mission to reserve space for On Point students to live for free in the volunteers' dormitory and eat in the meal hall.
- Negotiating with the Department of Social Services so that students can use On Point's address to get their required Certificate of Residency, which is used to determine tuition rates.

These creative solutions show the resourcefulness of On Point leadership and staff, and the generosity of community allies to support On Point's mission. These strategies are another example of On Point's role as a student advocate and creative problem-solver, that could be negotiated in other campus communities.

In one incredible example of On Point's commitment to meet students' housing needs, when a fire occurred on a partner college campus, it was the On Point advisor who coordinated with the Office of Student Affairs to reach every On Point student who lost housing, as well as other students affected by the fire, and secured temporary housing. In some cases, On Point also paid for extended stays at hotels for the students who had nowhere else to live.

While the college had its official response, that plan did not accommodate for the needs of students with no active parent to pick them up, no home, or no other housing options. This is one of the most effective examples of how On Point advising is not "business-as-usual" advising. The staff

⁵ Retrieved from <http://www.macmillandictionary.com>: "People who have unstable, temporary living arrangements are often described as *couch surfers*."

knew that these vulnerable students would be in jeopardy and took immediate action, serving as their safety net, to help them stay enrolled.

Last-Dollar Mini-Grants

With an eye on increasing retention rates, more campuses are creating emergency funds as a solution to fill the gap when an expense jeopardizes student enrollment, matriculation or success. On Point has used mini-grants extensively over the lifetime of the organization and has quietly and behind-the-scenes prevented students from dropping out, or averted other disasters that could impact student success. This type of funding is an immediate intervention provided with as little bureaucracy as possible to reduce stress and solve the problem.

On Point does not have a set limit or difficult process for students to access the funds; it requires a brief explanation and the approval of a program director. Because On Point has built a relationship of mutual trust with the student, they can help assess the situation and respond quickly with confidence. Staff members also counsel students through the process to examine if the type of emergency could be prevented in the future, although this is done without judgment or condemnation.

Housing deposits are a very common expense that On Point students encounter that could jeopardize enrollment or matriculation. These deposits are typically due months before school starts, as are security deposits, required by landlords. To alleviate this barrier, On Point will either pay the expense outright, or make a small loan, to be paid back after financial aid checks arrive. Each option is at the discretion of the program director.

On Point asks colleges for transcript fee waivers for low-income students or pays the fee if the student simply does not have \$5 by the time they need the transcript. This situation occurs mostly in the transfer process, for scholarship applications or other verification requests.

In another example, On Point may pay for books or other required supplies on a personalized basis. This, too, could be solved with a short-term loan or emergency loan until financial aid checks arrive.

Lastly, On Point may pay for eyeglasses, obtain free dental care, or gain pro-bono health care services from one of its supporters, in situations where eyesight or dental pain impedes participation in class, work or study time.

Other Support

Due to donor interest in increasing degree completion in Math and Science, On Point has a designated fund to assist students, in some instances, with paying for Math or Science courses that they need to complete their degrees during summer and winter breaks.

A unique “Cross the Line” scholarship also is available to students who may have exhausted their financial aid options and need nominal tuition support to finish their degree. Besides the Math and Science grant, and this small fund, On Point does not provide tuition assistance.

On Point also offers a popular Laptop Giveaway once a year to its highest performing students, with those students who earn a 3.0 or above grade point average getting top priority for a free laptop.

While these extra incentives definitely support student matriculation and timely completion they are not essential to implementing the rest of the On Point model.

Lastly, On Point has the policy to take students back at any point, should they stop out of college. On Point understands that opportunities and challenges happen and that does not diminish the student's worthiness for college or another post-secondary opportunity.

V. Higher Education Components for Success

The partner institutions are all engaged in this FITW Transfer Gateways and Completion model that includes strong institutional agreements, preparatory and transfer transition courses, program pathways, and advising and unconditional support from On Point. While this document is heavily focused on describing the On Point method, because that is the most unique piece of the grant, all partners acknowledge that On Point could not be successful without strong institutional support and the willingness of campus officials to implement best practice policies that support vulnerable students.

The partners have already exhibited some of the positive traits in supporting transfer as described by Shaw and London⁶ in *Culture and Ideology in Keeping Transfer Commitment: Three Community Colleges*, whereby the academic and curricular aspects of the transfer process are important but the *support services* for students intending to transfer should be equally emphasized.

The *Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group)* conducted an extensive literature review spanning more than 100 references. In their review, they describe the creation of a "transfer culture"⁷ by college leadership as a powerful tool to increase transfer rates, meaning that colleges that see transfer as their primary function, and emphasize transfer in policy and practices, have much higher transfer rates than colleges where administrators do not see transfer as their primary function.

Key traits of higher education partners

Beyond the concept of developing "transfer culture," there are other partnership traits that make this FITW model successful. Interview subjects from this FITW grant identified several key elements for institutional success, and the key traits of effective higher education partners. Several common themes emerged, and are paraphrased, as follows:

- Openness to consider change and willingness to implement change were the most frequent partnership traits stated by interviewees.

⁶ Shaw, K. & London, H. (2001). *Culture and Ideology in Keeping Transfer Commitment: Three Community Colleges*. *The Review of Higher Education*, 25, 91-114.

