

PRACTICES EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2020

<https://yeswemustcoalition.org>

Issue 29

Covid19 Response Update

We know that all of you are making extraordinary efforts to support your students, faculty and staff and keep them safe during this unprecedented health crisis. In order to provide a forum for YWMC members to share strategies and raise questions that others may have answers to, we have been holding an Open Forum via our Zoom platform for members every Thursday at noon. More than half of our members have taken advantage of this community gathering and we welcome any additional institutional members of the Coalition who wish to join the conversation.

YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: College Unbound

College Unbound, founded in 2009, is Rhode Island's newest college and offers a program to support and celebrate adult learners. Just over 10 years old and in candidacy for accreditation with NECHE, College Unbound (CU) became a member of YWMC in 2019 and is spearheading a movement to change what college for adult learners looks and feels like. The average adult student has made multiple attempts at college - with this reality in mind, CU is deliberately designed to allow students to work full-time, and go to school full-time, without having to sacrifice either necessity.

With more than 100 students currently enrolled, College Unbound's program is designed for adults looking to advance in their current careers, move into new vocations, or spark change that improves the quality of life for themselves and others.

While students come for the degree, the main focus is transformation. This constantly innovating, evolving world requires learning that differs significantly from traditional schooling. Learning can never stop, at any age. Adults, especially those who are underserved, need more rigorous and relevant ways to learn the skills needed for a constantly changing workplace. They also need their bachelor's degree to help them move up or move on to a better job. CU has set up a program that rewards past and present learning in and out of the classroom, enabling students to redefine themselves while getting in, staying in, and completing their bachelor's degrees.



CU has combined the best of both in-person and online college, and has gone a step further to identify the essential elements adult learners need to create a college unbound from the

limitations of traditional institutions and far more effective than a blended model. Students receive their BA from CU while developing the leadership and change skills that employers value most at a cost that will not put them in long-term debt. CU's curriculum acknowledges the importance of job readiness skills for the short term and leadership skills for the long term. CU's signature bachelor's program leads to a degree in Organizational Leadership and Change and provides students with the skills necessary to advance to leadership roles within their organizations and beyond. Ultimately, the student's professional and personal growth is the curriculum itself. Courses are driven by student interests, fully tailored to the specific personal and professional interests of each student.

Perhaps most exciting is the way in which CU's students move from thinking a college degree is unattainable to pursuing new learning pathways beyond their BA. Thirty percent of the students graduating from CU's independent BA program have been accepted to masters' degree programs. In this way CU is not only serving students who would not have enrolled elsewhere, but is also building a new generation of graduate students in Rhode Island's post-secondary landscape.



As a relative newcomer to Yes We Must, College Unbound is excited to share in a common mission of transformative post-secondary education for low-income, first-generation students. They look forward to learning from YWMC peers and sharing insights into how building a school for and with adults influences universal design for all best practices in higher education.

Institutional Resources/Practices

Career Development Faculty Fellowships

Given the heightened focus on career development as part of its core mission and 2025 Strategic Plan, the Center for Community Engagement and Career Competitiveness (CCECC) at Averett University (VA) is offering summer fellowships to eight faculty that will include a three-day intensive workshop during which participants will asset map what their departments/divisions are currently doing with regard to career education and reimagine/strengthen how career development opportunities for students are offered within the academic sphere. Participants will earn \$1200 for the fellowship and will have the opportunity to network with nonprofits and for-profits in the area for potential partnership development. The Career Development Faculty Fellows Program is committed to supporting participants in the following endeavors:

- Becoming part of a learning community of faculty leaders who engage with career development scholarship and best practices to reimagine how a liberal arts college can embed career-minded practices throughout the curriculum (capstones, internships, field experiences, job shadowing, federal work-study as intentional labor placement, etc.)
- Mapping what career development practices are currently being done in their department/division and how those practices can be marketed, improved, or grown
- Applying best practices in internship and field-experience supervision
- Connecting to new and/or existing community-university partnerships.

Ultimate deliverables include a curriculum map of career development experiences currently provided across each academic division at Averett; a communication plan on how all disparate areas of offerings can be tracked through one central location (the CCECC); and a plan for how to ensure that every Averett student has access to a workplace experience.

For further information contact: Billy Wooten, Director, CCECC, bwooten@averett.edu; or Angie McAdams, Director of Career Development, amcadams@averett.edu.

Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. Send brief descriptions to Nia Lane Chester, YWMC Program Manager. niachester@gmail.com.