

The Mentor

**CAMPUS
CONNECTIONS**

UCCS University of Colorado
Colorado Springs

UCCS

College of Education
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **COLORADO SPRINGS**



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What is Campus Connections?

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 life long learning.

Director's Dispatch



Dear Campus Community and Community Stakeholders,

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. This semester has brought us much joy as we were able to be back in person on the UCCS campus for the first time since Spring of 2020. Since COVID-19, we continue to see the importance of creating connections, supporting the mental health needs of youth, and promoting wellness and resiliency skills.

It has been so wonderful to get back to our normal routine and to integrate our amazing at-promise youth into the Mountain Lion community at UCCS. If you were on campus this semester you may have seen the mentors and their mentees doing walk and talks across the campus and eating dinner each Thursday evening at Roaring Forks.

An exciting addition to our Campus Connections team this semester has been a therapy dog named Lizzie. We were fortunate to receive an internal grant from the Committee on Research and Creative Works at UCCS to support this work. Lizzie was there each week and youth could sign up to spend time with her and also request to have her walk with them and their mentor to dinner. Based on the feedback we have received from youth and their mentors it seems that time with a therapy dog has had a positive impact on our youths' overall attitude and wellness.

There are many people that continue to support our efforts that we would like to take some time to acknowledge and thank. First, we would like to acknowledge our gratitude to our founding partners at School District 11 for their continued support. We have also continued our collaboration with Atlas Preparatory School in District 2 and thank them for their partnership.

Next, we would like to thank the Colorado Health Foundation who extended our Supporting Healthy Minds and Youth Resiliency grant to help us continue to support youth and increase our outreach to include even more mentees, especially youth of color, LGBTQ youth, and youth from rural settings. We continue to seek grant funding to support and expand the Campus Connections therapeutic youth mentoring program.

Finally, we would like to thank our Campus Connections Advisory Board Members. The Advisory Board was formed and met for the first time in Spring 2020. We look forward to scheduling a meeting in Spring 2022. If you are interested in joining our Campus Connections Advisory Board please reach out to us; we are always looking to add members with a vested interest in supporting the success of youth in Southern Colorado.

Sincerely,

Diane Stutey, Ph.D., Co-Director of UCCS Campus Connections, Advisory Board Member



Department of Counseling
& Human Services

Campus Connections Staff & Mentors

Staff

Joe Wehrman	Co-director
Diane Stutey	Co-director
Kim Severn	Instructor/Co-director
Cortny Stark	Co director/Research&Grants
Molley Cammell	Program Manager
Sabrina Estrada	Graduate Assistant/Mentor Coach
Beth Rockwell	Graduate Assistant/Mentor Coach
Saffire Halveson	Graduate Assistant/Mentor Coach
Luke Slayback	Digital Citizenship Graduate Assistant
Chelsea Souligny	Digital Citizenship Graduate Assistant
Rosalina Segovia	Digital Citizenship Graduate Assistant
Annelise Rice	Digital Citizenship Graduate Assistant
Jo-anna Halvorson	Counseling Intern

Mentors

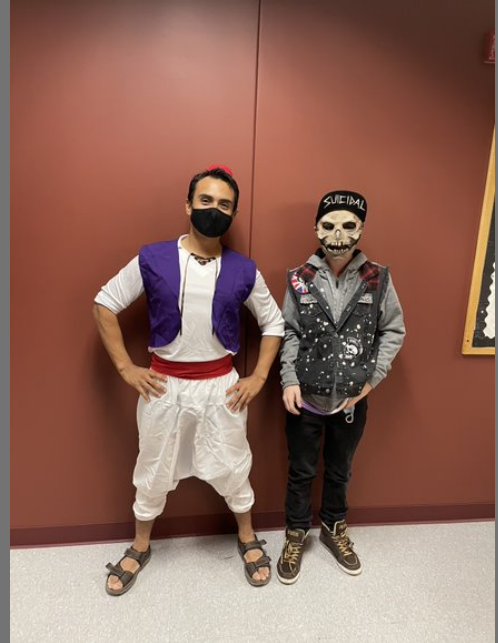
Christina Barnes
Brandon Bernal
Kaytie Blan
Emma Bose
Kirsten Christie
Shaine Dejesus
Anna Duerst
Isabel Dycus
Emily Gyurman
Graciela Mata
Olivia Millunzi
Kade Nordyke
Jade Notzon-Kidwell
Julia Ortiz
Peyton Reisman
Veronika Rossy-Fonseca
Faletoa (Jr) Sea

Halloween Fun!

Door Decoration Winners



Costume Winners



Finally back in person this semester! The mentors and their mentees celebrated halloween with a door decoration and costume contest. The group also spent time decorating cute and spooky cookies!

From The Graduate Student Perspective



Sabrina Estrada



I have been a part of Campus Connections for three semesters and I cannot believe my last semester is around the corner. I started during the Fall of 2020 semester as a graduate assistant. These past few semesters have been a blast and it has been great to see the way the program unfolds every year and how much of an impact the program has on the youth of our community.

