



Virginia's
Community Colleges
VCCS Career Coach Overview

Virginia Community Colleges Career Coaches are community college employees who are based in local high schools to help high school students define their career aspirations and to recognize community college and other postsecondary programs and services that can help achieve them.

The **fundamental purpose of the VCCS Career Coaches Program** is to empower students to make informed decisions about their career and educational plans and to prepare students for success in postsecondary education and training. While the day-to-day functions of a career coach vary according to local needs, major responsibilities include:

- Facilitating the development of individual career plans and portfolios;
- Relating information on careers and career pathways;
- Connecting students to early college programs such as Tech Prep and Dual-enrollment;
- Easing the transition of students from high school to postsecondary education and training and the skilled workforce.

Career coaches target high school students who most need career planning services. These students - sometimes referred to as the “middle majority” - are the mainstay of Virginia’s emerging workforce and may graduate from high school without any plans for postsecondary education or identified career goals. The primary goal of the Career Coaches is to increase the number and percentage of high school graduates who enter postsecondary education or training ready for success.

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) began the career coaches program in January 2005 with 11 coaches based at 13 high schools. Today, more than 120 career coaches serve students in more than 170 high schools throughout the Commonwealth. In 2008-09, career coaches:

- Provided one-on-one or small group coaching services to 58,397 students.
- Guided 28,537 students into early college programs.
- Assisted 28,350 students to develop career and educational plans.
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Preliminary data indicate program success in expanding secondary-postsecondary partnerships and increasing student interest in higher education and careers, and employer participation in high schools.

The impact of Career Coaches is clear.

- 80 percent or greater satisfaction rate of students receiving coaching services based on the coaches' knowledge of career information and assistance to students, in making career and college plans
- 67 percent change in students without plans to continue postsecondary education prior to meeting with the coach to having plans to continue to postsecondary education after meeting with a coach
- 89 percent of high school principals indicating that the coach program met or exceeded overall expectations
- 7 percent increase in community college enrollments from high schools with a career coach when compared to high schools without a coach
- 5 percent increase in dual-enrollments in high schools with a career coach when compared to high schools without a coach

Career coaches not only facilitate the career planning process, they, like athletic coaches, motivate students to winning performances.

To download the complete 2007-2008 Career Coach Report, visit: <http://myfuture.vccs.edu/careercoaches>

