

Wilkes Community College employs **six Career Coaches** in our service area high schools; four funded by the state grant and two funded by a private donor. One state funded coach resigned Feb. 14, 2020 and a replacement began on March 30, 2020.

Serving students during COVID-19:

At the onset of the school closure high school personnel went into action attempting to collect current contact information for students. The WCC Career Coaches had been collecting and verifying contact information during each student contact meeting. Career Coaches were able to provide current contact information to our school partners to conduct outreach.

WCC Career Coaches utilized multiple technology platforms to connect with students. Coaches were fortunate to be able to access and take advantage of the technology available as both a WCC staff member and high school partner. Coaches used: Zoom, Google text and email, Remind, Canvas, Microsoft Teams, RAVE (text, email and phone messaging system) and Soft Phones were installed on the coaches' laptops to work remotely. "Having the ability to meet students where they are and on communication platforms they are familiar with has created a new foundation of confidence for our students and assures them they are not forgotten, and we are here for them", Tathel Miller, WCC Career Coach.

After recognizing our student population was typically not available for phone or online conversation first thing in the morning, our coaches adjusted their workday to make contacts with students in the afternoon and complete administrative tasks in the morning. Many students were thankful that the coaches reached out to them. Career Coaches helped students plan their academic courses for the upcoming year or assisted them as they graduated and transitioned into the next phase of their post-secondary journey. "Being able to remain in contact with students and to make the circumstances as "normal" as possible has been important to them and helped them be successful in their classes," Teresa Duncan, WCC Career Coach. Students in our service area are required to meet with a Career Coach to develop an academic plan if they intend to pursue Career and College Promise courses.

Overall impact:

Despite the challenges COVID 19 and the staff turnover, WCC state funded Career Coaches served 861 unduplicated students and **conducted 2,014 individual meetings with high school students** during the 2019-2020 program year from July 1-June 15. The state funded coaches have met one on one with 34.74% of their high school's total student body. The purpose of the Career Coach program "to assist students with determining career goals and identifying community college programs that would enable students to achieve their goals" has resulted in **569 student academic and career plans being developed this service year**. Coaches made **177 group presentations serving 4,951 students** (duplicated count) in our service area.