

PRACTICES EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

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<https://yeswemustcoalition.org>

Issue 64

Growing the Coalition If you know a school that should be a member of the Yes We Must Coalition, please connect us with them. Growing numbers make us stronger in the work we do together and the voice we raise on behalf of low-income students. Please get in touch with Gloria Nemerowicz, President, at glorianemerowicz@yeswemustcoalition.org.

YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: Manor College (PA)



Located in Jenkintown, PA, **Manor College** was established in 1947 by the Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great to advance the professional lives of young women and members of their religious order. The College began with 11 female students in a small house. Today, it's home to more than 600 mixed-gender students and offers more than 30 Bachelor and Associate degree programs. Most importantly, it's a welcoming community where "You Belong Here" isn't just a tagline.

Seventy-five years after its founding as a private, Catholic, independent institution of higher learning, Manor's vision is to embrace the whole student, be experience-driven and career-focused, and facilitate a purpose-filled life that meets the urgent and emerging social justice needs of our world.

The core of Manor's mission is to provide a personalized education that generates a commitment to a peaceful world and inspires confidence in the present and hope for the future. By maintaining academic excellence through current, innovative programs and by encouraging students to develop critical thinking, a sense of inquiry, effective communication skills, and to seek opportunities to serve the community, Manor prepares graduates to serve society effectively and compassionately.



With a student-faculty ratio of 12:1 and small class sizes, Manor provides students with the attention they need, which is especially important for the 65 percent of students who are the first in their families to attend college.

Importantly, the College is committed to providing an education that is affordable and attainable. At Manor, more than 94 percent of students receive financial aid and scholarships, and more than 60 percent are Pell eligible. Manor College's low tuition helps graduates leave with considerably less debt than their peers.

In 2024, Manor developed the You Belong Here Advantage to boost recruitment and to help students through their college career from orientation to graduation. All new, full-time students (first-time college students or transfers) who had deposited and enrolled by August 15, 2024, were able to take advantage of the following incentives at no extra cost: free textbooks (with the exception of Allied Health Licensure program specific books), Manor Meals (4 free meals per week), free laptop for as long as they are involved at the College (with an option to buy the laptop for \$1 after graduation), tuition free summer classes for 2025 and free access to the Fitness Center. The College saw a positive impact in both recruitment and in setting students up for success once they arrived at Manor. Thanks to the generosity of several donors, the program will continue for fall 2025 enrollees.

Recently Manor College has received funding to help it continue its vision and mission. In 2023, the College received a \$1.27 million Madeleine Dean Congressional Grant to help refugee, immigrant and first-generation students. That same year, Manor earned a transformative Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Because of this grant, Manor College will receive more than \$1.4 million in federal funding over five years for the creation of a Career

Center, the implementation of early-academic-alert software, the expansion of a summer bridge program for first-year students, and enhanced professional development. More specifically, the Title III grant will allow Manor to further develop innovative and student-centric instructional delivery methods that address the learning and scheduling needs and expectations of students. The grant specifies the hiring of a full-time Director of Professional Development and Instructional Design who will create an on-going faculty development program that will explore pedagogy across instructional modalities as well as expand the institutional understanding of diversity and inclusion.

Manor College has received numerous accolades that include being named one of the top institutions for upward mobility by The New York Times, and repeatedly being ranked as one of the safest private colleges in Pennsylvania. For more information, please visit www.manor.edu or contact Kelly Peiffer, Vice President of Marketing Communications at kpeiffer@manor.edu.

Institutional Resources/Practices

Success Coaching Program at McMurry University

McMurry University's (Abilene, TX) Success Coaching Program aims to provide a success coach to every McMurry student from start to graduation. Recognizing that McMurry is a Hispanic Serving Institution with a diverse student body, including a significant number of first-generation and Pell-eligible students, the Program strives to support and provide guidance that addresses students holistically — understanding each student's background, circumstances, strengths, areas for growth, and ultimate goals. Coaches proactively engage students to help them navigate University policies and procedures, lend support, and connect them to campus resources.

The Program was launched in 2019 as part of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan, which established the Mindset for Success Office. Initially the Program had only one coach and served only students on academic probation by offering specific interventions to help students maintain good academic standing. Interventions included working with students on goal setting, time management, and other executive functioning skills.

In 2021, during the global pandemic, the Office's scope expanded to support students seeking academic help and to provide valuable links between faculty and students impacted by the COVID crisis. First, new first-year and transfer students were added and then all new students. In the years following the initial crisis, collaborative partnerships among the Mindset for Success Office; the STEM Student Success Center, still in its early formation as part of a Title V grant received in 2018; and a TRIO Student Support Services Office, funded by a 5-year Dept. of Education Student Support Services grant received in 2020, have allowed for the extension of support services to most of the student body.

The success coaches are all full-time support staff and have between 50 and 250 students in their case load depending on how many other roles they hold—full-time success coaches have closer to 250 students while, on the low end, our career specialist in the STEM area has closer to 50 students. All success coaches participate in Lifebound 3-day coach training and many also complete Lifebound certification. Students are assigned to coaches depending on which area they are involved in — TRIO-SSS, the STEM Student Success Center, or the Mindset for Success Office.

The expanded goals of the program now include:

- Providing students with a personalized, holistic support program to help them stay in good academic standing and retain to the next semester. Coaches proactively schedule meetings in a student's first year based on a data-informed retention index, which was created by the University and was developed to assess risk.
- Providing proactive interventions based on notifications from McMurry's Early Alert Program. Upon receiving reports, success coaches reach out to students to develop action plans.
- Helping students on academic probation return to good academic standing.

Assessment of the program has shown great success. Over the last five years, students who have actively participated in the program by having at least one significant contact with their success coach during the semester retained to the following semester at a rate 5.8 percentage points higher than nonparticipants. In fall 2023 we conducted a survey to evaluate students' interactions with their success coaches. Key findings include:

- 82% of students agreed/strongly agreed success coaches helped them to identify time management strategies.
- 89% of students agreed/strongly agreed success coaches made them aware of other resources on campus.
- 83% of students agreed/strongly agreed success coaches discussed future enrollment plans with them.

The Success Coaching Program is helping to advance programs and services to support student success at McMurry and to help students graduate and pursue jobs and graduate and professional education. As a member of the Class of 2025 commented, "Success coaching has helped me be more organized in school, look ahead in my academics, and know how to talk to my professors. Most importantly, my success coach has helped me better prepare myself for my future after college. Without my success coach, I wouldn't be doing as well in school. I wouldn't have someone cheering me on, looking out for my grades and mental health, or helping me find resources to make my life easier." For more information, please contact Cynthia Martin, Interim VPAA and Dean of the Faculty and Associate VPAA for Student Success, at martinc@mcm.edu.

Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. We are particularly interested in examples of how members are addressing issues of social and racial justice. Send ideas for the newsletter to Barbara Kirby, Operations Manager, barbarakirby@yeswemustcoalition.org.