⁷ Serban, A., Kozeracki, C., Boroch, D., Over, L., Malmgren, I. & Smith, B., *Transfer Issues and Effective Practices: A Review of the Literature*. (2008). Retrieved from The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges: https://rpgroup.org/system/files/TLC_Transfer_Practices_Lit_review.pdf

- Champions on campus willing to negotiate up or down the hierarchy as needed.
- Leadership that truly believes that every student can succeed with a “student-first” culture.
- Deep sense of mission to community, people in poverty and overcoming obstacles.
- Passionate people who have compassion for vulnerable students, and see them as an asset, not a deficit.
- Quick leadership response time to solve problems with executive authority and reduce bureaucracy.
- Respect for the expertise of the community partner, inclusion in high-level decision making, and in the on-campus advisor hiring process.
- Strong data capacity; not only the technical aspects but also the value of data-driven decisions.
- Have “their own ship in order” before engaging in such a deep partnership.
- Ability and commitment to work in a collective impact model, with sharing resources and expertise across institutions for the good of the cause.
- Recognition that students may need more than what the college can offer within its resources or constraints, and seek partners to fill those gaps instead of letting the gaps exist.

Best practice college policies for vulnerable youth

As part of its broader advocacy efforts, On Point promotes several best practices for colleges to increase student retention and transfer on their campuses. A sampling of these suggestions includes:

Purchasing and financial policies

- ✓ Require college bookstores to carry **all** required supplies (i.e. art supplies, calculators, culinary uniforms) combined with the option to borrow against financial aid at the beginning of the semester to purchase these supplies. While the items may be available at another store, students often don’t have the cash to make the purchase there; whereas if they can borrow against financial aid, at the campus bookstore, they can start the semester with their required supplies.
- ✓ Offer emergency loans against financial aid for bus tickets and train fare to and from home, should family emergencies arise. The reality is that the student may go home and not come back because they do not have the fare, and the college has just lost a student.
- ✓ Provide free transcript services for low-income students.

- ✓ Eliminate hidden fees for low-income students that prevent access to learning or studying such as Internet or website access fees, or fees to use computers in residence halls.
- ✓ Offer sufficient computer availability for low-income students who do not own their own computers, or offer a laptop loan or buy-out option.
- ✓ Run financial modeling to see how very vulnerable students – homeless, aged out of foster care, no parent income records – fare in a typical financial aid process and address the gaps.

Academic policies

- ✓ Offer early placement tests, and buses from key cities, to take placement tests on campus. While On Point transports many students to placement testing, they have discovered that many low-income students are forced to wait until the first day of college, due to lack of transportation. When students miss early placement testing they may also miss out on the best course selections.
- ✓ Require that class scheduling is done with an advisor, especially in the case of transfer students; do not leave it to chance that students will select the correct sequence to expedite transfer or degree completion.
- ✓ Offer accelerated programs coordinated with high demand jobs (i.e. nanotech) that guarantee certificates and diplomas in less time, and offer those classes between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. so that students can work after class or be home for their families.
- ✓ Provide accessible tutoring services that are student initiated and offered for **all** courses at **no charge** to low-income students; provide professional tutors instead of peer tutors to increase academic performance.
- ✓ Offer transfer-specific and transfer-friendly orientations long before the required transfer applications are due. Help students understand their options at the onset.
- ✓ Institute policies at universities that use reverse transfer more broadly.

Housing and food policies

- ✓ Provide gap housing over breaks to accommodate the housing-challenged. Be creative in using the under-utilized resources and assets on campus that are available when most students leave.
- ✓ Waive the housing deposit for low-income students, which can be due several months before they receive financial aid disbursements.
- ✓ Provide an on-campus food pantry, or institute more flexible spending options on food cards. Follow best practices established by the College and University Food Bank Alliance.⁸

⁸ Research, toolkits and best practices are available at <http://www.cufba.org/>.

At 1.5 years into the grant, the FITW participating institutions have implemented some of these suggested best practices to the degree possible. As college officials and advisors learn more through the life of the grant, the expectation is that these partner institutions will adopt more of the suggestions and be open to “find a way to say yes,” as On Point does.

Some partners that were interviewed also mentioned that On Point is very astute about the challenges of higher education institutions in terms of limited resources, and the complexity of the political, regulatory and bureaucratic hurdles they face. It is On Point’s polite persistence that helps the college officials stay focused on these solutions for vulnerable students.

VI. Core Policies and Structures to Support this FITW Model

While it is not the intent of this early process inquiry to conduct a full partnership analysis, there are core policies and structures, that allowed the collaborators to work effectively and productively, that are worth sharing.

Multiple partners stressed the importance of having clear expectations and respect for the expertise, resources and capacity of each partner. At the onset, each partner committed to a memorandum of understanding, that was supported by the trust and relationships built among the partners.

Early on, the grant coordinator also implemented the use of working groups, described in the “Background” section of this document. While the working groups were important, multiple stakeholders also said that being able to pick up the phone and call a colleague immediately, and the colleagues’ willingness to respond, was a key factor in making the partnership work. Whether this is a formal policy or not, the culture of the partnership, and the tone set by leadership favors open and expedient communication.

One of the most important aspects of implementing this grant, that could have caused significant barriers if it were missing, was the completion of data sharing agreements, and the implementation of a mutually-agreeable data collection system across campuses, that protects student identity. During the early inquiry process to create this guide, the On Point advisors stressed that if another community were to replicate this model, that having expedient access to student-level information is crucial so that front line advisors can address any issues that might be out of the scope of the traditional campus advisors.

