Community/Public Service Worksheet

Service Category: Educational Outreach Programs

Title: Drive Program

Primary UA Contact(s): Kathryn Merritt (name) Honors College (Office) (name)

Community Partner(s) (If any): Teresa Costanzo (name) Tuscaloosa's One Place (Organization) Dr. Walter Davie (name) Tuscaloosa County Schools (Organization)

Program Description: Working in partnership with the Tuscaloosa County School System and Tuscaloosa's One Place (TOP), The Honors College Drive Program (Students Driven to Excel) is a student-initiated academic readiness program that provides focused mentoring services to identified students in the local schools who need critical additional cognitive and non-cognitive support in order to be successful in their school setting.

Objectives/Outcomes: The primary objective of the program is for the dedicated and academically successful Honors College student to assist in filling the resource gaps in our local schools by serving as a positive facilitator of learning and personal mentor to students enrolled in these school programs. An additional objective is to expose the Honors College students to complex and varied social and academic issues facing American education.

Assessment Measures: TOP and TCSS collect data that analyze the academic progress of each student in the core subject areas of English, Social Studies, Math, Reading, and Science. Additionally, students' attendance and behavior records are evaluated on a regular basis. Both the students in the program and the Honors College students submit surveys and reflections throughout the term.

Results: The Honors College mentor becomes an advocate for educational equity in American schools, and a growing number actually choose to become educators or pursue a career in education policy reform. TOP and TCSS consistently report qualitative and quantitative benefits of the Drive Program.

Conclusions: Honors College students are meeting a critical need in our community's schools, but as importantly, they are being transformed by this experience. As one mentor noted, "I now have more empathy towards people I see struggling or striving around me."
Dedicated to open and collaborative dialogue with TOP and TCSS, we continue to refine the program and curriculum to more effectively meet the needs of the children being served. Additionally, program expansion remains a primary goal for Honors College as institutional resources deem feasible.