UC Santa Barbara Launches Destination College Advising Corps (DCAC) Program

UC Santa Barbara: November 19, 2019—University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) and College Advising Corps (CAC) have joined together to open the doors of higher education for more low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented high school students. UCSB joins CAC’s 31 university partners serving in 17 states across the country.

Beginning in fall 2019, the UCSB Office of Education Partnerships (OEP) will place five recent college graduates in underserved public high schools to work as full-time college advisers with the UCSB Destination College Advising Corps (DCAC) program. Each of these highly trained college advisers will work to change perceptions about higher education in Carpinteria, Oxnard and Santa Paula and will help high school students apply for and enroll in postsecondary institutions that are a match and fit with their goals.

Today, for every 482 students, there is just one counselor. That means most students only spend 20 minutes per year with someone who can advocate for their postsecondary education. CAC shifts this paradigm: College advisers empower students to embrace their strengths and build students’ confidence to attend college.

From trade schools to four-year institutions, CAC’s college advisers focus on helping students identify opportunities that are right for them. College advisers know firsthand the challenges that students can face: 80% of CAC’s current college advisers are themselves Pell grant recipients, first-generation college graduates, or underrepresented minorities.

According to a report published by Georgetown University in 2013, by 2020, 65% of jobs in the United States will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school. Inspiring all high school students to pursue college, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status, is imperative to their futures.

“Advisers are key partners in creating the world we want to see,” said CAC Founder and CEO Nicole Hurd. “If we don’t intervene, the future of our communities is in jeopardy.”

Each DCAC college adviser will become part of a school’s staff and community. They will help students navigate every step of their postsecondary journey, including registering for the SAT and ACT, applying for financial aid and scholarships, and completing college applications. Throughout this process, students and their families will rely on advisers as trusted allies—and as the most valuable college resources available.
"We are excited to bring the DCAC Program to five UCSB partner high schools, in academic year 2019-2020. This was made possible through teamwork and through leadership of school district partners, school site administrators and counseling staff, and though our UCSB academic preparation program staff in both MESA and EAOP.

The addition of the five DCAC Fellows at local high schools will help us better prepare students in two ways. First, the DCAC Program model will increase our capacity to support first-generation K-12 students academically, by increasing the frequency of contacts between students and the well-trained DCAC Fellows, who are near peers and first-generation college graduates. Secondly, we are excited that the Fellows will start their professional journey at UCSB’s Office of Education Partnerships. The Fellows have already received valuable workforce training, critical professional development, and are continuing to explore their individual graduate and career pathways. We are especially excited about connecting the DCAC Fellows to the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education where we hope they will continue to expand their leadership development in K12 and/or higher education.

We are very grateful to our UC Berkeley colleagues for sharing their years of experience and for fine-tuning the DCAC model in California. We are equally grateful to the College Advising Corp Foundation for developing the innovative program nationally, for their capacity building, and for their financial support. Finally, we are also thankful to the UCOP Office of Diversity and Engagement for supporting the expansion of the DCAC Program to UCSB."

Mario Castellanos, Executive Director
UC Santa Barbara Office of Education Partnerships

Over the past 15 years, CAC has developed a proven-effective model. Students who meet with CAC advisers are 30% more likely to apply to a college or university and 24% more likely to be accepted than students who have not met with CAC’s advisers. Thanks to support from CAC, UC Office of the President, UC Berkeley DCAC, UCSB OEP, Carpinteria Unified School District, Oxnard Union High School District and Santa Paula Unified School District, this new partnership between UCSB OEP and CAC will support thousands of students in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties and help them to realize their college potential.

CAC has established a “double bottom line” strategy to transform the lives of both its students and its college advisers. High school students served by CAC go on to achieve their greatest educational ambitions, while CAC’s college advisers hone their skills as future leaders who will build a more diverse workforce.

Adolfo Camarillo High School
Carpinteria High School
Oxnard High School
Rio Mesa High School
Santa Paula High School

College Advising Corps was founded with 14 advisers in 2005 at the University of Virginia. Since then, it has grown to include more than 800 advisers from 31 partner universities serving in schools and virtually across the country. Since CAC’s inception, those advisers have helped more than 450,000 low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students enroll in postsecondary education. CAC now seeks to activate the next generation of leaders to propel one million students to higher education by 2025.

Learn more at advisingcorps.org.