Included in the data sharing agreements are data templates and specific, transparent policies and procedures about each step to identify eligible students, provide lists to On Point, enter a student as an official participant, track their activities, and monitor their educational progress and outcomes. The evaluation team has a robust evaluation and data tracking plan that is being implemented throughout the life of the grant.

The training about the “On Point way” of advising also was seen as essential to the structure of the program so that FITW transfer advisors employed by the colleges could better understand the scope of services provided by On Point, both inside and outside of grant funding, and understand when and how to refer students to On Point. Also related to advising, a key decision deemed essential by multiple stakeholders was to include On Point in the campus-led search and hiring process for new advisors. On Point had hired dozens of people over the organization’s 17-year history and knew the skill set for this different type of student advising.

VII. Early Lessons Learned

There is ample qualitative evidence, in previous reports and studies, that On Point students are grateful for such comprehensive robust services that meet their needs. There will be further student feedback gathered through student interviews conducted by a volunteer, and through the formal FITW grant evaluation.

Based on partner feedback gathered during interviews, and subsequent conversations among the partners and authors, the early findings and lessons learned are summarized below:

- Open communication, honesty, shared knowledge and passion for the issues were all crucial to program success and are traits valued by the partners.
- Partnering with the community to fulfill institutional missions was seen as a strategic advantage and asset to the grant.
- The ability and readiness of all partners to be open and willing to learn, and to change based on what they had learned, was identified as a key trait to success.
- On Point is providing critical support to students who are new at understanding and learning the nuances of navigating college enrollment, course selection, financial aid and the transfer process; this support is appreciated by the campuses involved. As stated during interviews:
 - “On Point has the ability to reach students in ways the traditional advisors can’t.”
 - “They supplement what we can do as a public college.”
 - “Students need so much more than we can offer, they need this community support.”
- Community partners need to be savvy and understand the complexity of higher education, the differences between 2-year and 4-year institutions, and the regulatory context of higher education. Problems are not always solved simply. As one partner stated, when comparing On Point to other community based organizations: “On Point has a more complex approach to the world and expects to encounter challenges and other ways to solve things.”
- The typical caseloads for community college advisors are likely to be too high to manage the type of interactions that actually support outcomes for the most at-risk students; campus financial constraints are a factor but the On Point model helps alleviate the caseload to some degree.
- The collection, maintenance and sharing of data, and the requisite agreements, along with clearly defined roles in managing data, were viewed as essential in a partnership like this, and the institutional capacity of the organizations involved makes a difference. As one partner said, “You need to have your own house in order” and perhaps perform a “self-audit” to gauge for readiness before entering into a complex partnership like this.
- While all four components of the grant are important, they are not equal, and the choice to emphasize resources on this type of family-style, proactive advising was wise.

This grant program provides valuable cross-institutional examples of implementing college practices that support very vulnerable students – all for the purpose of improved transfer and retention. As more information is gathered and analyzed, the results will be shared and disseminated more broadly with fellow grantees and the college access, success and transfer community.

The authors would like to thank all of the representatives involved in this FITW grant from front line advisors to back office operations to the office of the president at each institution. Taking time to share interim observations and findings has been a worthwhile and valuable experience.

VIII. Contact Information

For more information about the SUNY Oswego FITW grant please contact:

Dr. Lorrie Clemo, Principal Investigator
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
State University of New York at Oswego
(315) 312-2290
lorrie.clemo@oswego.edu

IX. Replication and Technical Assistance

With a renewed emphasis on college enrollment and completion from the White House to community colleges across America, On Point offers a proven model to increase college access, transfer, and degree completion for some of our nation's most vulnerable students.

On Point has the distinction of helping nearly 6,000 students enroll in college and get “on point” to a brighter future. Whether you are a college or university administrator, elected official, civic leader or concerned philanthropist, **On Point provides strategies to increase degree completion for at-risk students.** Consulting, replication and technical assistance options are available.

Please contact On Point's Executive Director to discuss your needs:

Mr. Samuel Rowser
Executive Director
On Point for College, Syracuse Office
(315) 374-4104
samuelrowser@onpointforcollege.org

X. Resource Guide – Sample Materials Attached

- Sample Data-Sharing MOU
- Sample Program Pathway Workshop Flier
- Sample “Passport to Oswego”
- Sample Preparatory and Transfer Course Syllabi
- FITW Transfer Advisor Job Description
- On Point Program Director Job Description
- On Point Driver Description
- On Point Sign-In Sheet



FIRST IN THE WORLD
TRANSFER GATEWAYS & COMPLETION GRANT



Reaching Out: A Guide to Increasing College Transfer and Completion with a Community-Based Partner, *On Point for College*

By Lorrie Clemo, Virginia Donohue, Samuel Rowser and Kimberly Stezala

RESOURCE GUIDE

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

First In The World (FITW) Research Project

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is made by and between State University of New York at Oswego (SUNY OSWEGO) and Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) for the purpose of providing Data Recipient with access to the data required for an the evaluation of program effectiveness as outlined in First In the World (FITW) grant proposal

First In The World (FITW) Overview: The State University of New York at Oswego will lead this project, Transfer Getaways and Completion, partnering with Onondaga Community College, Mohawk Valley Community College, Cayuga Community College and with On Point for College. The funded project offers four major programs with strategic interventions, aligned for innovative seamless support for vulnerable students: Program Pathways, Advisement and Support, Preparatory and Transition Courses, and University Agreement. The project's focus is to support college success for underrepresented students. Outcomes include college success: program persistence, two-year graduation and four-year transfer and graduation rate for underrepresented students.

