

Highlighting a S.T.A.R.— System with Targeted Actions and Results

Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD), one of Texas Workforce Commission's Adult Education programs, is also one of the largest Adult Education (AE) providers in Texas. Consisting of seven colleges and multiple campuses, DCCCD selected Cedar Valley and El Centro Colleges to highlight their Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs in IT and Logistics during the 2018-2019 program year with the Texas Peer Mentor Network (TX-PMN). At DCCCD, the Adult Learning and Career Pathway Development's alternative label, *WorkReadyU*, demonstrates the District's commitment to collaboration with workforce partners to prepare students for entry into high demand occupations in the Dallas area.

The Cedar Valley Campus received a visit from Texas Peer Mentor Network (TX-PMN) site visitors on February 21-22, 2019. The first meeting featured a discussion on (a) the nature of the direction of DCCCD's IET partnership overall across all seven district colleges, (b) the importance of staffing the right people at Seagoville Federal Correctional Institute, and (c) the goals of future program growth with EL Civics IET.

Amarillo College sent their Dean and Associate Dean of Academic Success, Edie Carter and Dr. Linda Munoz, as the official TX-PMN site visitors for this trip. DCCCD staff who welcomed the visitors to Cedar Valley included Monica Stansberry, Senior Program Specialist; Gloria Smith, Senior Director of Adult Learning and Career Pathway Development (*WorkReadyU*); Ruben Johnson, Executive Dean of Business Technology; Cheryl Green, Coordinator of Academic Programs in Continuing Education; Ed Snyder, Continuing Education and Workforce Coordinator; Ray Rivera, Associate Dean Continuing Education; Kenneth Goffney, Instructional Specialist and Coach; Sheridan Nixon, District Office and *WorkReadyU* Partnership's Project Lead; and Jesus Mercado, Instructional Lead and Manager for Transition Programs, Career Transitions, and HSE Programs.

The TX-PMN's number one tenet, Structure, has been the focus of growth for DCCCD during 2018-2019, specifically related to the creation of a referral process for the Developmental Education and Adult Education crossover. A meeting with DCCCD Developmental Education Leadership to discuss this process was originally scheduled during the visit, but the plan was altered and the site visitors had to reschedule. The concerns about Dev Ed/Adult ED alignment were addressed later through a series of telephone conversations during February 28 – March 7.

A major highlight of the TX-PMN visit to DCCCD was the afternoon trip to the Seagoville Federal Correctional Institute, southeast of Dallas.

A major highlight of the TX-PMN visit to DCCCD was the afternoon trip to the Seagoville Federal Correctional Institute (FCI), southeast of Dallas. Cedar Valley College (CVC) has been working with state and federal prisons for 12 years. Their curriculum has been validated and approved by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) for use on an off-campus site. Cedar Valley currently offers AA programs as well as some AAS programs in Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC); Automotive; Logistics; and Entrepreneurship. They also offer a Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA) industry recognized credential. All inmates who complete courses through these programs receive CVC transcripts with no indication of the student's incarcerated status.

The site visitors agreed that the greatest strengths of Cedar Valley's IET programs are their robust partnerships with federal and state prisons. CVC provides all state AEL programs with a strong model for developing IET programs for incarcerated populations. At CVC, faculty hired to teach in these locations receive professional development support to work with incarcerated populations and are informed of the nuances between the different educational settings. Having the right staff liaison between the FCI and the college, as well as having dynamic instructors, is vital. For example, CVC has a staff member who hires, trains, and supports the faculty who will serve these unique, intensive populations. Cedar Valley is now able to provide professional development on a larger scale related to working with county, state, and federal prisons. CVC's work with this population has focused on GED completion, Career and Technical Education IET programs, and finding success in the workplace through developing critical thinking skills and emotional intelligence (EQ) capacity. In addition, they offer special support for veterans.

CVC provides all state AEL programs with a strong model for developing IET programs for incarcerated populations.

CVC's partnership with the FCI holds few structural or coordination challenges at the present time, although a few concerns were mentioned: (a) occasional lock downs and lack of online testing services can interrupt class progress, (b) a limited number of IET programs are approved for the prison environment, (c) some individuals leave before they are able to complete a program, and (d) more than half of inmates at the federal center hold postsecondary degrees higher than an AA, which means a community college cannot provide for their educational needs.