**Capstone Project Abstract Template**

**250 Word Limit**

PROJECT TITLE: An analysis of the Social Network of Campus Connections and its Relationship to Youth Outcomes

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BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION:

Campus Connections (CC) is a multidisciplinary service learning course at Colorado State University (CSU) where undergraduate students serve as mentors to at-risk adolescents in a group-based setting. Development of close relationships with other participating adolescents and mentors is a key component of the program.

OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this study is to model the development of relationships between all adolescents and mentors in the program and to determine if development of a strong social network at CC is associated with better program effects.

METHODS/PROCESS/STRATEGY:

Social bonds between all adolescents and mentors were measured at five intervals during the 11-week Campus Connections intervention period. Social networks were graphed at each interval, and social network statistics at week 9 were used adolescent depression scores as week 11, controlling for depression at pre-intervention and important control variables.

RESULTS/OUTCOMES/PRODUCT:

The addition of the social network statistics to the model predicting adolescent depressive symptoms at the end of CC significantly improved model fit (Partial F(4, 72)=2.71, p<.05). Adolescents who made more connections demonstrated less depressive symptoms than would otherwise be expected.

CONCLUSIONS/FUTURE RESEARCH OR USE:

Results from this study may be used to further improve the already well-established Campus Connections Program to incorporate more activities that encourage the expansion of adolescent friendships with other adolescents and mentors. Future research is needed to further understand the importance of additional descriptors of adolescent social networks (e.g., relationship with paired mentor).