

OPC/UPEP LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Grant Project Leadership

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview focused on your involvement in [Onondaga Pathways to Careers (OPC)/Universal Pathways to Employment Program (UPEP)], the local name for the Department of Labor's Pathways to Careers: Community College Interventions for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities grant. My name is _____ and I work for a company called Social Dynamics, an independent research firm located in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Social Dynamics is acting as subcontractor to Westat, an independent research firm in Rockville, Maryland who is contracted by the Department of Labor to conduct these interviews as part of the evaluation of grant program.

As was explained in the initial invitation, your participation is voluntary and you can choose to not respond to any question for any reason. Please keep in mind that the information you provide will be kept private to the extent provided by law. The information collected will be analyzed and published in aggregate form and we will not identify any individuals in any report or presentation.

Your participation will help provide valuable information that will assist the Department of Labor in making decisions regarding future program activities and their structure.

The interview will take approximately an hour. We would like to audio-record it to ensure accuracy. Only the team will have access to the recording for analytical purposes and the recording will be destroyed once the project is completed. Do I have your permission to continue?

Today's conversation is going to focus on a handful of specific topics and activities within [OPC/UPEP]. Our goal is to learn more about your role in the initiative, the goals of the program, collaboration among stakeholders, and the participation of students in [OPC/UPEP]. We intend to follow-up with you to obtain additional details on these and additional topics at a later date.

Staff Role

Let's start by discussing your role with [OPC/UPEP].

1. Briefly describe your project role and responsibilities. What is your position title?

PROBES (if needed):

- What are your current responsibilities for [OPC/UPEP]?
- In what ways do you interact with instructors, students and other college staff?
- *If college staff:* In what ways do you interact with students and staff participating in [OPC/UPEP]?

Grant Planning and Early Implementation (asked during initial interview only)

2. Now that your program has been up and running for a while, tell me how what you are actually implementing differs from what you had planned to implement, as described in your grant application.

PROBES (if needed):

- What did you plan to do that you were not able to implement?
- What have you implemented that you did not initially plan for?
- To what extent is the current [OPC/UPEP] model different from your proposed model?

3. What would you say is the biggest change you have made in terms of what you planned to do versus what you are actually doing?

4. What has been your biggest challenge thus far? What have you done to overcome that challenge?

5. [OCC/PSCC] also has a TAACCCT grant - the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program. How is [OPC/UPEP] connecting with the TAACCCT grant to support educational and employment outcomes for students with significant disabilities?

PROBES (if needed):

- Does the TAACCCT program make referrals to [OPC/UPEP]? What is the process for making a referral from TAACCCT to [OPC/UPEP]? Does [OPC/UPEP] make referrals to TAACCCT?
- What, if any, services are available to [OPC/UPEP] participants through TAACCCT?

Collaboration

6. In the self-report checklist that was sent to you on (date), you identified several college offices on the campus that you work closely with. [Interviewer should have list in advance of visit]. Why did you identify these particular offices? How do you work with these offices to meet the objectives of [OPC/UPEP]?
7. Please tell me which of these offices you feel will play the most significant role in [OPC/UPEP].
8. You also identified several agencies outside the community college as partners. [Interviewer should have list in advance of visit]. Why did you identify these particular partner agencies? How do you work with these offices to meet the objectives of [OPC/UPEP]?
9. Which of these partnerships do you believe will play significant roles in [OPC/UPEP]? Please explain why.
10. Which of these partnerships and collaborations existed prior to the [OPC/UPEP] grant?
11. What new partnerships and collaborations are you planning to develop?
12. In what ways does the college collaborate with allied service systems such as transportation, housing, workforce development and disability-specific agencies such as VR?
13. Who are your employer partners and what roles are they playing in [OPC/UPEP]? [Interviewer should have list in advance of visit via checklist]

PROBES (if needed):

- Do you have enough partners to accomplish your objectives?
- Do you plan to recruit and involve more employers?

14. Which of these employer partnerships existed prior to the [OPC/UPEP] grant? Were these established relationships through previous TAAACCT funded or other activities?

Engagement, Recruitment, and Enrollment

Now I'd like to learn more about how you engage faculty and staff members, and how you recruit students to participate in [OPC/UPEP].

15. In what ways do you provide information about [OPC/UPEP] to faculty, staff, and instructors?

PROBES (if needed):

- Was there an instructor orientation or similar event that provided information to faculty and staff about the program? What did it consist of? Will these events be repeated or updated throughout the grant period?
- What other ways of providing information about [OPC/UPEP] are used?

16. Tell me about your outreach efforts to recruit students into [OPC/UPEP].

PROBES (if needed):

What outreach approaches are used by PSCC/UPEP to identify and recruit students with disabilities?

- To what extent have you engaged secondary education programs to identify and recruit students with disabilities?
- To what extent have you engaged the VR and Workforce system to identify and recruit students with disabilities?
- What campus-wide outreach and recruitment activities have you initiated here at [OCC/PSCC]?
- What outreach and recruitment activities have you initiated within your local community?

17. To what degree, if any, do secondary students participate in [OPC/UPEP]? That is, not as recruitment targets but as actual program participants?

