

# The Mentor

Fall 2020

**CAMPUS  
CONNECTIONS**

**UCCS**

College of Education

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **COLORADO SPRINGS**



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Campus Connections is a wellness and resiliency-oriented service-learning program that pairs UCCS students and youth from the community in mentor-mentee relationships. Youth are referred through our El Paso County community partners and are matched with a UCCS student who provides one-on-one therapeutic mentoring throughout the semester.

Mentors spend four hours once a week with their mentee providing academic support, career planning, and promoting positive social skill development.

UCCS mentors support youth in building goals while providing a supportive environment to help them achieve those goals. Campus Connections takes place on UCCS's campus, giving participants exposure to university life and the potential to explore the possibilities of lifelong learning.

# Director's Dispatch



Dear Campus Community and Community Stakeholders,

This semester has presented us with the unique opportunity to be flexible and creative in how we work with our amazing at-promise youth. Everyone on the Campus Connections team has been striving to make our new virtual environment feel as supportive as our in-person program. Mentors and Mentees were able to meet the first night in person with everyone outside and wearing masks. We had dinner on the lawn and fun, games, and tie-dye to wrap up the night. We are thankful to UCCS, D11 and the parents for coordinating this meaningful experience.

We continue to meet virtually each week, still allowing for relationship building and a little bit of homework time. This semester, in addition to our Social Justice activities, we added some digital citizenship lessons. Our mentor and mentees were able to learn more about how to be safe online as more of our time is spent on a virtual platform.

This semester we were able to serve more students by adding our Teen Group program. Partnering with Atlas Preparatory Academy's middle school. This program allows a small group of students to experience some of the same relationship building and wellness activities as Campus Connections, but in a shortened time frame. The group is co-facilitated by a current school counselor and one of our second-year master's students. We hope to be able to offer Teen Group next semester as well!

On behalf of the entire team at Campus Connections and the Department of Counseling and Human Services, I would like to thank all of you for your continued support of this innovative program.

Sincerely,

Kim Severn, MA, Co-Director and Instructor for UCCS Campus Connections and Advisory Board Member



**UCCS**

Department of Counseling  
& Human Services

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# Campus Connections Staff & Mentors

Staff		Mentors	Major
Joe Wehrman	Co-Director	Cameron Alexander	Biochemistry
Diane Stutey	Co-Director	Marilyn Bemis	MA- School Counseling
Kim Severn	Instructor/Co-Director	Alberto Castillo	Human Services, Military and Veteran Affairs
Cortny Stark	Co-Director	Haley Christman	Emphasis Communication & Human Services
Molly Cammell	Research & Grants Program Manager	Rachel Clayton	Criminal Justice & Human Services
Hailey Gloden	Graduate Assistant	Chris Delgado	Finance & Business
Alanys Chavez	Graduate Assistant	Rachel Duryea	Human Services
Beth Rockwell	Graduate Assistant	Mario Mandel	Computer Security
Sabrina Estrada	Graduate Assistant	Kathryn Palm	Psychology
Raelynn Goodwin	Counseling Intern	Keldon Tapia-Jones	Human Services
Catherine Lawson	Counseling Intern	Kieley Thorpe	Psychology, minor in Human Services
Kristina Stoltzfus	Counseling Intern	Rayna Warszawski	Human Services

## Mentor Coach

Halle Brimm	Criminal Justice & Human Services
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# Mentor Recruitment

We are  
always  
looking for  
excellent  
mentors!



Did you know?

Becoming a Campus Connections Mentor is a great way to:

- Build your resume
- Get hands-on experience
- Give back to the community
- Build leadership skills

There are leadership opportunities built in!

Campus Connections is a 3-credit course (COUN4950) that can be taken multiple times! There are more leadership opportunities offered with each time you take the class:

- First Semester:  
Mentor
  - Second Semester:  
Mentor Coach
    - Third Semester:  
Lead Mentor Coach

*Faculty:*

Partner with us in recruiting mentors for Campus Connections! If you are interested in having someone from our staff come and speak to your class about the program, please contact us at [mcammell@uccs.edu](mailto:mcammell@uccs.edu).

