



## **Promising Practices in Immigrant Education**

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*CCCIE keeps a repository of community college best practices in immigrant education. It is our hope to provide meaningful information to community colleges across the country serving the needs of immigrant populations. As a first step toward developing a brief narrative describing your program, please respond to the questions below:*

**Name of Community College** Prince George's Community College, Largo Maryland

**Title of Program** International Education Center

**Type of Program** (i.e. ESL, workforce training/career development, community outreach/partnership, providing access/support to undocumented students, citizenship/civics preparation, etc.)

Drop-in 1-on-1 faculty support for all immigrant and international students, peer mentoring, international student speakers bureau.

**Primary Division(s) or Department(s) involved:**

Academic Affairs

**Key Partners (if applicable, please note other outside agencies or organizations involved in the program)**

We host the International Populations Network of Prince George's County MD

### **1. Need for Program**

We started in January 2005. Our services have grown as our population of noncredit and credit students from other countries has grown.

We particularly address students here without family who need a support system, including help finding jobs and emergency help.

### **2. Brief Description of Program**

The International Education Center is within Academic Affairs. It has two purposes:

1. To help newcomer students learn US higher education systems to be successful
2. To educate other students, faculty and staff to the different perspectives of our students from 121 other countries, to improve cultural diversity communication across the college



### **3. Specific Population Served**

1. Students from other countries, including immigrant, F1 visa, H4 visa, etc.
2. All students, faculty and staff through International Education Center programs and 1-on-1 assistance.

### **4. Goals and Objectives**

Immigrant, refugee and visa students are knowledgeable of the US higher education system and how to navigate successfully in it, being well prepared to transfer to university programs or to work following Associates Degrees.

Immigrant, refugee and visa students are supported by the International Education Center and the College as a whole, so that they perceive themselves as a significant part of PGCC.

Immigrant, refugee and visa students and US American students develop enhanced US American and intercultural competence and confidence through interactions at Center programs.

Visitors, prospective PGCC students and the community see through the existence of the International Education Center that PGCC promotes global competency and is a comfortable college to be an international student.

### **5. Outcomes**

We're working on compiling data showing the students who are served by the International Education Center are being retained at higher than average rates. We certainly have individual stories of students we were able to help to stay in college and to succeed in graduating.

### **6. Collaboration**

The Center could not operate without 25-30 faculty volunteering to serve one of their existing office hours each week in our location instead of their own offices. We also work with the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation to help students find international business internships. We collaborate with Prince George's County Public Schools to bring all county high school juniors in ESL programs to visit the college and learn about why and how to attend college.

### **7. Success Factors**

- 1) As a professor, I have 3/5s of my time dedicated to running the center. It helps that I serve as both the coordinator of the Center and a faculty member; that allows me to make good connections across the college for individual students and for the program.

- 2) I have created regular open discussion sessions at which students and employees learn about each other's' perspectives and feel more comfortable discussing differences.
- 3) We have a full busy week of International Education Week each November which gives good visibility to the services we offer and helps international students feel valued at our college.
- 4) The Maryland referendum on in-county/in-state tuition for undocumented students passed in 2012. That attention helped undocumented students come out of the shadows with their challenges.

## **8. Challenges Faced and Overcome**

We realized that the college enrollment of students from other countries, in all visa/immigrant categories, was growing, but their needs were not being addressed effectively. I continue to find ways to educate staff and faculty about international/immigrant students because we see where lack of knowledge by faculty and staff can disadvantage students, as when seeking on-campus employment and financial aid.

## **9. Funding and Sustainability**

Funding is minimal, but within the college budget. Three-fifths of my professor-level salary is dedicated to the International Education Center, plus 1/5 for a faculty assistant. A part-time administrator at 18 hours per week is also in the budget.

## **10. Contact Information**

**Name of person completing this form** Dr. Marlene C. Cohen

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