1. **Data Request Details:** In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions outlined above, an evaluation mechanism has been designed to track the participants (students) throughout their college experiences and progress toward degree. In order to conduct the evaluation, a series of student data (demographic as well as academic) being identifies as relevant to and needed for the implementation of evaluation program. A list of data elements is provided in Exhibit A
2. **Data Provider:** Mohawk Valley Community College, Office of Research and Analysis. **Designated staff** Jim Myers
3. **Data Recipient:** State University of New York at Oswego, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. **Designated Staff** Mary Ann Preston
4. **Method of Delivery :** The data file will be provided ONLY via Secure File Transport Protocol (sftp) At <ftp.oswego.edu>, account MVCC-fitw
5. **Permitted Uses and Disclosures of the data:** Data Recipient may use and/or disclose the data for its Research activities only. Data Recipient will destroy all data upon completion of project.
6. **Preparation of the Data:** Data Provider shall prepared and furnish to Data Recipient the data in accord with any applicable HIPPA or FERPA Regulations
7. **Responsibilities of Data Recipient.** Data Recipient agrees to:
 - a. Use or disclose the data only as permitted by this Agreement or as required by law;
 - b. Use appropriate safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the data other than as permitted by this Agreement or required by law;
 - c. Report to Data Provider any use or disclosure of the data of which it becomes aware that is not permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

- d. Use any student identifier – in this case MVCC student ID to match individual records across academic semesters and for the evaluation program, subject of this MOU
- e. Require any of its subcontractors or agents that receive or have access to the data to agree to the same restrictions and conditions on the use and/or disclosure of the data that apply to Data Recipient under this Agreement; and
- f. The data recipient will abide by the laws and regulations of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act in maintaining and securing the data provided.

8. **Term and Termination.**

- a. **Term.** The term of this Agreement shall commence as of the Effective Date and shall continue for so long as Data Recipient retains the data, unless sooner terminated as set forth in this Agreement.
- b. **Termination by Data Recipient.** Data Recipient may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying the Data Provider and returning or destroying the data.
- c. **Termination by Data Provider.** Data Provider may terminate this agreement at any time by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice to Data Recipient.
- d. **For Breach.** Data Provider shall provide written notice to Data Recipient within ten (10) days of any determination that Data Recipient has breached a material term of this Agreement. Data Provider shall afford Data Recipient an opportunity to cure said alleged material breach upon mutually agreeable terms. Failure to agree on mutually agreeable terms for cure within thirty (30) days shall be grounds for the immediate termination of this Agreement by Data Provider.
- e. **Effect of Termination.** Sections 1, 5, 6, 7 of this Agreement shall survive any termination of this Agreement under subsections c or d.


9. **Miscellaneous.**

- a. **Change in Law.** The parties agree to negotiate in good faith to amend this Agreement to comport with changes in federal law that materially alter either or both parties' obligations under this Agreement. Provided however, that if the parties are unable to agree to mutually acceptable amendment(s) by the compliance date of the change in applicable law or regulations, either Party may terminate this Agreement as provided in section 6.
- b. **No Third Party Beneficiaries.** Nothing in this Agreement shall confer upon any person other than the parties and their respective successors or assigns, any rights, remedies, obligations, or liabilities whatsoever.
- c. **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.


- d Headings. The headings and other captions in this Agreement are for convenience and reference only and shall not be used in interpreting, construing or enforcing any of the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf.

DATA RECIPIENT

Lorrie Clemo	Vice President of Academic Affairs & Provost
Name	Title
	
Signature	Date

DATA PROVIDER

Stephanie Reynolds	Vice President of Student Affairs
Name	Title
	
Signature	Date



Vice President For Administrative Services 7/10/15

TRANSFER CONNECTIONS WORKSHOP

Building Relationships and Communication with 2 Year Colleges

Friday, October 30, 2015 | 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

- Build bridges for future business transfers
- Resources for a successful transfer process
- Collaboration between 2 and 4 year colleges
- Connection of *Passport to Oswego* to your college
- Open forum to offer ideas for improved transfer process
- Participate in federal initiative to increase transfer student success

Free!

Please join us and be part of the discussion

(Includes continental breakfast and lunch)

For more information:

Karen Valentino

Assistant Provost and FITW Grant Coordinator

karen.valentino@oswego.edu
315.312.3021

Glynn English

Assistant Dean, School of Business and Director of BASAC

glynn.english@oswego.edu
315.312.2148

Additional details will be announced in late September.



FIRST IN THE WORLD

TRANSFER GATEWAYS & COMPLETION GRANT

HOSTED BY:



U.S. Department of Education FITW Grant Partners:

On Point for College

Cayuga Community College

Onondaga Community College

Mohawk Valley Community College

OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT & INFORMATION SYSTEMS

OPTION A: MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

This major is for students interested in managing the information resources of an organization and is computer intensive.

Junior Year
CSC 120/CSC 212
FIN 325: Corp Fin
OPM 310 & OPM 410 (fa)
Upp Div ECO Elective

Senior Year
MGT 495: Mgt Policy & Sim
MGT 415: Dec Anlys
MGT 486: Mat Mgt
2 MIS Electives

OPTION B: MANAGEMENT SCIENCE/OPERATIONS

This major is for students interested in managing the information resources of an organization and is math intensive.