# Mentoring Virtually



**Name:** Alberto Castillo  
**Major:** Human Services,  
Military and Veteran Affairs  
Emphasis

## Why did you choose to participate in Campus Connections this semester?

I chose to participate in Campus Connections this semester because I want to make an impact in a child's life. I wanted to be the person that a child could turn to if they needed to talk to someone about something. I have always been the type of person to "Always show up." I also wanted to challenge myself and gain the knowledge and experience that goes into working with this age group. I am so glad that I took the step and became a mentor with Campus Connections.

## What has been most surprising to you about the program?

The most surprising thing about this program to me is how these amazing kids look forward to coming to Campus Connections every Thursday. I honestly thought that they were going to show up because they had to, not because they wanted to be there. That made me very happy to watch.

## What have you enjoyed about the program?

There has been so much that I have enjoyed about this program but if I had to narrow it down, I have to say that I have enjoyed my time spent with my mentee. He is so bright and driven in life. We clicked right away, and we had a really good understanding of each other from the beginning. I have watched my mentee grow so much in the short amount of time that we have been in this program and that makes it so exciting for me to know where this mentorship can lead. Also, the leadership in this program is outstanding. They are always there to help. This program feels more like a family than a program. It's amazing.

# Mentoring Virtually

Alberto Castillo continued:

**What has been the most difficult thing about the program?**

The most difficult part of this program for me has been not playing the parent roll. I have two children of my own and I have to remind myself that I am his mentor not his parent. It is second nature to switch into a father roll, but I cannot do that while in this program or at all for that matter. I am a mentor.

**How have you overcome difficulties in mentoring in the virtual format?**

For the most part we have overcome the virtual format. It can be hard at times due to internet connection and when friends stop by my mentees home. I just roll with it and include his friends in where I can. Mainly just saying hello and goodbye and small talk. I try to keep my mentee engaged by talking about relevant topics that he can relate to.

**What advice would you give to any mentors participating in a virtual format of the program in the future?**

I would tell any future mentors that first and foremost this is an amazing experience. I would also tell them to be patient with the process. I can say that being in-person and virtual are really different. Furthermore, just know the role of a mentor and try to come up with fun ideas to keep your mentee engaged. Most of all LISTEN to your mentee don't just hear them, they have a lot to say. Always show up for them and let them know that they can come to you with anything. If you ever get stuck, ask for help.

# Mentoring Virtually



**Name:** Kathryn Palm  
**Major:** Psychology

**Why did you choose to participate in Campus Connections this semester?**

I chose to participate in Campus Connections this semester because I wanted a chance to apply evidence-based theories and practice to help youth in the community.

**What has been most surprising to you about the program?**

What's been most surprising to me about the program is how much support mentors receive from the professor, counselor educators, graduate assistants, counselors, and mentor coaches, and how much the program is informed by peer-reviewed scientific journal articles.

**What have you enjoyed about the program?**

I have enjoyed learning more about topics like acceptance, empathy, authenticity, companionship, mutuality, closeness, ethics, diversity, implicit bias, privilege, race, gender, LGBTQ+, youth, poverty, immigration, mental health, substance abuse, adverse childhood experiences, trauma, and socio-emotional development and regulation.

# Mentoring Virtually

Kathryn Palm continued:

**What has been the most difficult thing about the program?**

Participation in small-group activities has been somewhat strained at times and adapting the more social activities to an online environment has been difficult.

**How have you overcome difficulties in mentoring in the virtual format?**

I have overcome difficulties in mentoring in the virtual format by creating a plan for how to spend one-on-one time with my mentee after pre-lab and the mentor family activity.

**What advice would you give to any mentors participating in a virtual format of the program in the future?**

Advice I would give to any mentors participating in a virtual format of the Campus Connections program in the future would be to read articles before class, take notes during pre-lab and post-lab, and to write up a detailed plan for how you want to spend one-on-one time with your mentee (e.g. 5 minutes for unpacking the mentor family social justice activity, 5 minutes for asking check-in questions, 10 minutes for homework, 10 minutes for goal setting, etc.).