During Fall of 2020, we were holding the program online and it was a different experience than I expected. It was amazing to see such an interactive in-person program adapt to an online version. The flexibility and creativity of all the staff, especially the mentors, made the online experience worth-while. This semester being my first, it was my first glance at what it was like to work with the youth and their families. I was often observing and helping out on Thursday nights, meaning I could take a step back and really see the growth in rapport between the mentors and their mentees. We completed two semesters online and each graduation I was touched. I wondered what it would be like to be a part of this program while it was in person, and I finally got that chance this semester, Fall 2021. I completed my similar duties but everything felt much more engaging and connecting. Meeting the families and their children face to face and walking them through their intake process and allowing them pick the perfect mentee was exciting to say the least. Then come time for Fall 2021 graduation, I saw the quietest mentees stand up in front of a crowd just so that they could share how their mentor impacted their lives.

I think that is the best part about being a graduate assistant... being able to see the entire program from start to finish and its outcome. I am thankful to be a part of such a great program and it is bittersweet that this upcoming semester will be my last. Below are some pictures of my favorite moments from the semester.



Research Update



The fall of 2021 has offered us numerous opportunities to innovate and adapt our research to explore the many diverse experiences of our youth mentees, and student mentors.

This fall semester, we had the privilege of supporting the UCCS Cybersecurity Initiative through the implementation of youth-focused Digital Citizenship curriculum with our mentees. Campus Connections received funds from the Cybersecurity Faculty Seed Grant to support the development and facilitation of our new Digital Citizenship curriculum. As part of this project, each youth mentee participated in activities exploring digital wellness, digital accessibility, and securing one's information online. Youth also considered how and where their personal information or "digital footprint" lives in the online environment.

The results from the Digital Citizenship curriculum and associated study were published in the The Chronicle of Mentoring & Coaching, December 2021 special issue. In addition to this manuscript, the results of the study were presented by Kim Severn and Dr. Cortny Stark at the University of New Mexico Mentorship Conference in October of 2021. This education session was titled "Youth Mentor Programming: Cultivating Youth Resiliency and Digital Citizenship in a Virtual World", and included an overview of Campus Connections programming, and Digital Citizenship project.

Additional funding from the UCCS Cybersecurity Initiative was received in summer and fall of 2021 to support student workers, and Campus Connections staff.

We also had the privilege of collaborating with 3 phenomenal Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative (DFEI) graduate student ethics ambassadors. Our ambassadors adapted a total of 8 Leadership, Attitude, Performance (LAP) ethics lessons for use with our middle school age youth mentees. The new curriculum, coupled with mentee and mentor "orientation to principle based ethics" will be implemented in spring 2022.

Dr. Stutey and graduate assistant, Michelle Jaime, are facilitating therapy dog research this fall with Campus Connections youth mentees. Each week, youth have been able to sign up for time to meet with a therapy dog, Lizzie, before going into their planned activities. After spending time with Lizzie, they are asked to complete a brief six question survey about how they felt. Thus far, almost all of the youth mentees have shared feeling moderately or very much more calm, relaxed, and content after spending time with the therapy dog.

Some of the feedback the research team have gathered from the youth mentees include:

- "It made me feel better about my day.", "She makes me feel calm.", "I always look forward to seeing her.", "It's enjoyable to be with her.", "I instantly felt calmed down.", "It felt like a relief to get away from the noise of the classroom to see her."

With caregiver consent and the youth's assent, mentees that have been meeting with Lizzie were given the opportunity to participate in individual interviews to share more about their experiences on spending time with a therapy dog.

- Cortny Stark PhD LPC LAC CRC, Assistant Professor, Substance Use and Recovery Counseling Program Coordinator, Co-Director for UCCS Campus Connections, Department of Counseling and Human Services

- Diane Stutey PhD LPC RPT-S NCC, Assistant Professor and Department Chair, School Counseling Coordinator, Co-Director Campus Connections Therapeutic Youth Mentoring Program, Department of Counseling and Human Services

Mentor Recruitment!

**We are always
looking for
excellent
mentors!**



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

Did you know?

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!

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News & Events

A look Ahead

Campus connections (CC) is excited to announce the beginning of a new ethics initiative made possible by the generous support of the Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative (DFEI)! As mentioned, the development of this project was completed during the summer and fall of 2021 and the new ethics curriculum will be implemented in Spring 2022. The ethics initiative will include the adaption and implementation of 5-10 of the DFEI Leadership, Attitude, Performance (LAP) lessons with our springs 2022 cohort of youth mentees,

During the summer and fall of 2021, 3 graduate student ethics ambassadors worked with the project coordinator to adapt selected LAP activities to 45 minute experiential activities for middle school age youth. These activities will be printed in our new CC "Finding your ethical compass" workbook. This workbook includes the instructions for LAP activities, as well as the "Tough Decision Log" that asks youth to consider experiences where they needed to use their ethical decision-making skills.

We are excited to have the opportunity to share the DFEI ethical principles with our CC mentors and mentees, and hope to continue to share the DFEI LAP curriculum with future cohorts of CC participants!

~Cortny Stark PhD LPX LAC CRC

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

Coming up:

Spring 2022 applications

Still accepting applications for the Spring! Contact Molly:

mcammell@uccs.edu

Do you have unwanted arts/crafts supplies?

Donate them to Campus Connections!
@ Columbine3031

Support Campus Connections! Make a donation today!

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