



## **Best Practices in Immigrant Education**

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**Name of Community College** Palm Beach State College

**Title of Program** Dr. Kathryn W. Davis Global Education Center

**Type of Program** Provides access, integration and referral to community services to immigrants.

**Director of Program** Jeannett Manzanero, Ph.D.

**Primary Divisions or Departments involved:** Provost Office, student services, language institute, the college foundation and grants department.

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

Palm Beach County's immigrant population was 330,500 in 2009, according to recent population estimates by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Many students who would like to attend college do not have the financial resources to do so. Additionally, newly arrived immigrants pay almost four times the tuition that a resident immigrant would pay. Many do not qualify for financial aid until their application for residency has been approved, and due to the lack of an adequate comprehensive immigration reform, this may take several years. High school graduates of low income levels are impacted the most. Many have worked very hard to graduate and have obtained high grade point averages. Some qualified for Florida Bright Future scholarships (state funds through the Lottery), but due to their status were not able to obtain those. Many realize that the cost of tuition is beyond their ability to pay.

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

The Global Education Center at Palm Beach State College is a one-stop education and resource information center for immigrants in Palm Beach County. The center is funded by a private donation made by Dr. Kathryn W. Davis in 2007. The mission of the center is to empower immigrants by providing them scholarships funds to attend college, improve their English, learn about the U.S. through acculturation workshops, and provide them with referrals to receive community services. To be selected, the student must be an immigrant to the U.S. He or she must be enrolled in an educational program at the college on a part-time or full-time status. Although the scholarship is based mainly on financial need, students are expected to fulfill a contract in order to keep their scholarship. This includes maintaining a minimum GPA of 2.0, meeting with an advisor each term, and following an improvement plan if they fall short in their performance. Completing community service hours and peer mentoring are also expected. Students must attend monthly meetings where acculturation workshops to better adapt to the U.S. are provided.

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

We target the following individuals (and their families and multi-generations, if applicable): First-generation college students, new immigrants with varying degrees of prior formal and/or higher education, and "undocumented" children of immigrants in the public school system. The Global Community Education Center serves as a national model for offering a continuum of programs targeting foreign-national students and maximizing their integration into and contribution to their community (or adopted homeland).



#### 4. Goals and Objectives

Comprehensive, integrated educational and support programs that draw on the strengths and resources of Palm Beach Community College and its community partners (see Key-Partner Network below) with the goal of facilitating acculturation and assimilation into American society, addressing the specific needs of the target population, and building a sense of community.

Educational Programming includes workshops and activities such as:

- Civics, Leadership and Service-Learning for new immigrant students to learn how democracy works and their role in it. This includes components on global understanding, micro- and macroeconomics, local/state/federal government, and bridging theory and practice through community-based experiences.
- English Language and Budget Management programs, including ESOL and United Way Prosperity Center courses for adults.
- Summer Youth Enrichment, exposing future first-generation college students (as early as the first grade) to a range of academic, artistic, leadership and postsecondary prep activities in a college environment.

Support Programs – including, Career Exploration/Counseling, such as:

- Exposure to “first-jobs” (e.g., at elementary school career days or bilingual recruitment fairs) and associated prep activities for K-14 students.
- Provision of “second-career bridge” educational advisement and foreign transcript evaluation for professionals credentialed outside the U.S.
- Offering of guidance to adults with limited college background seeking to advance their employment and earning potential.

Scholarships and Stipends are available to minimize the financial hardships that may impede college entrance, persistence or graduation.

Additionally, guidance on healthcare, legal, childcare, transportation, employment and financial literacy assistance are offered.

#### 5. Outcomes

The Dr. Kathryn W. Davis Global Education Center (GEC) is a one-stop education and resource information center for immigrants in Palm Beach County that has registered 1,260 students representing more than 55 different countries. From its inception the center has granted scholarships to 132 scholars, 75 students for degree or certificate programs and 57 students in English as a second language (ESL) courses. During 2009-2010 we have seen Dr. Davis's generous gift and her vision to open opportunity, come to fruition. Fourteen (14) scholars have completed associate degrees and moved on to complete a bachelor's degree. Three (3) scholars received vocational certificates. Forty-six (46) adults have completed ESL courses and are continuing their education or prepared for professional career licensing. Some became U.S. citizens while others improved job opportunities. Seventeen (17) former scholars have continued their education through federal aid or other scholarships. Presently, 37 scholars are enrolled in degree or certificate programs, while 15 are completing a six-week Intensive English Boot Camp during the summer of 2010, through the English Language and the ESOL lab. This year, in addition to all the college level and ESOL scholars, 32 children from immigrant families were sponsored to attend Summer youth College classes.



All scholars participate in a peer mentoring program. Presently, 18 pairs of scholars have been matched. Students are paired based on their expressed desire whether to give or receive academic or social support from a fellow scholar or tutor someone in ESOL, English writing or math skills. Up until now scholars have completed 792 hours of mentoring.