18. Tell me about the process of *enrolling* students into [OPC/UPEP]. Describe each step from the point a potential participant is identified to the point where he or she is enrolled in the program.

PROBES: (if needed):

- Were any of these procedures developed specifically for [OPC/UPEP]? That is, were these procedures in place for students with disabilities prior to [OPC/UPEP]?
- Is this process different than the general process to enroll a student into the college?
- What information is provided to students when they enroll?
- Are student's family/parents involved in the enrollment process? If so, how?

19. Once a student is enrolled in [OPC/UPEP], how do you orient them to the program and the college? For example, is there an orientation or do they complete assessments of any kind?

PROBES: (if needed):

- Were any of these procedures developed specifically for [OPC/UPEP]? That is, were these procedures in place for students with disabilities prior to [OPC/UPEP]?
- What role, if any, does the Office of Disability Services play in the enrollment or orientation process?
- How are students' disability-related support service needs identified?
- Is K-12 documentation used in any way?
- Are student's family/parents involved in the orientation process? If so, how?

Self-Exploration and Career Exploration

Next, I'd like discuss the strategies used to assist students in self and career exploration.

20. At what point do students select a career pathway to pursue? Describe how the program helps students to select a pathway/track.

PROBES (if needed):

- How does [OPC/UPEP] help students select a career pathway to enroll in?
- How does [OPC/UPEP] assess students' career options and skills when they enroll?
- What assessments are used to identify students' interests, skills and values? Do all students complete the same assessments?
- What assessment tools are used to determine placement and credit for prior learning? Do all students complete the same assessments?

21. How does [OPC/UPEP] assist students in the process of identifying their personal and career goals?

PROBES (if needed):

- How does PSCC/UPEP staff assist students in identifying training opportunities that align with their personal and career goals?
- How does PSCC/UPEP help students identify goals that are realistic?
- Are student's family/parents involved in the self and career exploration process? If so, how?
- Is the self and career exploration process conducted in a group or individually with each student? What are the advantages of each approach?

22. To what extent are the following topics incorporated into the self and career exploration process:

- a. Personal strengths/skills?**
- b. Personality traits (characteristics)?**
- c. Prior jobs related to career goals?**
- d. Academic strengths?**
- e. Need for accessible and reliable transportation?**

f. Housing situation?

g. Academic/vocational career requirements of career pathways of interest?

PROBES: (if needed):

- Does [OPC/UPEP] utilize existing tools for this process? If so, what are they? How were they selected?
- How does [OPC/UPEP] help identify and resolve challenges that students may face regarding accessible and reliable transportation or housing?

23. To what extent does the self and career exploration processes include the following activities:

a. Site visits to job sites?

b. Work-based experience (e.g. internship, job shadowing)?

c. Research information on relevant certifications and necessary skills?

d. Engage in personal goal setting with students?

e. Engage in professional networking with students?

PROBE: (if needed):

- How are these activities structured? What are their objectives?

Individualized Learning and Career Planning

Now I'd like to discuss individualized learning and career planning.

24. Describe the process of individualized learning and career planning. Does it include written academic or career plans tailored to students' career goals and interests?

PROBES: (if needed):

- Does each student participant have a plan in place?
- To what extent is the student involved in developing the plan?
- Does the program separate an individualized learning plan from an individualized career plan, or does one plan address both?
- Are parents or other family members involved in this process? If so, how?

25. To what extent does the planning process include assessments of students' career options and existing skills, values, and training needs?

PROBES (if needed):

- To what extent does the program use existing resources to assess career options such as the Occupational Outlook Handbook, O*Net, Internet Resources (e.g. monster.com), or resources at the American Job Center?

- To what extent does this process include visits to job sites or work-based learning experiences?
- To what extent does the program encourage students to get advice from others about career options, for example from parents, teachers, friends, or job supervisors/managers?
- How does the program ensure that students' career goals are consistent with their interests, skills and values?

26. What kinds of information and instruction on interpersonal (e.g. soft) skills does PSCC/UPEP provide to students? For example, information and instruction related to communication skills, leadership skills, working with others, being reliable, or being willing to accept responsibility.

27. What kinds of training does [OPC/UPEP] offer to students related to job search strategies?

PROBE (if needed):

- Does the program utilize existing tools for this process? What are they? How were they selected?

28. To what extent does [OPC/UPEP] provide opportunities for students to build or expand their social and professional networks? Please tell me about this process?

29. To what extent does [OPC/UPEP] provide support or training in self-advocacy (or related topics)?

PROBE (if needed):

- Is the training based on an existing curriculum? What is the name of the curriculum? How was it selected?

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

The next set of questions focuses on work-based learning opportunities. These include company tours, guest speakers, job shadowing, project based learning, paid and unpaid jobs, internships, apprenticeships, service learning, and community service.

30. What kinds of work-based learning opportunities are available to [OPC/UPEP] students? Are these opportunities specifically for the [OPC/UPEP] students or are they available to all students pursuing those career pathways?

PROBES (if needed):

- To what extent are paid and unpaid jobs available?

