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#### LEARNING LOG

Supporting Guilford Tech students through Titan Link

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### DETAILS

MAKING IT WORK, UNDERSTANDING WHAT WORKS, AND SHARING WHAT WORKS

#### TITLE

Supporting Guilford Tech students through Titan Link


#### SOLUTION

Developmental Education Reform and Supports for Learning

#### CAPACITIES

Policy

Owner

 [Ed Bowling \(/education/s/profile/0053600000472lgAAI/\)](/education/s/profile/0053600000472lgAAI/)



Record Type

Monthly-Current 2017



#### INSTITUTION

Guilford Technical Community College

#### REFLECTION

#### SITE INITIATIVE

Provide academic and non-academic supports to students

#### PROGRESS TOWARD STUDENT SUCCESS

GTCC made several organizational changes to support guided pathways during its work with CBD. One change was to centralize a number of functions that support students needing help with both academic and non-academic issues. The Center for Academic Engagement initially centralized all of the professional and peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, and student success courses. We will share more about those activities in a future learning log.

Many of the students who came to the CAE for academic supports were also grappling with challenges outside the college. Data indicate that 83% of non-completers leave college for reasons outside of school. For example, in 2015, the Food Research and Action Center listed the GTCC service area as the highest metropolitan region for food insecurity in the US, with 27.9% of households experiencing food hardship. GTCC decided to build on the success of its Center for Working Families, a resource that primarily served adult education students on one of its campuses, by opening an additional center on the main campus and making the services available to all students and members of the GTCC community. The Centers were renamed Titan Link (the Titan is the college's mascot), and a third center will open on another campus in the fall of 2017. The mission of Titan Link is "...partner with agencies of Guilford County to improve the financial self-sufficiency, academic program completion and ultimately quality of life for the Guilford Tech community."

Titan link offers a broad selection of services to the community: Employment/career services; emergency grants; transportation assistance; government benefit screening; tax preparation; and financial coaching. Referrals are made to 72 community organizations, who may provide food, housing, and childcare and other supports to students. Students have access to food pantries on three campuses, and a community garden provides fresh produce. Titan Link manages the distribution of 28,000 bus passes annually, and screens students for emergency loans.

This year, GTCC became a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site, and GTCC accounting students were trained to provide income tax services to Titan Link students. Also, in 2016SP the college began the Future Millionaires Speaker Series, which has been attended by approximately 130 students. Topics have included saving, establishing credit, controlling expenses, delaying gratification, and eating on a budget. Financial aid staff also collaborate with instructors of college success classes to incorporate financial literacy information. In its first semester, Titan Link provided services to 152

students, and another 101 students accessed the food pantries. The use of Titan Link services is expected to increase significantly during fall 2017 with the opening of the Greensboro campus center.

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#### IMPACT❶

In the 6 years prior to the Center for Working Families changing to Titan Link, the Center served 726 students through the campus food pantry, and nearly 1,700 received transportation assistance. Titan Link will be on three campuses this fall, and the services are available to all members of the community.

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#### INTERNAL/EXTERNAL RESOURCES❶

GTCC is using both grant and institutional funds to support the centers. Funds from Completion by Design, as well as a grant from a local funder, have enabled the college to expand to three centers. GTCC recently received a \$15,000 grant from Wells Fargo to hire a part-time financial coach.

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#### NEXT CRITICAL STEPS❶

The Titan Link center on the main (Jamestown) campus will be housed in proximity to the tutoring center as part of a building renovation.

Open Greensboro campus center

Develop an assessment plan, performance indicators, and milestones to gauge the usefulness of the centers.

Expand Voluntary Income Tax Assistance program to Jamestown campus in spring 2018

Partner with Family Services of the Piedmont's Consumer Credit Debt Counseling division to develop a curriculum for a 10-week series of financial literacy workshops

Participate in the United Way Integrated Service Delivery Network to ease the use of referrals to community organizations.

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#### OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES❶

Use assessment metrics to justify long term support and expansion of the centers.

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#### QUESTIONS/REQUESTS❶

We are familiar of Single Stop, which has a relatively high cost to set up and maintain, and Beyond Financial Aid, which has been helpful guiding some of our thinking.

ARE THERE OTHER FINANCIAL LITERACY/SUPPORT FRAMEWORKS OUT THERE THAT COLLEGES HAVE FOUND EFFECTIVE FOR SUPPORTING OUR MOST ECONOMICALLY CHALLENGED STUDENTS?

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#### STATUS

Final

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#### Completion Date❶

5/31/2017

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