Our Challenge: National Landscape on College & Career

Nationally...

- **22%** of students graduate community college within three years

- **13%** of students earn a bachelor's degree within six years

- Only **25%** of low-income, public high school students receive career readiness support

- Employers deem **40%** of all college graduates as unprepared for workforce entry.

- First Generation Grads receive significantly lower starting salaries.
In 2015 - NACE assembled a task force of corporate and higher education leaders to answer these questions from “both sides of the table”. Over 600 employers were surveyed representing nearly 20 distinct industries ranging from business to STEM (NACE, 2019).

### Employers Deem Essential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism/Work Ethic</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking/Problem Solving</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral/Written Communication</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork/Collaboration</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Management</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global/Intercultural Fluency</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Employer View vs. Graduate View

- Teamwork/ Collaboration
- Oral/ Written Communication
- Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Professionalism/ Work Ethic
- Digital Technology
- Career Management
- Global/ Intercultural Fluency

Legend: Green = Employers, Blue = Students
Established in 2013, ACES uses a case management approach to identify and neutralize barriers to student success.

Students apply and 800 are selected for the program in their 10th grade year based on potential barriers to academic success.

99% of ACES students graduate from high school and enter into higher education.

9 out of 10 persist from year one to year two of college.
THE ACES PATHWAY

Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) is a first-of-its-kind partnership among Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, and the Universities at Shady Grove. ACES provides individualized coaching, scholarship opportunities, and career readiness programming for students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education, improving their ability to thrive in college and into a career. Each year, more than 2,500 students participate in ACES across all three institutions.

CAREER SUCCESS

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

MC MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

The Universities at Shady Grove

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Montgomery County Public Schools

When enrolled at one of the 80+ programs offered at USG, ACES students continue to receive:

- Leadership development
- Career readiness programming and internship guidance
- Networking opportunities

Students apply to ACES in 10th grade and participate in 11th and 12th grades. Each student receives:

- Individualized coaching that continues throughout the entire pathway
- College application and financial aid assistance
- College preparation and transition support

While working towards their associate's degree at Montgomery College, ACES students receive:

- Transfer advising into USG
- Career exploration opportunities
- Financial aid and scholarship assistance
Our Challenge: National Landscape on College & Career Experience Opportunities (CEO): Pathways & Career Readiness Together

Progressive and hands-on career readiness supports were added to enhance the ACES pathway experience. Starting with an initial pilot group, students were challenged to participate in coaching, career readiness instruction, and professional experiences spanning from high school to college.

Key Innovative Components of CEO:

- Progressive and hands-on learning
- Emphasis on Career Competencies
- Access to career experiences, regardless of academic standing
- Quality career coaching
- Simulation activities vs. traditional instruction
- Emphasis on accessibility and addressing barriers
- Utilizing student voice in programming
- **Flexible format employer partnership**
Opportunities for Regional Employers - *beyond the traditional internship.*
The pilot indicates what is possible when underrepresented students have access to progressive career readiness interventions.

Higher academic performance
- 42% of CEO students at Montgomery College had GPAs of 3.0 or above compared to 28% of the comparison group.

Faster graduation/transfer rates
- Students graduated or transferred to 4-year schools at rates nearly 3 times that of the comparison group.

*This includes students with enough credits for transfer - usually 60 credits which is equivalent to an associates degree.
Utilizing a pre/post assessment, students rated their competencies pre-CEO with an average score of 3.5 and post-CEO with an average score of 4.7.
Student Profiles

Ebonie
B.S. in Information Science, UMD
M.S. Human Computer Interaction, UMD

Job Shadowing, VariQ
Micro-internship, Sodexo
Mentor, Senior Director of IT (Asbury)

Julie
B.A. in Social Work, UMBC
Dual MSW/MPH, UMB

Job Shadowing, KindWorks
Micro-internship, Maryland State’s Attorney’s Office
Mentor, Assistant Director of Social Work (Asbury)

Jorge
B.S. in Biological Sciences, UMD
Pursuing Dental School

Job Shadowing, Bunnag Comprehensive Dentistry
→ became a Part-time Job as Dental Assistant!
Mentor, Current Dental Student
Toward Systemic Change: Program Expansion

Based upon the success of the CEO Pilot, Program Leaders expanded the central mission of ACES to include professional success for all students. In January of 2019 - career readiness supports were launched for all ACES students, beginning with a focus on supports for high school students.

KEY EXPANSION FEATURES

- STEM exposure/experience infused into every activity
- Progressive instruction with increasing levels of challenge
- Collaboration with existing partners. No duplication of service
- Every intervention mapped to career readiness outcomes
- Students surveyed after each intervention and at pre/mid/post
- Career experiences for every student with an emphasis on neutralizing barriers

- Original curriculum on topics such as professionalism, communication, resume writing, interviewing, and STEM careers. Streamlined tools for multiple audiences.
- 90% of all ACES HS Students served (Over 1,500 students)
- Learning outcomes measured at 85% or higher on career readiness topics.
- 750 + SSL Hours with a career exploration focus
Possibilities: From 100 to 150,000+

1,600
Phase 1 (MCPS),
ACES Career Readiness Expansion, 2019

2,500
Phase 2-3 (MCPS, MC, USG),
ACES Career Readiness Expansion, 2023

100
CEO Pilot,
2015

400
STEM Ready
(ACES Model Leveraged to support
400 local students, underrepresented in STEM)
2020

150,000+
Montgomery County Career Readiness Initiative,
(County wide framework for career readiness)
Future
The potential for student success found in using career readiness as a framework for pathways is not just scalable - but replicable. The model is currently being layered onto other pathway initiatives for underrepresented groups.

- Talent/STEM Ready - increasing diversity in IT, Bioscience, and Engineering through accessible pathways supported by career readiness
- Healthcare Initiative Foundation - supporting scholars in Public Health, Nursing, & Social Work with career readiness and coaching
- A county wide framework for career readiness competencies which can span K-J