# Research Update



## Fall 2020 Research Update:

This October, the Campus Connections (CC) research team had the privilege of presenting the results of a qualitative study exploring the experience of CC Undergraduate Mentors at the University of New Mexico Mentoring Institute annual conference. The presentation, titled *Campus Connections Youth Mentoring Program: Cultivating Connection during the COVID-19 Crisis* described how the COVID-19 crisis required CC mentors and staff to adapt the mentorship process to the virtual environment. Results from the study highlighted the role of resilience and flexibility in mentors ability to continue supporting our youth, and ensure the persistence of the mentor/mentee relationship. A full description of the methods, analysis, and results from this study can be found in the Chronicle of Mentoring & Coaching, Vol. 1, Special Issue 13, available December 2020.

The CC research team is excited to share that we are continuing to gather data as part of the photo elicitation study, exploring the identity development of youth mentees. Youth participating in this study meet with a member of the research team via Zoom, and review a series of stock images. Participants then select those images that are “about me” and those that are “not about me”, and discuss with the researcher what inspired them to select each photo. At this time there are 9 youth participants, and the study is fully funded by the University of Colorado Colorado Springs Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Grant.

~Cortny Stark, PhD

# News & Events

## Campus Connections Receives Money for Staff Wellness

In January 2020, Campus Connections was awarded a \$77,610 grant from the Colorado Health Foundation.

Program staff met with foundation researchers in September to discuss additional needs of program staff and participants who support youth resiliency. As a result of that meeting, the foundation awarded an additional \$4,500 to promote staff and participant wellness.

One way we decided to use the funds was by giving back to our mentors. We polled the mentors and asked what would be most beneficial to them; a gift card to the bookstore worth \$50, a professional development opportunity, or a book on mentoring.

The mentors were extremely thankful to receive a gift card to the bookstore worth \$50. It has been a unique challenge to mentor online so the additional gift from the Colorado Health Foundation was very much appreciated by the mentors and program staff alike.

~Molly Cammell

## Tell your students

about Campus Connections!  
The program runs in the Fall and the Spring. We are always looking for students to act as mentors to our youth participants! Applications at [uccs.edu/campusconnections](https://uccs.edu/campusconnections)

## Coming Up:

Fall 2020 Virtual Graduation

December 10, 2020 5:00pm

Spring 2021 Mentor Applications

Deadline: 11/13/2020

Do you have unwanted arts/crafts supplies?  
**Donate** them to Campus Connections!

Columbine 3010

**Campus Connections Board Members:** Dean Valerie Martin Conley, Cory Notestine, Valerie Scates, Sarah Clapham, Dr. Kristen Myers, Dr. Joseph Wehrman, Dr. Diane Stutey, Kim Severn, Molly Cammell, Kodi Enkler, Melanie Folkerts

**Support Campus Connections! Make a donation today!**

<https://giving.cu.edu/fund/campus-connections-gift-fund>



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HEALTH & WELLNESS

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## Commencement Feature: Solis turning passion into her career

May 13, 2020 Ian Gassman

Abigail Solis has always had a passion for helping people through counseling.

On top of being a member of the Chi Sigma Iota sorority, a National Board of Certified Counselors Minority Fellow and an intern at Mt. Carmel Veteran Service Center, she became a graduate research assistant and counselor-in-training for Campus Connections.

Campus Connections is a youth mentoring program that has been hosted at UCCS since 2019. It allows student counselors to work with middle school students for an entire semester or more, offering guidance and discussing issues.

When Counseling and Human Services Assistant Professor Diane Stutey realized how invested Solis was in Campus Connections, she asked her to start exploring the program to find out how counseling is impacting the kids. Eventually, Solis wanted hands-on experience.

"The more I interacted with kids, the more I wanted to dive in," Solis says. "It was amazing being able to communicate with them and see them develop into more confident, resilient individuals."



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In-person counseling made Solis a more confident and resilient individual herself. After being diagnosed with epilepsy, she faced her own mental health issues. Her father served in the military and was deployed to the Middle East. Upon coming home, it was clear he had developed post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The readjustment piece can be very difficult," Solis explains. "But we understood what he was going through and I think that's what happens when you have a good counselor – it made me want to be a counselor."

Now, Solis is closer than ever before to fulfilling her dream. Before graduating, she was hired as a peer specialist at an individualized counseling center in Colorado Springs called Colorado Motion.