Junior Year
CSC 102: Bus Info Sys
FIN 325: Corp Fin
MGT 310 & MGT 410
MS/O Elective

Senior Year
MGT 486: Mat Mgt
MGT 415: Dec Anlys
MGT 495: Mgt Policy & Sim
MS/O Elective
Upp. Div. ECO Elective

MARKETING

This major introduces students to the concepts and tools employed by marketing management professionals. The area encompasses activities towards planning, implementation and control of marketing programs.

Junior Year
CSC 102: Bus Info Sys
FIN 325: Corp Fin
MAT 258: Intro Stats B
MKT 370 & MKT 375
Upp. Div. ECO Elective

Senior Year
MKT 467: Adver & Promo
MGT 495: Mgt Policy & Sim
2 Upp. Div MKT Electives

RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Students in this major will take specialized courses in risk management, lines of insurance, and employee benefits while gaining core strengths in such business areas as accounting, finance, marketing, and management.

Junior Year
CSC 102: Bus Info Sys
ECO 340: Money & Bank
FIN 325: Corp Fin
RMI 300: (fa) Intro Risk Mgt
RMI 310: (spr) Prop & Liability

Senior Year
RMI 400 (fa) & RMI 450 (spr)
MGT 495: Mgt Policy & Sim
RMI 320: (spr) Employee Ben
FIN 354 (fa) & FIN 454 OR 2 MKT
Track Electives

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students graduating from SUNY Oswego must have:

- ✓ A minimum GPA of 2.0 for graduation (in major & cumulative)
- ✓ A minimum of 122 hours for degree purposes
- ✓ 42 credits of upper division work (300-400 level) from Oswego
- ✓ Maximum transfer credits of **62** from community college
- ✓ At least ½ of major credits taken at Oswego
- ✓ Major and cognate courses completed with a C- or better

Numerous international opportunities and discipline-related internships are available and encouraged.

Contact the following offices at SUNY Oswego for specific transfer information:

Transfer Services Coordinator
Corie Kohlbach
183 Marano Campus Center
315-312-3638
corie.kohlbach@oswego.edu

School of Business- B.A.S.A.C
230 Rich Hall
315-312- 2148
glynn.english@oswego.edu

Transfer Success Advisors
Transfer Center
170 Marano Campus Center
<https://www.oswego.edu/transfer-services/transfer-center>

Rosemarie Pupparo
315-312-4951
rpupparo@oswego.edu

Alicia King
315-312-2058
alicia.king@oswego.edu

"The contents of this passport were developed under grant P1116F140327 from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government."



FALL 2016



◇ Business Administration A.S

PASSPORT TO OSWEGO
School of Business:



- ◇ Accounting
- ◇ Business Administration
- ◇ Finance
- ◇ Human Resource Management
- ◇ Management Info. Systems
- ◇ Management Science/Operations
- ◇ Marketing
- ◇ Risk Management & Insurance



1. Print out current degree plan.
2. Check off the courses you have completed.
3. Schedule a meeting with an advisor at OCC.
4. **Enroll in BUS 230 (Principles of Management)!!**
5. Make sure your remaining OCC courses meet Oswego Course Equivalents. (Consult the course equivalency table in this passport)
6. **Complete SUNY Gen Ed Requirements at OCC to be exempt from Gen Ed at Oswego!**
7. **Complete your OCC degree**
8. Apply to SUNY Oswego and meet with a Transfer Success Advisor at Oswego (see back for contact information)

<p>Transfer Center G230 Gordon Student Center Onondaga Community College Syracuse, New York 13215 315-498-2590 tansfercenter@sunyocc.edu</p>	<p>Transfer Student Success Advisor-FITW Shannon Adamsen, Ed.M. G230 Gordon Student Center Onondaga Community College Syracuse, New York 13215 315-498-2573 s.l.adamsen@sunyocc.edu</p>
<p>Coordinator of Transfer Services Mike Ramos</p>	

- ✓ SUNY General Education Requirements (SUNY GER) should be satisfied by completing your OCC degree.
- ✓ Students who have **not** completed their SUNY Gen Ed Requirements at OCC must complete Oswego's Gen Ed program.
- ✓ Some courses taken at 2-year school will **not transfer as upper division credit at Oswego**.
- ✓ Several courses may be given equivalencies only as lower division credit.

Senior Year
HRM 458 (spr) & HRM 459 (spr)
HRM 462: Employment Law
HRM 463(fa) & HRM 464 (spr)
MGT 495: Mgt Policy & Sim

SD101: Career and Life Planning/FITW Professional Skills Preparatory Course

Instructor: Meg Osborne, Coordinator of Career Services

Email: osbornem@cayuga-cc.edu

Phone: 315.294.8522

Office: M224 – Center for Student Engagement
(to the left of the Information Desk at the Main Entrance)

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Dates: August 29 – December 9, 2016

Class Days & Times: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 am -12:20 pm

Location: M244

Course Description:

This course provides a systematic method for making career and lifestyle decisions and presents a structured approach for practicing effective decision making skills. Integrated concepts include an evaluation of individual capabilities, preferences and goals.

Students will also learn about the processes of the job search, resume writing and interviewing. Students will acquire skills in effective communication and interpersonal skills, workplace etiquette, goal setting, networking, and professional and ethical conduct. As a transfer focused section, this course will also help students incorporate personal and career goals to select a four-year transfer institution. Students will understand how to choose a transfer school, what the transfer process consists of, and how selecting the right transfer institution can enhance future career opportunities.

