

***Institutional Emerging/Promising Practices – Wentworth Institute of Technology***

***The Leading for Change Higher Education Diversity Consortium defines an emerging/promising practice as one which campus data either suggests or demonstrates being supportive of the success of campus students or employees from under-represented groups.***

***Please share details on three emerging promising practices at your institution (one per sheet).***

***1) Name of Initiative: BRIDGES Mentoring Program***

***2) Who the Initiative Is Designed to Support: first year students of color***

***3) Description of Strategies/Activities Employed: First year students of color are invited to participate in BRIDGES, a mentoring and community program sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Social Justice Programs. Students first attend a one day pre-orientation program to expose the students to campus resources and current students. The students facilitate a conversation with the new students about the campus climate. Additionally, each student is matched with a student mentor for their first year. All of the mentees and mentors are invited to community events throughout the year.***

***4) Data on Effectiveness of Initiative: While the average graduation rate for our students of color is below 60%, data suggests participants in this program have a 67% graduation rate.***

***5) Contact Person Who Can Share More About This Promising Practice: Alex Cabal, Director, 617-989-4987, cabala@wit.edu***

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***Name of Initiative:*** RAMP: Pre-College Summer Bridge Program

***Who the Initiative Is Designed to Support:*** RAMP provides a paid summer bridge opportunity to students from Boston who are entering Wentworth in the fall as freshman or transfer students. In support of our surrounding environment, RAMP primarily serves students from Boston Public Schools (BPS), one of the most diverse school districts in the country. BPS students come from over 100 countries, and nearly one half speaks a language other than English at home while three out of four live near or below the poverty line. According to the BPS at a Glance 2015-2016 report, 72% of BPS students identify as having High Needs (which includes English Language Learners, students with disabilities/students with an IEP, and economically disadvantaged students). Seventy-six percent of the BPS population is Latino (41%) or African American (35%), whereas sixty-seven percent of RAMP participants are African American (38%) or Hispanic (29%) and many are from new immigrant households.

***Description of Strategies/Activities Employed:*** RAMP provides an intensive six-week experience that helps the participating students successfully transition from high school to higher education through group mentoring, front-line academic instruction, and project-based learning activities. With Wentworth's shift toward collaborative practices focused on innovation and experiential learning, RAMP focuses on providing these students with an introduction to the learning environment that awaits them at Wentworth and beyond.

Through RAMP, the Center and these students work directly with real-world clients, addressing a critical need in their neighborhood through project development activities focused on positive community impact. Former RAMP students serve as peer advisors. In addition to guiding the design process, these peer advisors serve as positive role models for the students and provide valuable insight into the Wentworth community and their experiences managing the higher education environment. There are also weekly, formal reviews of the students' work by faculty, external partners and peers, a process that helps them to improve their public speaking skills.

RAMP engages multiple external, industry and community-based partners, a cornerstone to the development of our students. This summer, employees from industry partners like Dell EMC, Janey Construction, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger, Turner Construction, Gilbane Construction and Akamai Technologies presented to the students about careers in STEM and strategies for achieving career success. In most instances, students were able to visit these companies in their own spaces. Through our work with local community institutions and organizations, the Center was also able to bring leaders from The BASE and Bottom Line to speak with the students.

In addition to the collaborators mentioned above, two full-time staff members from the Center carry out the goals and objectives of RAMP. They meet regularly with RAMP participants and provide ongoing, individualized case management to support RAMP students in their transition at Wentworth throughout their entire time at the institute.

This past summer, Wentworth faculty from the English department provided direct instruction for six hours each week; increasing the students' ability to effectively communicate through all mediums. In an effort to better expose students to project-based, interdisciplinary learning, we partnered with faculty to offer students a creative course called "How to Make Almost Anything," which we will offer again in 2017. This course provides students with hands-on, STEM-

based workshops including 3D computer modeling, 3D printing, creating sensors/actuators, wired/wireless communications, a small engine clinic, and more. Additionally, students took part in weekly workshops with Wentworth staff from Student Affairs, The Learning Center, and the Library that emphasized “21st century skills” such as critical thinking, life skills, social skills, and interpersonal communication.

***Data on Effectiveness of Initiative:*** Participation: Since 2011, 150 students have participated in RAMP with 43 participating this past summer, the highest number to date.

Retention: To date, the first-to-second year retention rate at Wentworth for RAMP participants is 87.4, as compared to 84% for the rest of Wentworth’s student population. Our goal is to increase this rate to at least 90% within the next three years.

Graduation: According to a study funded by The Boston Foundation in 2015, of the students who attend post-secondary educational opportunities, only 51% of Boston Public School (BPS) graduates earn a college degree within six years of finishing high school. The third cohort of RAMP students graduated this past summer, improving our 4-year graduation rate to 52% and the 5-year rate to 68%. Through RAMP, Wentworth intends to maintain or exceed a 72% six-year graduation rate for all Boston residents involved in the program.

***Contact Person Who Can Share More About This Promising Practice:*** Contact Person Who Can Share More About This Promising Practice:

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