- To what extent can students receive college credits for paid jobs (e.g., co-operative education)?
- To what extent are internships and apprenticeships available?
- To what extent are service learning or community service opportunities available?
- To what extent is on the job training or job shadowing opportunities available?
- To what extent are work-site field trips offered?
- To what extent are other forms of work-based learning available that we have not discussed?

31. To what extent have [OPC/UPEP] students participated in a work-based learning opportunity to date? What forms have these taken?

PROBES (if needed):

- How many students have participated in work-based learning to date?
- Which type of work-based learning opportunity do you think has been the most valuable for [OPC/UPEP] students?
- Which type of work-based learning opportunity has been the most challenging to provide for [OPC/UPEP] students?

Family Engagement

32. To what extent are family members (parents, grandparents, guardians) of [OPC/UPEP] participants involved in the program? That is, how do family members support students' involvement in [OPC/UPEP]?

PROBE (if needed):

- Do parents or guardians meet with [OPC/UPEP] staff to discuss students' career pathways of study? If not, do you think they should? Why or why not?

School Support and Class Experience

Now I'd like to talk about the support services available to the students.

33. How does [OPC/UPEP] ensure that students are aware of and know how to access college resources such as academic help, financial aid, transportation and other support service needs?

34. In what ways is [OPC/UPEP] involved in helping students obtain needed classroom or other accommodations?

PROBE (if needed):

- Is this process different for students with disabilities who are not participating in [OPC/UPEP]?

35. To what extent have [OPC/UPEP] students requested accommodations?

PROBES (if needed):

- How many students have requested accommodations?
- What type of accommodations have students requested (e.g. audio reading materials, extra time to complete assignments, providing spoken answers instead of written ones, using a computer to take notes in class or complete tests, completing tests or in-class assignments in a different room)?

Universal Design for Learning

36. Now I'd like to talk about Universal Design for Learning. Please briefly describe your understanding of Universal Design for Learning.

37. What areas of Universal Design for Learning have [OPC/UPEP] faculty or staff received training on?

PROBES (if needed):

- Who provided the training?
- How was the training presented? (Webinars, Manuals, Classroom Instruction)
- Was the training required or voluntary?

38. To what degree does [OPC/UPEP] incorporate Universal Design for Learning into the program?

PROBES (if needed):

- To what extent has the program provided instruction or training to college instructors here at [OCC/PSCC]? To what extent do you think instructors have applied the training they have received?
- To what extent has the program provided instruction or training to other faculty and staff here [OCC/PSCC]? To what extent do you think faculty and staff have applied the training they have received?

39. Has training been provided to instructors who are not participating directly in [OPC/UPEP] (i.e., not teaching one of the pathways classes)?

PROBES (if needed):

- Are you aware of whether it is being used in academic courses outside of your program? If yes, please give an example.

- Are you aware of whether it is being used in career & technical education courses outside of your program? If yes, please give an example.

40. What impact do you believe Universal Design for Learning will have on the persistence and completion of career pathways certifications for [OPC/UPEP] students and for other students not in the program?

Guideposts for Success

41. Now let's talk about the Guideposts for Success. Please briefly describe your understanding of the Guideposts to Success.

42. What areas of the Guideposts for Success have [OPC/UPEP] faculty or staff received training on?

PROBES (if needed):

- Who provided the training?
- How was the training presented? (Webinars, Manuals, Classroom Instruction)
- Was the training required or voluntary?

43. How are you incorporating the Guideposts into [OPC/UPEP]?

PROBES (if needed):

- Are they influencing the School-Based Preparatory Experience you are providing to your students? If yes, how?
- Are they influencing the Career Preparation & Work-Based Learning Experiences you are providing to your students? If yes, how?
- Are they influencing the Youth Development & Leadership opportunities you are providing to your students? If yes, how?
- Are they influencing the Connecting Activities you are providing to your students? If yes, how?
- Are they influencing how you interact with the families and supports your students possess in their lives? If yes, how?

Training and Technical Assistance

Now I'd like to talk about any other technical assistance [OPC/UPEP] staff have received through this project.

44. What kinds of technical assistance and training have [OPC/UPEP] staff received from IEL, the national technical assistance provider and its partners?

PROBES (if needed):

- Which topics were covered in the T/TA received (e.g., individualized planning and ILPs, assistive technology, career pathways implementation)?
- Who provided the training?
- How was the training presented? (Webinars, Manuals, Classroom Instruction)
- Was the training required or voluntary?

45. To what extent was the technical assistance and training you received helpful as you implemented the program? Please provide specific examples.

46. What areas of technical assistance received so far have been the most helpful to [OPC/UPEP]? Why?

47. What college policies or practices have been initiated or modified as a result of the technical assistance?

Closing

48. Given your experience with the program thus far, what would you do differently?

49. Are there any changes that you plan to implement in the future?

50. What impacts have you observed this far of the program on the education and employment outcomes of [OPC/UPEP] students?

51. What impacts have you observed this far of the program on the education and employment outcomes of [OPC/UPEP] students?

52. What aspects of the program do you think will be sustained beyond the duration of the grant?

Thank you very much for participating in this discussion. We have learned a lot about your experiences in the [OPC/UPEP].