Three class hours weekly.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

- Students will identify personal interests, skills and values and compare them with career options.
- Students will describe jobs, careers and the life long process of career development.
- Students will access career information, requirements and review selected career options.
- Students will understand the components for transfer (researching, applying, seeking best fit).
- Students will describe skills involved in researching and acquiring a job.
- Students will demonstrate resume writing, job search and interviewing skills.

Text: THE CAREER FITNESS PROGRAM, *Exercising Your Options* 10th Edition, Sukiennick, Bendat and Raufman, Prentice Hall 2001

You do not need to buy the text. I have sufficient “loaner” copies for the class when necessary.

Student Participation: Students are expected to participate in class discussions and exercises. This course is designed primarily in a discussion format and it is therefore critical that students take part in these discussions. I hope to create an atmosphere in class that allows students to express themselves freely.

Student Evaluation:

Assignments	15%
Assessments	15%
Participation	10%
Career Research Report	10%
Transfer Research Report	10%
5 Question Quizzes	10%
Resume, cover letter, interview	30%

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend each meeting of their registered courses. **Student absences cannot exceed 20% of the course** (6 classes for a course meeting two days a week). There are **NO EXCUSED ABSENCES** under College policy. All absences are counted, regardless of the reason for the absence, including but not limited to field trips, illness, athletic trips, court appearances and other personal reasons. **Students who do not meet the required attendance policy for this course will receive a grade of F for the course.** Severe weather is an exception, of course. Please be safe when driving to campus!

I expect that you will communicate any problems, issues, concerns, or troubles you are having with me if they will impact your ability to meet the requirements of this course.

Americans with Disabilities Statement:

Students with documented disabilities who may need special instructional accommodations should notify me as soon as possible, no later than the second week of the term. Students may contact the Office of Accessibility Resources in the Center for Academic Success (CAS).at 315-255-1743 ext. 2422.

Academic Honesty:

Academic integrity is of the utmost importance. If any assignment is plagiarized in any manner, you will fail with a zero and risk failing the course.

Keep in mind that an assignment is given to allow you to determine what you have learned in class as well as use your own creativity. All assignments are therefore

expected to be your own original work, unless you are specifically told to work as part of a group

SUNY is committed to Intellectual Integrity. Any form of intellectual dishonesty is a serious concern and therefore prohibited.

Student Conduct:

Classroom etiquette is based on mutual respect for one another and the learning process. As such, I expect cell phones and laptops to be silenced during class and put away (unless we are using them for an in-class assignment).

All course requirements shall be governed by the policies of the College. Students are required to conduct themselves in compliance with College policies and to the professional standards of the industry.

Computers and Internet Access:

I will use email to communicate with you periodically outside of class for updates and reminders. I will also expect all written assignments (unless otherwise indicated) to be typed. In addition, course materials will be posted in Blackboard. If you are phobic of computers, don't have internet access, or don't have a computer at home, you must assess how you are going to meet the expectations of this course.

***You need a 1 – 2” 3-ring binder to keep track of your materials for this course**

GST 315: Transfer Success Seminar
Section 840
Thursdays, 3:55-5:50pm

Instructor: Alicia King, Transfer Success Advisor

Office: 170 Marano Campus Center (Transfer Center)

Phone: (315) 312-2058

Email: Alicia.King@oswego.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 8:00-2:00pm, Fridays 8:00-4:00pm or by appointment

GST 315: TRANSFER SUCCESS SEMINAR

Required Text:

- Transfer Success Guide (provided in class)
- Other readings and worksheets provided by the instructor

Course Description/Purpose:

This is a seminar course designed to assist you with your transition as a transfer student, and help you make well informed decisions regarding your academic program, overall experience at SUNY Oswego and career related choices. The course addresses academic expectations and facilitates social and academic transitions specific to your transfer experience. Grading: Satisfactory (S), Unsatisfactory (U) & Honor (H) grades are assigned; 1 credit, Quarter-course (Q-1).

Course Learning Outcomes:

- Produce an academic plan towards a successful graduation completion
- Learn and interpret effective library information and skills such as research techniques, citations, and plagiarism.
- Practice using the DEGREE WORKS audit, myOswego, advising, registration and the college catalog to gain a comprehensive understanding of those resources.
- Become familiar with and demonstrate involvement in campus resources and student support services
- Create a functional resume, cover letter and post-interview “thank you” note, with referrals to Career Services.
- Analyze and develop an awareness of personal strengths and ways to succeed at SUNY Oswego

Evaluation of student work

POINTS:

In-Class Attendance and Participation	10%
Class Assignments/Papers/Readings	35%
Discover Oswego, WITH forms	15%
Campus Events/Clubs/Involvement #1&2	10%
Advisement Appointment, & Guide & form	10%
Drafts: Resume, Cover Letter, Thank you	10%
Final Evaluation Paper	10%
	<hr/> 100%

Final Grades: The final course grade will be:

Satisfactory (S) for grades 65% and higher

Honors (H) for grades of 80% and higher

Unsatisfactory (U) for grades below 65%.

Course Policies:

Attendance is an integral part of the educational process. The student is responsible for course material presented in their absence by group members. There are no make ups for late papers and/or assignments. Students are to conduct themselves in a professional manner as outlined in the student handbook.

If you have a disabling condition, which may interfere with your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services located in ROOM 155-C Marano Center

Overall Expectations:

Attendance and Class Participation: Successful completion of the course is based upon participation during class, arriving on time, turning in assignments when they are due and contributing to class discussions. Cell phones are for emergency use only.

