

# PRACTICES EXCHANGE

## NEWSLETTER

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<https://yeswemustcoalition.org>

Issue 51

**Growing the Coalition** If you know a school that should be a member of the Yes We Must Coalition, please connect us with them. Growing numbers make us stronger in the work we do together and the voice we raise on behalf of low-income students. Please get in touch with Gloria Nemerowicz, President, at [glorianemerowicz@yeswemustcoalition.org](mailto:glorianemerowicz@yeswemustcoalition.org).

### YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: Calumet College of St. Joseph



**Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ)** is a small, private, Catholic institution that offers associate, bachelor's and master's degrees and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Founded in 1951 and located in Whiting, Indiana, CCSJ is blocks from Lake Michigan and just minutes from downtown Chicago. Dedicated to the academic, spiritual and ethical development of undergraduate and graduate students, CCSJ is informed by the values of its founding religious community, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Ranked the #1 most affordable private college in Indiana, 94% of traditional students receive financial aid. CCSJ is a charter member of the Yes We Must Coalition.

Faculty are able to connect with students through the College's small class sizes and a student /faculty ratio of 10:1. CCSJ's supportive community empowers students to explore their passions, embrace their purpose and achieve their goals — in the classroom, with our competitive sports teams, as part of our robust student groups, and beyond graduation. Traditionally a commuter campus, this year the College added its first on-campus residence hall.

The College offers sixteen bachelor's programs, including business management, biomedical science/kinesiology, criminal justice, digital and studio arts and education. Four post undergraduate and graduate programs include the Transition to Teaching Program that allows students with a bachelor's degree to transition into the education field, public safety administration, psychology and management. Two degree-completion programs (Public Safety Management and Business Fast-Track) offer adults the opportunity to complete their degrees at an accelerated pace.



CCSJ is consistently ranked in the top ten most diverse regional universities of the Midwest region by *U.S. News & World Report*. Named the first Hispanic Serving Institution in Indiana, the College is proud of its ethnic and cultural diversity. CCSJ promotes and values social justice, student empowerment and opportunity, lifelong learning, the inherent dignity of all people and an ethic of service.

The first institution in the Calumet Region to offer a four-year degree, Calumet College of St. Joseph is proud to serve the area both in the classroom and through community service. Through academics and outreach, the College's mission extends far beyond the classroom. Our graduates become alumni who make a daily difference in their community. They positively influence the fields of education, business, law enforcement, and the professions. They serve as artists and social workers, leaders of banking and industry.

In the past two years, CCSJ freshmen have given over 5,000 service-learning hours by volunteering within the community. Service extends beyond the community as well. Recently the college provided books to the school-aged victims of Hurricane Katrina, and has adopted a Guatemalan village. Each spring a team of faculty, staff and students serve the poor of Guatemala by providing material assistance to some of the world's most needy.

The athletics program at CCSJ began in 1999 and the school currently hosts 17 teams. The men's and women's bowling teams continue to be perennial powerhouses nationally, most recently placing 2nd and 5th respectively in the Western Shootout. This year the College became one of the founding members of the Midwest Sprint Football League.

CCSJ is grateful for a number of recent grants, including the Department of Education's Hispanic-Serving Institutions STEM Grant (\$5 million over 5 years); the Department of Education's HSI Strengthening Institutions Grant (\$3 million over 5 years); and the Lilly Grant for Indiana Youth Programs on Campus (\$565,000 over 3 years).

For more information, please contact Derek Shouba, Vice President for Academic Affairs, at [dshouba@ccsj.edu](mailto:dshouba@ccsj.edu).

## Institutional Resources/Practices

### **The PACE (Persistence and Completion Experience) Program at Lees-McRae College**

The current undergraduate enrollment at **Lees-McRae College** (LMC) includes 674 seated students and 198 Extended College and Online Learning students. The admissions team has recently grown the in-coming cohort of first-year and transfer students to over 200, and the College anticipates an in-coming cohort of more than 300 for fall 2023.

Although LMC anticipates 2023 will be a year of significant new student enrollment growth, our retention and persistence through completion rates need to grow as well. To address this, the College has developed programming, the Persistence and Completion Experience (PACE), to include experiential learning and intrusive advising to improve the persistence of our in-coming cohorts. Led by the Dean of Student Success, the entire Burton Center for Student Success (BCSS) team is responsible for implementing PACE.

Phase One of PACE, Restructuring, was implemented in summer 2021. This initiative restructured the First-Year Experience to include best practices in the First-Year Seminar, such as expanded common intellectual experiences, syllabi elements, programming, and assignments as well as teaching persistence skills, such as self-efficacy, sense of belonging, value for the curriculum, and the importance of transferring these skills (Tinto, 2016). Phase One also re-envisioned the BCSS to provide leadership for program development for the First-Year Experience, professional development for First-Year Seminar instructors, a reading/writing instructor to develop and teach Foundations of College Reading and Writing, a mathematics instructor to develop and teach Foundations of College Algebra, and a coordinator to provide leadership for accessibility services. The coordinator of accessibility services was a new position.

Once restructuring was in place, the College began Phase Two, Redesign. Changes included redesigning the Math and Reading/Writing Placement Assessments to help students more seamlessly transition from high school into LMC's math and rhetoric general education curriculum. We also redesigned the Peer Academic Mentor application and selection process so we would be aware of students who demonstrate knowledge and collegiality in specific disciplines as well as students who are successful in multiple disciplines. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the College's Ratchford Writing Center was reassigned to be a classroom, a change that caused confusion among students and their instructors who perceived the change as a loss of services. In spring 2022, the Ratchford Writing Center reopened with stronger leadership and student staff trained to coach college writers. Finally, the BCSS team gained a new position to provide consistent support and facilitate accommodating approximately 90 students who were registered for on-going services there.

This year the College is rolling out Phase Three, New Programming. The programming will include a newly created position for a First-Year Seminar instructor/academic advisor, monitored study hours for first-year students and student-athletes with faculty and Peer Academic Mentors, and “Picking Up the PACE,” an academic recovery program for students on academic probation (cumulative GPA below 2.0). First piloted in spring 2022, Picking Up the PACE invites students to meet with the Dean of Student Success to design an individualized academic recovery plan. Although all plans differ according to the students’ needs, areas typically addressed include class attendance and engagement with courses through classroom participation and assignment submission. Both the Dean of Student Success and participants record efforts and achievements.

We are pleased that after the implementation of Phase One and parts of Phase Two we experienced an 8% increase in retention for the fall 2021 to fall 2022 first-year cohort and a decrease of 2.3% in the number of students from the same cohort who were placed on academic probation. We are optimistic to see more success following the full implementation this year. For more information, please contact Beth Beggs, Dean, Student Success, and Director, Burton Center for Student Success, at [beggsb@lmc.edu](mailto:beggsb@lmc.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. We are particularly interested in examples of how members are addressing issues of social and racial justice. Send ideas for the newsletter to Barbara Kirby, Operations Manager, [barbarakirby@yeswemustcoalition.org](mailto:barbarakirby@yeswemustcoalition.org).