

Book Review - Developing Effective Student Peer Mentoring Programs (P. J. Collier)
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Peter J. Collier's book, *Developing Effective Student Peer Mentoring Programs*, provides a comprehensive review of college-based student mentoring programs and the associated rationales for utilizing them to improve student persistence and degree completion at today's universities and colleges. He uses well-known streams of research that support the use of mentoring programs to engage students and increase the likelihood of improved success outcomes. Collier goes further and focuses significant attention on the use of mentoring programs that have been designed to engage growing populations of first generation college students, underserved minority students, international students, and transfer students. Through the use of relevant vignettes, Collier and his contributors persuasively argue that mentoring programs should be considered as an important, cost-efficient variable in the development of a comprehensive undergraduate student success strategy for colleges and universities.

In the early chapters, Collier provides the essential framework to understanding the crisis of low graduation and retention rates confounding higher education today. This framework is important to helping the reader better understand the central question of this book: why and how to use peer mentoring programs to improve undergraduate student success. Collier answers these questions and more in a series of organized explorations of benefits and best practices that can be used to guide the design and implementation of peer-mentoring programs best suited for the specific needs/goals of the individual campus.

The book underscores the realities that while peer-mentoring programs are in vogue today at many higher education institutions, benefits to students can sometimes be limited due to unclear program strategies and goals. In an effort to address these issues, Collier provides the reader with excellent examples of successful mentoring programs that include explicit strategies, goals, and evaluations. He also includes a "how to" section designed to help practitioners either improve their current program or develop a mentoring program for their campus population and identify program outcomes.

This peer-mentoring handbook is organized in an easy-to-reference format that allows both experienced student success professionals and neophyte practitioners to find valuable information related to their work. The first four chapters complete a thorough review and discussion of the status of peer mentoring in higher education today. Collier focuses the remaining chapters on how to design, implement, adapt, and evaluate a program suited for specific populations and outcomes.

In today's challenging higher education environment, identifying affordable tools and strategies that improve student outcomes are critical priorities for colleges and universities. Collier's handbook makes a substantial contribution to the field of student success by creating a valuable handbook that serves as a necessary tool for college-based practitioners charged with creating and managing peer mentoring programs on their campus. The book is an essential read for academic

and student-affairs professionals charged with organizing and implementing peer mentoring programs on their campuses.

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