Out of Class Notification: *If you miss multiple class meetings due to illness or other unexpected temporary absence, please go to the Student Advisement Office in 145 Campus Center, 312-2240. You are required to provide documentation to Student Advisement so that Student Advisement is aware of your situation, and so that they may notify each of your instructors.*

Email: You are required to activate and use the college email address through your *myOswego* account. You need to check your email for class communication and notices.

Student Conduct: The course projects will require visits to various departments and events with other professionals. All course requirements shall be governed by the policies of the university. Students are required to conduct themselves in compliance with university policies and to the professional standards of the industry. Students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct. Please review it in sections 40 – 50 on pages 19 – 29 of the student handbook:

http://www.oswego.edu/Documents/student_handbook/pdf/p9-30%20Code.pdf

Any student who consistently disrupts the learning process will be asked to leave the classroom, possibly be asked to withdraw from the course, and will be referred to the office of the Dean of Students.

Academic Honesty: The College is an academic community which values and takes seriously its responsibility for upholding academic honesty. All members of the academic community have an obligation to uphold high intellectual and ethical standards. For more information please refer to the “Intellectual Integrity” page at SUNY Oswego. :

http://catalog.oswego.edu/content.php?catoid=31&navoid=2603#inte_inte

As well as the definition of “Plagiarism.”

Course Requirements:

- Attend all classes; be on time; contribute to class discussions.
- Complete assigned readings prior to class in order to facilitate analysis and discussion.
- Complete and turn in written homework assignments on time.
- Maintain a file for the papers to refer to in your final course feedback assignment.
- Complete and turn in papers as instructed and required.

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.” Benjamin Franklin

Transfer Student Success Advisor
US Department of Education Transfer Gateways and Completion Grant
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (Research Foundation for SUNY) located at the State University of New York at Oswego, invites applications for a 12 month, full-time position of Transfer Success Advisor for the Transfer Gateways and Completion program funded through a Department of Education First in the World (FITW) grant. Transfer Success Advisors are committed to helping students persist and succeed in their academic endeavors, and understand the demands and challenges that low income, first generation students may face while attending college. While this position is located on the campus of Onondaga Community College, this is a Research Foundation position, NOT a New York State position.

Posting Date: December 2, 2015

Review Date: December 14, 2015

Salary: Commensurate with qualifications and experience. In addition, The Research Foundation for SUNY offers an excellent benefit package: https://portal.rfsuny.org/portal/page/portal/employee_benefits/benefits/Home

Date of Appointment: Immediate

Job Description: The Transfer Student Success Advisor focuses on the engagement of 2 year college students at Onondaga Community College (OCC) who are considering a transfer to SUNY Oswego to pursue and complete a 4 year degree. Depending on the student's interests, an advisor can assist students with transfer to a different 4 year college, but should consider SUNY Oswego as a primary option. The advisor provides one-on-one assistance to underserved college students in resolving financial, academic and personal issues.

Advisors will collaborate with partners and stakeholders with the First in the World Grant initiatives. Through the grant, SUNY Oswego, three regional community colleges (OCC, MVCC, CCC) and On Point for College (a best-practice college access and success program) are partnering to provide interventions to low-income, first generation students to assist them with finding pathways from two-year completion to four-year completion. The candidate must be available to travel to various locations including but not limited to Utica, Oswego, Auburn, Albany and Washington, D. C.

Responsibilities:

- Provide up-to-date and accessible transfer resources for students and faculty
- Advise students with course selection and registration, career development, and graduation audits
- Coordinate on-campus visitations by four-year colleges and maintain strong associations with transfer partners
- Design and conduct programming on transfer processes and timing of the transfer process in collaboration with the Coordinator of Transfer Services
- Assist with the coordination of Transfer Fairs
- Develop collaborative relationships with OCC service related offices, the Transfer Success Advisors at partner institutions, On Point for College, and FIPSE FITW grant personnel
- Develop FITW grant assessment practices based on grant priorities and create reports as the grant requires
- Present success strategies and facilitate appropriate referrals to college services relevant to the needs of individual students
- Other duties as assigned by the Director of Advisement & Counseling Services

Requirements:

- Master's Degree;
- Experience working with student support services in the areas of financial aid, college admissions, residence life and housing, academic advisement, transfer services and/or Educational Opportunities (EOP) and TRIO programs;
- Effective written, oral and interpersonal communication skills;
- Understands the needs of students from high-risk backgrounds and has passion for student success.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Previous experience in community college/university student services, specifically advising and transfer services;
- Experience and knowledge of community college programs and student populations.

To Apply: Submit a letter of application addressing qualifications, a copy of unofficial transcripts, and resume with contact information for three professional references to:

<http://oswego.interviewexchange.com/candapply>

If you have any questions about the position, please call or email:

Karen Valentino, Search Committee Chair

315.312.2645 or email to: karen.valentino@oswego.edu

Official transcripts are required prior to hiring. Files must be complete to be considered.

