Welcome
by Dr. William P. Mullaney, Ph.D.
Vice President of Academic Affairs

Upon arriving at Bergen Community College (BCC) around nine months ago, I was thrilled to learn about the Connect 1-2-3 Program because it indicated to me that the college was clearly establishing itself as a leader in the Student Success Movement that colleges across the country are supporting in order to help students. The national data suggests that one of the key factors that influence students’ ability to succeed in college is making a significant connection with someone at the college, be it a professor, advisor, tutor, counselor, staff member, administrator or fellow student. Through all of its aspects, the Connect 1-2-3 Program is clearly rooted in this belief, and the positive effects of the program are already becoming clear. I want to thank you all for participating in some way in this program that highlights all that is wonderful about BCC.

First Year Students Benefit from Peer Mentoring

The 1-2-3 Connect: First Year Experience Peer Mentor Program prides itself in helping students to make a seamless transition into Bergen Community College. Twenty-five Peer Mentors worked diligently starting with six Summer Connections Orientations, continuing into the Fall 2013 semester, in guiding first-year students and continuing students through the academic and social rigors of college.

Each Peer Mentor was assigned to a Success 101 (IST-123) class, which a total of 395 first-year students were mentored. For additional support outside of the classroom, students met in individual or group meetings with their Peer Mentor. The Peer Mentor Drop-In Center, B-220 in Pitkin Education Building, was an excellent environment for these meetings to transpire. Over 300 meetings ensued in pursuit of social and/or academic support.

Spring 2013 was a dynamic semester as Peer Mentors and students bonded in over 15 diverse events designed to foster collaborative relationships. Our most successful events, with over 100 students in attendance, were the Halloween Party, which students planned; and Stop the Violence Day, dedicated to ending and preventing domestic violence. We enjoyed collaborating with the clubs and organizations on our events and activities and will continue these relationships.

Our goal for succeeding semesters is to find creative ways to increase attendance at our academic programs such as Success 101 Walk-Ins where students can obtain assistance with their journals. In addition, we would like to encourage students to use this semester’s new initiative, “Let’s Connect,” a peer activity board to which any student can make a request for an activity partner for movies, dining, study, car pool and other events. Thank you all for your continuous support and ideas you may have for enhancing the Peer Mentor Program.
Message from Coordinator

Welcome back. The 1-2-3 Connect team hopes everyone had an enjoyable Winter break. The 1-2-3 Connect team had a busy fall semester. The Peer-mentoring team started their work well before the start of the Fall semester, holding several ‘Summer Connection’ orientations. Peer-mentors welcomed a new cohort of students to Bergen Community College. Peer-mentors worked diligently to ensure students were well prepared for their first college experience, stressing academic excellence and providing a road map for success.

During the fall semester 1-2-3 Connect instructors helped students develop the skills students need to ensure their continued success at Bergen Community College. Peer-mentors assisted in this process, providing students with support, skills workshops, and social events designed to encourage students to become part of the college community. The 1-2-3 Connect team implemented the Writing Composition I (WRT) and English Basic Skills (EBS) program, which provided students with an accelerated path to college level courses. In the Developmental Mathematics Hub (TEC-114) students were taking advantage of the Guided Mastery Self-Paced courses. Many students completed their coursework before the Thanksgiving break and started the next required Mathematics course. Many thanks to the mathematics tutors and the Math Annex supervisors (Joe and Fernando), who are always willing to assist students and provide them with encouragement.

I am looking forward to an exciting and successful spring semester and our Summer Connections program.

Robert Fusco
1-2-3 Connect Program Coordinator

With the goals of improving student success and enhancing learning and study skills for our Title V, 1-2-3 Connect participants, Linda Kass, Chair of the Developmental Math Department, and Melanie Walker, Co-ordinator of the Title V Developmental Math Grant, implemented the Guided Self-Paced Mastery Developmental Math Program.

These Guided Self-Paced Mastery classes allow the student to grasp the material at their own pace and let them take the time they need to master the course. Our Mastery Classes are designed to relieve the anxiety usually associated with taking a math course. Students have the opportunity to retake assignments and tests as many times as needed to achieve the posted level of mastery. Our Title V math classes are conducted in our newly designed Computer Math HUB where students learn the material through computer aided instruction along with individualized help from a professor and class tutor.

Students have many options as they move through these classes

- Students can excel and complete a course and start the next course the same semester.
- Students can receive an “incomplete” grade if they have completed 75% of the course.
- If students are attending class regularly and do not complete 75% of the course, they will receive an “F with benefits” grade which will allow them to continue with the class the next semester and start where they left off.

