

Success Stories: A Year at Paieo College

by Maria Paiewonsky, Kristen Mecca, Tim Daniels, Carla Katz, Jim Nash, Ty Hanson, and Stelios Gragoudas



Partnership for Educational Coaching

A team of individuals at Holyoke Community College (HCC) agreed to use a new tool, the Student–Educational Coach Agreement, which is designed to help organize the educational coach's role at the college. This team included a college student, Tim Daniels; his educational coach, Kristen Mecca; Ty Hanson, a Holyoke Community College learning specialist; and Carla Katz, project coordinator for the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) initiative at HCC (ICE is a postsecondary education initiative across Massachusetts). In addition, Jim Nash from CareerWorks (a one-stop career center) and Maria Paiewonsky from Think College helped review the tool. Table 1 highlights how their monthly meetings were organized and facilitated by Maria Paiewonsky.

The Student–Educational Coach Agreement is a tool that helps organize the role of the educational coach at the college. It is designed to help organize the educational coach's role at the college. It is designed to help organize the educational coach's role at the college.

he learned how to get to classes and to the cafeteria, fitness center, and library on his own. Tim put Kristen's phone number into his contacts list on his cell phone so he can call her if he runs into any problems. Kristen takes advantage of Tim having a cell phone to send him text messages if she needs to let him know about a subtle reminder or other message. Since almost everyone on campus has a cell phone, the educational coach can assist the student without calling attention to this type of support.

Communication with course instructor(s): Students say that learning to talk to their professors can seem a little intimidating. Still, college professors expect students to speak for themselves when they need help understanding course information or an assignment. Students also need to discuss their accommodation plan, if they have one, with professors. Students and coaches may rehearse these conversations or write a list of the steps needed before students approach an instructor themselves. Students say this helps them build their confidence and remember everything that they want to say to their professor.

Tim and Kristen's example: Tim enjoyed his oral communications class, but knew he had to

recorder in class the following semester to reduce Tim's dependence on her class notes.

Using academic support services: All colleges offer students some type of academic support, especially if students need help with note-taking, study skills, or organizational skills to successfully complete coursework. Academic support might be offered directly in class through the professor, at an academic support center on campus, or through college tutors. Educational coaches may recommend that students take advantage of these services, and may also help them make an appointment and follow up with the academic support.

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advisor as looking for backstage help for the fall theater production. Tim is thinking about doing this to get involved with the theater group again.

Taking responsibility for one's schedule: College students have to learn to manage new schedules that are often much busier than the schedules they followed in high school. Learning to take responsibility for a schedule can take time and may require guidance from educational coaches. Educational coaches might need to remind students to get a planner of some kind, as well as to independently make, record, and keep appointments and to record homework and assignment deadlines.

Tim and Kristen's example: A goal for Tim is to eventually take full responsibility for his planner. By the second semester, he was recording several appointments, but his family and coach were adding to it as well, including written reminders about assignment due dates. Kristen was working with Tim to record more of his schedule independently.

RECOMMENDATION

In the final meeting, Tim and the other team members reflected on the use of the Student–Educational Coach Agreement over the course of the semester. The group determined that there are a number of benefits to using the agreement and identified the following recommendations:

- Use a formal agreement between the student and the educational coach to help to prepare for this important partnership.
- Before the semester begins, the student and coach should meet with each professor to discuss how the coach will support the student to participate in his or her course.
- Meet regularly to evaluate the agreement. It gives both the student and educational coach a chance to reflect on

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Transportation to & from campus	Takes bus on own to college. Waits at bus stop. Uses bus pass. Refers to checklist in planner. Parents review schedule the night before.	

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