



INSTITUTE *for* EVIDENCE-BASED CHANGE



Creating a Caring Campus: Staff and Student Success

Intentionally involving classified professionals in the student success agenda advances and accelerates positive student outcomes.

The first contact students have with the institution may be a phone call to student services, a meeting with a financial aid officer, a grounds worker while walking across campus, bookstore clerks, or a wide range of other personnel. The interaction of these college staff with students can set the stage for their potential success.

Building on the impact of student support services on student success

The IEBC *Caring Campus* program draws from years of IEBC experience working with institutions making significant strides in advancing student success and closing equity gaps. The power of engaging student support staff and other classified professionals in campus student success initiatives is significant. Their key roles help ensure learning by removing non-academic obstacles and building student connectedness to the college.

Caring Campus uses an **evidence-based coaching model** to promote deep involvement of staff in student success. A good coach instructs in fundamentals and directs strategy. Accordingly, IEBC's *Caring Campus* coaches instruct classified professionals on the fundamentals of what can be done to increase student connectedness to the college to directly enhance student

engagement and success. Because Caring Campus goes beyond, but is complementary to, the traditional staff development model, it involves deep coaching of participating staff. This means working with every student service and operations department that engages with students—directly or indirectly—at every point in the student’s experience, from connection to completion. The one-year program also guides student services and operational departments in developing strategy, grounded in commitments, which can be easily implemented campus-wide.

The core benefit of this approach is **developing a culture focused on increasing meaningful connections with students**, especially those who have not had an experienced adult in an educational system who cared about them. Such connections cannot be overestimated. As Tinto documented in his seminal work, *Leaving College* (1993), students leave because they do not feel connected to an institution, but this lack of engagement can be addressed within and beyond the classroom.

Caring Campus integrates the work of classified professionals with the work of the faculty in support of student success initiatives, thus **creating a true partnership among colleagues**. As community colleges focus on systemic changes to improve student outcomes, it is essential that all aspects of the student experience align with these efforts. Research indicates that student support staff and other professionals across campuses can contribute substantially to enhancing student connectedness, thereby increasing the likelihood students will attain their educational goals.

Colleges can be more confident in their student success efforts with IEBC’s *Caring Campus* in action.