Founded in 1861, SUNY Oswego is a public comprehensive college located in Central New York on the beautiful shores of Lake Ontario, 45 minutes from Syracuse. Named one of "Top Up-and-Coming Schools" in U.S. News "America's Best Colleges" in 2010, a Kiplinger's "Best College Value" for 2015, and a "Best Northeastern College" by Princeton Review every year since the first edition in 2003, Oswego offers its 8000 undergraduate and graduate students preeminent academic programs in the arts and sciences, business, communications, and teacher education. The College's success is built on providing students outstanding educational experiences with attention to a liberal arts and sciences foundation, practical applications, interdisciplinary approaches, independent scholarly and creative work, and skills for living in multicultural and global communities. The emphasis on faculty-mentored student research and creative projects is evidenced by Quest, a daylong symposium spotlighting original student research; a stipend program for students engaged in research and creative work; and the Global Laboratory, a STEM-based research abroad program at top-ranked universities around the world. SUNY Oswego is an unusually collegial and vibrant community and is in a time of wonderful opportunities with extensive facilities construction and renovation, a forward-looking strategic plan, and expanded outreach to regional, national, and international communities.

Additional information about SUNY Oswego can be found at www.oswego.edu

The Research Foundation for SUNY is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to of age, race, color, gender, creed, nationality, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or protected veteran status. The Research Foundation for SUNY is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

Requests for reasonable accommodations of a disability during the application and/or interview process should be made to Karen Valentino, 315-312-3021 or karen.valentino@oswego.edu .

For Campus Safety information, please see the Annual Security Report on the Human Resources website:

http://www.oswego.edu/administration/human_resources/SecurityandFireReport.html

On Point for College, Inc.

Position Title: Director of Advancement and Completion

FLSA Status: Exempt

Effective Date: December 1, 2016

General Overview: Oversees day-to-day operations for On Point for College's college access, success and re-enrollment services including supervision of staff and facilitation of weekly program meetings. Serves as acting agency director in the absence of Executive & Deputy Directors. Assists with development of strategic planning, budgeting, program, and ongoing monitoring as appropriate.

College Access Program Services:

1. Responsible for training of advisory staff
2. Monitors program goals and outcomes attainment by program staff in comparison to proposed benchmarks for grants and contracts including summer programs & identification of at risk students.
3. Assigns staff to cover participant recruitment and outreach to potential students.
4. Provides program presentations to inform various groups about our services.
5. Fosters and maintains connections with collaborative program partners including City School Districts, community centers, AVID, and colleges and universities.
6. Coordinates and facilitates pre-college student orientations for community partners.
7. Coordinates parent orientations and conducts sessions.
8. Acts as master program counselor and advocate to troubleshoot complicated student issues and advocacy with college staff.
9. Appoints resident advisor for summer housing at Le Moyne College for homeless youth and monitors student compliance with rules and regulations. Coordinates with the Rescue Mission for housing placement during major breaks i.e. Christmas, Spring, etc.
10. Manages Early Awareness Program.

College Success and Re-Enrollment:

1. Supervises College Success and Re-Enrollment Advisors and their rotation of campus visits to two-year, community, and Agricultural and Technical colleges and universities.
2. Oversees transportation program and oversees mentor training in coordination with Development Associate.
3. Coordinates beginning of semester campus visits by staff to all New York State campuses attended by our students.
4. Monitors program goals and outcomes attainment by success staff in comparison to proposed benchmarks for grants and contacts.
5. Performs other related duties as assigned.

Qualifications: Must have a bachelor's degree with 5+ years of work experience with young adults, financial aid, college admissions, and/or the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).

Skills Required: Supervision, Program Management, Microsoft Office Suite.

On Point for College, Inc.

Position Title: Shuttle Driver

FLSA Status: Non-exempt

Effective Date: December 1, 2016

Job Responsibilities:

The Shuttle Driver is responsible for the safe and efficient transport of students, staff and parents in the On Point for College van, personal vehicle, or a rental. In this visible role, it is important that the Driver maintains a positive attitude and professional appearance at all times. The driver welcomes each student with a smile, facilitates on campus tours, placement tests and general transportation of students. Operates passenger vans safely and efficiently. Reports accidents, safety situations, vehicle condition, or damage to the Program Director. Inspects exterior and interior of vehicle at beginning of each shift for properly operating headlights, turn signals, brake lights, interior lighting, air conditioning or heating, mirror adjustment, properly inflated tires, windshield wipers, etc. prior to driving the shuttle/van. Ensures that both inside and outside of the vehicle are properly cleaned and fueled. Accurately completes student sign in sheets if no advisor is present. Transport supplies, materials, etc. for various On Point events (i.e. Celebration, etc.). Performs other related duties as assigned.

Requirements: Must be 25 years older or older (for insurance purposes), possess a valid driver's license with specific class and endorsement based on the type of shuttle/van according to state requirements, reliable transportation, may travel and be available to work evenings and weekends for work events. Able to safely operation a vehicle for up to 12 hours in a day. Able to load and unload materials, supplies, etc. from the vehicle. Must be able to work outdoors in all weather conditions. Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in a courteous manner in keeping with the Curbside philosophy. Passionate about On Point for College's mission.

This position description is not an exhaustive listing of responsibilities or duties that may be required of persons assigned to this position. Also, the position description may be modified at any time without notice, at the discretion of management. All On Point for College employees are expected to understand and comply with applicable policies and procedures.

	Access			Re-Enrollment		Transfer					Center	Office		
	Success			Tours		OPFJ					College	City		
	Date	Parent	Student	Name	Age	Reason for your visit	Financial Aid	Curriculum Outline Review	Phone	Major/Degree Program	Current Status	Grant Visit		Want to Transfer?
	Date		X	Sample Jones	19	Financial Aid, Registration, Tutoring	X	If Applicable	315-362-5003	Human Services	If Applicable	XYZ Grant and/or Intervention		Yes or No
1											College Freshman	Intervention		
2											College Freshman	Intervention		
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