The GEC continued its services through integration workshops, immigrant information sessions and outreach in partnership with Palm Beach County schools' multilingual and migrant education programs, as well as participation in community health fairs and festivals (among other events) to reach 3,150 additional prospective students and their families.

During the past year, in addition to direct services, the GEC also partnered with various community organizations, the Mayor, and Commissioners of the City of Lake Worth to open the Lake Worth Resource Center (LWRC). The LWRC has provided "ready-to-work" labor for employers in the county. In support of the LWRC, the GEC sought funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, to offer formed carpentry training to 10 students, provided by the Associated Contractors of America, Inc. Cake decorating and office support courses were also offered in English and in Spanish to 119 underemployed heads of immigrant households. These courses were facilitated through the Business and Industry division of Palm Beach State College's Corporate and Continuing Education.

The GEC has begun collaboration with the Palm Beach School District's Title I Migrant Education program to facilitate the recruitment of prospective students. This collaborative has received the support of various community organizations, such as Aspira, Caridad Health Center, El Sol Neighborhood Resource Center, Farm Workers Coordinating Council, and the Maya Ministries.

The GEC continues its role to expand services to the immigrant community while building bridges to other programs within the college. Dr. Jeannett Manzanero, Director of the Center, serves in the college's District Diversity Committee; presently preparing the Inspire Diversity Ethnic Awareness and Sensitivity (I.D.E.A.S) Forum, chairs the marketing sub-committee of the Hispanic Serving Institution initiative and co-advises the Students Working for Equal Rights (S.W.E.R) Chapter club, which has taken the charge to promote the DREAM act in South Florida.

## **6. Collaboration**

Key-Partner Network, which actively provides a continuum of support services, participates in outreach and follow-up activities and contributes to the Global Community Education Center's sustainability. The Network includes, but is not limited to, the following:

### **Education**

Palm Beach State College's – Including, but not limited to: Student Support Services, Academic Advising, Career Counseling, Outreach, TRIO Programs (targeting underrepresented, first-generation-in-college, low-income populations aged 12-adult), Childcare Career Continuum Program for Spanish Speakers, Transition to Teaching for Hispanic Teachers, International Student and First-Generation in College Programs, Minority Recruitment Initiatives (including the College's designation as a federally recognized "Hispanic-Serving Institution), Service-Learning Activities, Language Connection Institute and the Center for Lifetime Learning.

School District of Palm Beach County – Multicultural Education and Adult Education, among other departments are Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students.



### **Community and Social Service Organizations**

Caridad, Migrant Farmworkers Association, Hispanic Human Resources Center, Centro Cultural Latino Americano, Brazilian MAAs, Haitian Center, Asian Organizations, ASPIRA, United Way, including the Prosperity Centers (local initiative providing financial and educational planning), and Catalyst for Justice (a Palm Beach County-based organization to foster multicultural understanding).

### **Business/Industry/Workforce**

Workforce Alliance, Legal Aid, Palm Beach County and Florida and Palm Beach County Hispanic Chambers of Commerce.

## **7. Success Factors**

First, we attribute our greatest success to Dr. Kathryn W. Davis' continued commitment to our scholars and program. Secondly, our center has been promoted by the college president as a priority in serving immigrant students. Additionally, the center's integration with all other student services provided at the college under direct direction of our campus provost, Dr. Maria Vallejo, has facilitated communication between departments. This has made the process of admissions, registration, testing and advising easier for immigrant students, their families, and especially for undocumented students, a more welcoming experience. Other successes are attributable to the constant collaboration with various community-based organizations, which have opened their doors to our students to provide health, legal and various other services invaluable to their proper integration within our county. Finally, our students have a tireless commitment to their studies. Considering the many stresses undocumented students and immigrant families are subjected to, our scholars have managed to maintain an average GPA of 3.2, way above the expected minimum to be eligible for our program.

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

Challenges are appeased with time. Initially, not all members of the college community were on board. Progressively, after three years we have been able to highlight all the wonderful accomplishments of our students throughout the college community, and more people are not only open to our program, but now they refer students to our center for services. Through our information sessions, members of the community at large and prospective students learn about our services, and have a chance to ask questions. These efforts foster greater understanding of the immigrant experience.

Our biggest challenge continues to be funding. As of today, we are only able to provide part-time scholarships to our students. The state's treatment of undocumented families as out-of-state prohibits the opportunities for these funds to go very far. We continue, however, to be hopeful and collaborate with the Florida Immigrant Coalition and the Palm Beach County Coalition for Immigrant Rights. Through awareness events and other opportunities to educate citizens, we help to dispel some of the myths still present throughout our community about the lives of undocumented youth, while promoting the passage and support of the DREAM act.

## **9. Funding and Sustainability**

Our funding is possible through the gracious gift of Dr. Kathryn W. Davis. Although we have received a firm commitment of continued support for a few more years, our center has started the transition of students to services through the regular student services system at the college upon completion of freshman year. The Center's director continues to seek funding through the Grants Department and the Palm Beach State College Foundation.

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