



**Promising Practices and Common Challenges
for the College-Community Connections Program
(Identified in the Evaluation of the Pilot Programs)**

Promising Practices

- Program design includes adequate planning;
- Expectations for students, staff, and faculty are clearly defined;
- Student participation is voluntary;
- Recruitment of students takes place early in planning process;
- Program addresses a gap in the community organization's programming;
- Program has "intensive" schedule in which classes are held frequently over a short period (ideally every day);
- Program is delivered by one or a small group of instructors to foster student engagement and continuity in instruction;
- Students participate in an authentic college experience, including challenging college-level coursework, on-campus activities, and interaction with college students;
- Content area is engaging, including culturally and socially relevant themes or topics aligned with student experiences and interests;
- Students participate in coursework that introduces them to skills they will need to succeed in college, such as critical thinking, public speaking, and research skills;
- College instructors whom students can easily relate to, such as young, dynamic professors and/or faculty of color;
- Community organization staff members are actively involved in program classes and/or activities to help increase student engagement and establish bridge to programming within agency;
- College students have an active role in program, serving as mentors and/or instructors; and
- Students are provided opportunities that expose them to experiences and ideas that they do not usually encounter in school or their everyday lives.

Common Challenges

- Inadequate planning time;
- Logistical issues, such as scheduling (different college and high school schedules), communication, and transportation were not worked out;
- Programs competed with other student activities and/or obligations, such as after school activities during the school year and summer work experiences;
- Expectations for students, staff, or faculty about program were not clearly defined and understood;
- Community organization staff turnover;
- Poor student attendance or participation;
- Wide age range of students created programming challenges; and
- Students were not prepared with "soft skills" such as coming to class on time and prepared, relating to instructors with respect and attention, or acting appropriately, which impeded class instruction.