

## **Advance College Academy (ACA) ACA Director Roles & Responsibilities**

The national average of students who begin college and dropout before completion is over 40%. To date, our ACA programs have a 90+% completion rate of the associate's degree. Even taking into consideration the caliber of student accepted into an ACA, that completion rate does not come naturally, not without great effort from the students; continual oversight from the directors; and collaboration among ACA instructors, career coach, Reynolds ACA director, and school counselors.

### **Grades:**

Frequent grade intervention is necessary during the dual enrollment years because the transition from high school to college freshman and then to college sophomore is difficult. Two sets of grades and two GPA's are in jeopardy. Students who are struggling are still fully capable of the college work but are not accustomed to responding quickly enough to semester classes.

Frequent grade intervention is necessary during the 9th and 10th grade years to train students to pay attention to what an un-weighted 3.0 GPA feels like in terms of effort, stress, and time management.

- Check MP/ SEM GPA's for all 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students, Anyone below an un-weighted 3.0...on probation as per ACA handbook
  - 1st probation meet with student, generate action plan, mail home to family
  - 2nd probation meet with student, family and counselor, generate action plan, send copy home to family, career coach to check on progress
  - 3rd probation, meet with student, family, counselor and administrator for removal from program
- Execution of the intervention for a 1st probation, for **1 student**, is approximately **50 minutes** from calculating the GPA to mailing a summary with tasks/goals, home to parents.
  - *Ex. MP 1 of 11th grade fall 2016, 15 students, took 13 hours interspersed around teaching load and student availability resulting in 6 weeks to accomplish.*
- Execution of the intervention for a 2nd probation, for **1 student**, is approximately **1 hour** from start to finish as above. Parents are included in this meeting which takes longer.
- Execution of a 3rd probation is very rare because of the success brought through 1st and 2nd probation tasks/goals.

### **Cohort Engagement:**

Completion of the associate's degree is not an individual effort. Students, who work in isolation, struggle. The students in a cohort support, remind, tutor, and encourage each other. Development of a group of students who lean in to support each other in the authentic, ethical completion of a course or the associate's degree requires a sequence of cohort bonding events.

Every year the following field trips require date selection; layout of event details; field trip submission; communication to students, parents, faculty; collection of forms and funds (for some events); and recruitment of chaperones.

*Ex. a one day field trips on average require 5 hours of preparation before boarding the bus.*

- 12th grade ecology field trip for biology class - Collection of data for an ecology research paper and presentation conducted at Reynolds, in green space of campus, in September. 9AM to 3PM
- 9th grade fall field trip for history - first opportunity for the newly created cohort to spend time sharing a common experience. 9AM - 5PM commercial carrier trip to Newport News to museum in AM, lunch followed by guided visit to Christopher Newport University.
  - *Ex. Trips are planned to minimize sub coverage needed by using the director, career coach, and parent chaperones adding 8 hours to the 5 hours of planning.*
- 11th grade field trip for history class - First college level field trip for guided tour of battlefield, lunch and guided visit to Mary Washington University 9AM to 5PM
- 10th grade math placement test- This untimed placement test takes the average ACA student 5 hours to complete, some much longer. 9AM to 5PM at the Reynolds testing center with lunch on campus and parent pick up after testing.
- 9th grade spring field trip for English - Second field trip for the newly formed cohort. Scavenger hunt of Reynolds library services followed by a guided writing activity at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Lunch together. 9AM-1:30PM by school bus
- 10th grade overnight field trip to James Madison University - This event coincides with the summer Reynolds classes (SDV - student development and HLT - health & wellness). Includes guided visit of the campus, meals through the dining services, seminars with admissions and Dean of Student Activities, accommodations in dorms, guided visit of University of Virginia on day two. 7AM day one to 5PM day two. Combination of school bus and commercial carrier.
- Summer Camp/ freshman transition - Scheduled to occur in August and allow the new cohort to meet each other, the faculty team, and students of the other cohorts.

## Parent Engagement

Student completion of the associate's degree is directly proportional to parent involvement. Parents that are unaware or uninvolved are unable to help when their student struggles. To engage and inform parents of the challenges, struggles and expectations that are a natural part of the swift progression of being a full time college student at the young age of 16 and 17.

The following annual workshops provide a time and place to educate and discuss with parents what comes with the next phase leading to the completion of the associate's degree. Each workshop includes date selection, space reservation, revision of workshop agenda, update of materials, printing and packaging of materials, preparing the director's portion of the workshop, communication and reminders to families, and recruitment of speakers: teachers, student representatives from later cohorts, career coach, school counselor, Reynolds ACA director. Workshops are conducted in the evening or on a Saturday morning.