Self-Paced Math Courses Build Study Skills

Our V.J. Patel Family Title V Math Hub provides Title V students the opportunity to:

- Improve student success
- Enhance study skills
- Encourage mastery of material
- Accommodate learning styles
- Provide immediate feedback on tests and homework
- Facilitate completion of courses simultaneously
- Offer flexibility of scheduling.

These classes are redesigning the way students learn and study Math. Students will learn how to be an active and engaged student by doing the math rather than watching how the Professor does the math.
# Accelerated Learning Program

During the fall 2013 semester the Accelerated Learning program offered six sections of English Basic Skills (EBS) and Writing Composition I (WRT). Four of these sections were designated for second semester students. The other two sections were designated for new incoming students who meet the required Accuplacer score. The EBS 1-2-3 Connect team collaborated with the English faculty to provide course materials designed specifically for the Accelerated Learning program. The Accelerated Learning program and the new course materials were developed to improve student success and increase overall student retention. The team used a ‘Moodle’ site to ensure the course material was available to faculty members interested in the Accelerated Learning program.

The EBS 1-2-3 Connect team has systematized the registration process for the EBS/WRT courses for the spring 2014 semester and will offer eight sections for second semester students. The new systematized registration process was the result of the collaboration between the academic and student services offices; offering registration tickets and real-time registration for students with peer mentor assistance. The EBS 1-2-3 Connect team has begun the process to ensure English Basic Skills support is a placement in the Datatel system, along with a research project to track the retention and persistence of students in the Accelerated Learning Program.

# First Year Student Responds to Success 101 Program Student Success Testimonial

My name is Jannah Ramadan and I graduated in 2013 from Pascack Valley, in Hillsdale, New Jersey. In high-school, I was never really thinking of college. I took all classes that I needed to take throughout my four years and couldn’t wait to graduate. I got decent grades, but at the end of junior year I made a decision that would change my life - to go to college and get a degree in something that I love and enjoy learning. I have two older brothers, one older sister and one younger sister. All my older siblings finished high school but never completed college. When my senior year was over, I realized I’m going to begin my new journey. I was filled with all different kinds of emotions. It felt unreal. Mostly, I was really nervous. I didn’t know what to expect, especially because I was alone. Of course my family was always there to support me, but I knew I wouldn’t have someone related to me know what I’d be going through.

While registering for my first semester, one class called Success 101 (IST-123) really stood out. I was excited for the first class even though I didn’t really know what to expect. But once Professor Talarico started to describe the course, I was really excited and knew it would help to start my academic journey. I will always remember her personal story. It was very touching and inspired me to become a stronger individual. This course taught me many new strategies on how to be successful, and not to give up and to stay on track. Through all the journals I have written, I’ve grown and realized how much I developed as a student. There are many lessons the Success 101 course teaches you and it can help you become the student you want to be. This class teaches you how to overcome your fears and accept anything that comes your way. This course makes you think more positively, become open-minded, become a creator rather than a victim, use the ‘wise choice’ process and much more! I am very excited to grow and reach every goal I am determined to accomplish. I’m proud of myself for the changes I have made as a student to achieve anything that comes my way. The ideas I have learned will always stick with me, and will always be something I will look back at in case I get off course.
Tutor Program Expands Services

The Cerullo Learning Assistance Center (CLAC) has taken strides to provide even more services for Title V students, as well as those in all other cohorts. One of the newer services that everyone may not yet know about is ‘Reading Comprehension’ appointments. These appointments are offered to augment reading across the curriculum. Regardless of the course, the tutors of the CLAC are here to help students understand their textbooks and are available by appointment or walk-in basis. In addition, the CLAC assists every Title V student enrolled in an Introduction to College Experience (IST) class at least four times a semester, which presents the wonderful opportunity to work closely with the college community, including students, faculty, and administrators.

The Title V initiative allowed the CLAC to implement a wide-ranging In-Class Tutor Program, which has helped the Bergen College community immensely. The In-Class Tutor Program worked so well in a Title V capacity, Bergen Community College has since expanded it to college level courses. Regardless of its successes, the CLAC is constantly reviewing the In-Class Tutoring Program through questionnaires and surveys going out to faculty and tutor participants to gain feedback. The CLAC prepares tutors to better serve the Title V students by offering preparatory quizzes to help apprise the tutors of the support expected of them.