In this role, Solis has been working with kids of all ages while she pursues her license in professional counseling. This will require her to get 3,000 supervised counseling hours, plus take a national exam, but it means more job opportunities. Solis is even thinking about Ph.D. options.

Such credentials will allow Solis to work with more patients over time and, soon, she would like to focus on helping military families living in Hispanic communities, just like her own.

"I used to work at a base, seeing how the military community was treated," Solis says. "I could see how listening and being empathetic – what that could do for someone."

She will be graduating with her Master of Arts in Counseling and Human Services with an emphasis in clinical mental health counseling, and is one of two recipients of the Student Achievement Award.

This award is given out annually to two graduating students who have made either a significant personal accomplishment or substantial contribution to the quality of student life at UCCS while finishing school.

While working and doing more research this summer, Solis will visit her family and show them this special, unexpected merit.

"This award feels weird to me because I know there were so many other people out there trying for it," Solis concludes. "It took a while to sink in, but I'm very grateful."





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## UCCS Mentors needed for at-promise youth

October 21, 2020 Crayton Daniel



SEARCH ...

### SUBMIT IDEAS

Submit Story Ideas

### ARCHIVES

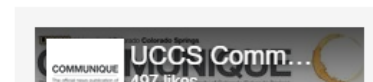
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**Campus Connections** is a wellness and resiliency-oriented service-learning course that pairs UCCS students and youth from the community in mentor-mentee relationships. Students participating in the program can receive 3 credits as part of the service-learning/fieldwork course COUN 4950.

Mentors spend four hours once a week with their mentees providing academic support, career planning and promoting positive social skill development. "Mentors are given the opportunity to gain real-world experience as well as an opportunity to give back to the younger generation," said Molly Cammell, Campus Connections program manager.

The program launched during the Spring 2019 semester. Since then, it has helped 62 at-risk youths and inspired more than 60 UCCS students on their post-college journey. "Many of our mentors have chosen to pursue careers in counseling and other helping professions as a result of their work with Campus Connections," said Cammell.

Mentors strive to strengthen their mentee's life skills, self-confidence and engagement in the community but their impact can be seen more directly in the classroom. "Their school counselors have said they do better in school when they have the help of their mentor and really benefit from having an adult outside of their family to talk to each week," said Cammell.

With the possibility of the program remaining online in the spring due to ongoing concerns around COVID-19, that isn't stopping mentors from continuing the mission of the program. "The world may be operating remotely but people still want human connection- especially our middle schoolers," says Cammell. "The need for mentorship of our at-risk youth does not change with the format."

Students interested in becoming a mentor for the Spring 2021 semester should fill out an [application](#) and send it to Molly Cammell at [mcammell@uccs.edu](mailto:mcammell@uccs.edu). You can learn more about the program by visiting the Campus Connections [website](#).





# SPRING 2020 OUTCOMES

## MENTEES

57% Male  
 11% Female  
 5% Genderfluid/  
 genderqueer/nonbinary

## Mentors & Graduate Students

94% Female  
 6% Male

## DEMOGRAPHICS

45% White  
 36% Hispanic/Latino  
 27% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
 27% Black/African American  
 18% American Indian/Alaska Native  
 18% Asian

\*Multi-racial/ethnic participants were able to select more than one category making the total greater than 100%

64% White  
 21% Asian  
 14% Black/African American  
 14% Hispanic/Latino  
 7% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

\*Multi-racial/ethnic participants were able to select more than one category making the total greater than 100%

## MENTEES

**11-14 YEARS OLD**

**68% RECEIVED FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH**

## MENTORS

**AVG. 26 YEARS OLD**

**AVG. GPA 3.5**

YOUTH WERE FROM:  
 RUSSELL • WEST • MANN • HOLMES  
 ACHIEVE ONLINE • JENKINS • TESLA • NORTH

**MAJORS: PSYCHOLOGY, HUMAN SERVICES, CRIMINAL JUSTICE, INCLUSIVE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION, SOCIOLOGY, BIOLOGY, BIOCHEM**  
**7 HUMAN SERVICES MINORS**  
**3 COMMUNITY MENTORS FROM THE OFFICE OF INCLUSIVE SERVICES**  
**2 SCHOOL COUNSELING GRADUATE INTERNS**