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What makes a Successful Community College Student?

Many people in society have a misconstrued idea of community college. When a person says they are going to attend a community college many think “oh, they must have low test scores” or “they must not be smart enough for real college” but these outdated ideas are the furthest from the truth. Before I even entered my senior year of high school, I knew I would be attending Central Piedmont Community College. I knew this because my mother had attended and graduated from Central Piedmont and both of my siblings attended Central Piedmont as well. From watching them go to Central Piedmont and now thrive, they have shown me that to be a successful community college student; the student must have strong community support from the college, the financial resources to attend, and a chance for growth.

One of the most important pillars of creating a successful community college student is having a strong community at the two-year college they will attend. We see this even more now during the coronavirus pandemic as “26% of students have said they would choose a community college” this year. One of the key reasons a strong college community is important to a community college student is because they provide many resources such as mental health counseling and academic tutoring. These resources allow the student to be focused on earning their degree as they are getting the proper help for issues such as dyslexia, depression, ADHD, and anxiety. This is significant due to the fact many community college students are low income, and this is their first time being able to access treatment due to it being covered by financial aid.

The fact that community college is very affordable to many students makes it easy to attend and excel in as well. According to college board, “yearly tuition at a community college for in-state residents would cost \$3,400 while yearly tuition at a public four-year university or college would cost over nine thousand dollars.” Also, at the community college students can explore other options to cover tuition, books, and fees, such as work-study, scholarships and grants. Due to this significant tuition gap, many may choose to save money by taking their general education classes at the community college and then transferring over.

Another key pillar of making a successful community college student is giving them a pathway to future growth. Every student will have a different growth path, some may go straight into the workforce some may transfer and continue their education. Personally, one of the top reasons Central Piedmont is making me a successful community student is because they are giving me a guided path to my next degree and future career. I am a part of the 49er Next program which guarantees my admission into the University of North Carolina at Charlotte after I complete my associate degree. This resource works best for me because it allows me to complete my degree here at Central Piedmont and transfer over with the help of the Transfer Resource Center. Central Piedmont has many other programs like the 49er Next Program such as Royal Up and UNC Passport program.

Therefore, to make a successful community college student, one must have a strong college support, the financial means to attend and a pathway to future growth. A supportive two-year college should provide access to counseling, academic support, and a community to rely on. The community college should also educate their students on the Federal Application for Free Student Aid (FASFA) and other financial opportunities such as work-study, grants and scholarships. Also, to make sure that each student will be successful the community college should make sure each student has a personalized growth path whether it is finishing a two-year degree and getting into the workforce or transferring into another institution.

Works Cited

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