*Ex. one workshop requires, on average, 11 hours of preparation before the workshop begins. Each workshop lasts, on average, 2.5 hours.*

- 12th grade parent/ student workshop prep for graduation & internships - This final workshop sets reminders for the active application process; Reynolds graduation explained including regalia, Governor's medallion, ETS testing and timelines; May internship guidelines and process; perspectives from alumni.
- 10th grade parent workshop prep for 11th grade in ACA - While 10th grade students are taking the English placement test at Reynolds, a portion of the morning is presented by Reynolds director of ACA enlisting speakers of Reynolds support systems for students. The remainder of the workshop involves student and teacher perspective on success in the coming coursework, events, checkpoints, and best practices for parents from director, course load perspectives from school counselor, and the next phase of career coaching. Portions of this workshop are replicated for the students at a later time during the school day. Summer Reynolds classes SDV and HLT dates and content discussed.
- 11th grade parent/ student workshop prep for 12th grade in ACA - College selection and application process specific to transfer students, financial aid, student and teacher perspectives on success in the coming coursework, common app & essay boot camp, and how to talk about ACA in a college interview.
- 9th grade parent/ student workshop prep for 10th grade in ACA - Student and teacher perspectives of the 10th grade coursework, timing of the Reynolds English and math placement tests as well as their significance to continuing th the program, Timeline of the summer coursework and overnight to JMU as well as the critical importance of attendance in SDV and HLT.
- Orientation to the ACA and workshop prep for 9th grade in ACA - overview of the goals and outcome of the academy, perspectives on 9th grade coursework, the importance of getting involved, a first chance for the cohort to meet, perspectives of parent involvement from ACA parents.

## **Faculty Engagement**

For most ACA faculty, the greater portion of their teaching load is directed to non-ACA students. This can lead to a disconnected experience for the students, lack of preparation, and frustration. As a young cohort-based model of this kind of program, the most successful mechanisms, by which to prepare our students for the skills necessary to succeed at university, continue to be refined.

The following events provide a framework for faculty unity, communication, and development all with the goal of providing authentic college coursework to 16 and 17 year old students while inspiring and redirecting the students on the path to completion of the associate's degree.

*Ex. one workshop or meeting requires, on average, 3 hours of preparation and 3-4 hours to facilitate or host.*

- Reynolds Faculty/ Liaison Workshops – These workshops are held at least twice a year with the goal of provide meaningful time for Reynolds faculty to liaise with HCPS ACA faculty. The design of these programs is a collaboration between the Reynolds ACA director and HCPS ACA directors.
- 9th- 12th grade ACA faculty meetings – Five to six strategically timed meeting are help to initiate conversation about student progress and challenges, share recent advancements in coursework delivery, and educate the faculty on the finer details of the program so that they may accurately represent the ACA to our students and the community.
- Vertical teaming by content – The window of opportunity to prepare our students, for the fast-paced rigors of being full time college freshman at 16, is short. Allowing faculty the time to focus on designing a scaffold on which to build skills as well as knowledge requires both inquiry of the faculty and planning so that session goals are achievable.
- Regular classroom visits by ACA Director – taking the time to view the faculty/student interactions reveal coachable moments for enhancing the relationship between faculty and student, ensure the coursework is being taught to the caliber and rigor of an authentic college class.

### **Liaison with Reynolds**

The post-secondary landscape is ever changing in regard to the relevance, transferability, and regulation of coursework delivered through dual enrollment. Regular communication and information sharing among the Reynolds ACA director and HCPS ACA directors prevents outdated information from being circulated and fosters a joint sense of success and investment, in the ACA students, for their successful completion of an associate's degree before high school graduation.

The following allow for a meaningful shared experience.

- Reynolds and HCPS ACA director meetings – The content of these every-other-week meetings varies based on the faculty, student, or parent events listed in this document; the current challenges with a cohort, changes or enhancements required through SACS, NACEP or state legislation.  
*Ex. one meeting requires, on average, 1 hour of preparation, 2 hours to meet, 2 hours of work generated from one meeting.*
- Reynolds Convocation – This annual event requires delivering invitations to ACA families, ACA faculty, school administration, county leadership including school board and board of supervisor; scheduling and orchestrating professional headshots of ACA juniors; generating information from the students for on-screen and spoken commentary about individual students; distributing and redistributing tickets for ACA student family and friends; securing parent volunteers as ushers and to serve refreshments.  
*Ex. This one event generates 6 hour of work before the event and 2 hours on the evening of the event.*
- Reynolds Commencement – this annual event is the culmination of several, periodic communications of details about ETS testing; testing gift card redemption for regalia; commencement start time, group photo meeting, and invitations to ACA faculty, school administration, county leadership including school board and board of supervisor.
- Fostering relationships with blossoming ACA programs in surrounding counties - The success of ACA programs in other counties adds credence to the ACA brand perception by 4-year colleges and universities, in state and out of state. When solicited to share best practices or explain the design of a successful ACA program, that opportunity is taken.

### **Normal duties of HCPS specialty center directors**

- Recruiting through information sessions and open house
- Creating shadowing opportunities early and throughout the year
- Application processing, selection, and tracking
- Orientation for newly admitted freshman class