

## **Out of the Shadows and Into the Light: The Luminous Work of Tutors**

### **Making Visible the Invisible work of Tutors**

Bronx Community College  
North Hall and Library  
April 5, 2019

### **Proposals due by February 15, 2019**

Keynote Speaker  
Corey Spencer- Fordham University PhD Candidate  
BCC Alumni and Former BCC Writing Center tutor

### **Continental breakfast and lunch provided**

### **On This Year's Theme**

Bronx Community College (BCC) is an eclectic mix of races, religions, cultures and interests. Hard at work in almost every academic department on campus is a select group of well-trained professionals who often serve in the shadows but who are remarkably committed to the success of BCC's students. They are the tutors of Bronx Community College. Academically diverse, with degrees ranging from Associates to Masters and majors from Business, Education, Psychology and Social Work to Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Art, Creative Writing and English, the tutors are an integral part of the College's teaching and learning process. Brendon Duran Faraa, an Associate Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the University of Western Cape, South Africa, writes that "the academic support tutors provide beyond the traditional classroom is crucial for improving students' academic success, maximizing engagement and increasing retention" \*.

Having successfully navigated the sometimes-tempestuous waters of higher education, the tutors have become key learning partners to students. They simultaneously function as peers, guides, helpers, collaborators and sounding boards bridging the gap between the classroom and the library, or the classroom and home. Tutors are very often a lifeline for students. The support they offer (or not based on different constraints) has meant the difference between students remaining in college or dropping out. However, despite their exceptionalism, tutors remain in the shadows—seemingly marginalized—their contributions to student success often unacknowledged. This conference seeks to bring tutors out of the shadows and into the light where they belong...

\*\*Faraa, Brendon Duran. "Considering the Role of Tutoring in Student Engagement: Reflections From a South African University." *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* 5 (2) (2017): 1-15. Web. 21 November 2018.

**The following questions may serve as springboards for your proposal.**

## **1. THE LUMINOUS BRILLIANCE OF TUTORS**

### **a. IGNITING THE MINDS OF THE STUDENTS: TUTORING STRATEGIES**

Tutors have many notions about tutoring pedagogy.

- What are the different models of tutoring? Which one works best for which student?
- For consideration: Strategies that ensure student empowerment in a session; how can empowerment help with cognition or with communication?
- Strategies to promote interest in a topic that does not interest the student.
- Common errors tutors make during a tutoring session and strategies which can remedy/come back from those errors during the session.
- What can we do about moments when tutor-tutee goals don't align?
- What can tutors do intra-session to encourage engagement?

### **b. SOFTENING THE GLARE: TUTORS' COMFORT:**

- How can a tutor deal with personal stress?
- How can we address tutoring sessions that may affect tutors emotionally?

## **2. ILLUMINATING STUDENTS' NEEDS**

Students/tutees often have misconceptions of what will take place in a tutoring session.

- How can we help students feel confident that they will receive the kind of assistance they need?
- How do we make students feel safe/comfortable expressing their thoughts on a topic during the session?
- How can we help the student deal with stress?
- Many students come from poverty and homelessness. How are tutoring centers addressing food insecurity and hunger, which has an impact on the students' abilities to focus?
- How can you describe and/or measure the educational value added to students' experiences at your institution?
- What kinds of assessment are our tutoring centers engaging in to evaluate/assess either the students' or the tutors' voices?

### **3. SPECTRUMS OF HARMONY: CENTERS AS COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE**

Every tutoring center has a community of practice, a culture.

- How is that community of practice built and maintained?
- What is unique about the culture of your tutoring center? What makes it work?
- What problems arise between staff? Between staff and students? How are they addressed?
- How can tutors promote that culture to the student?
- How do challenges tutors face help them to improve themselves?
- How can the tutor's experience contribute to the Center's story/narrative?
- How does the Center contribute to the tutor narrative?
- How does your tutoring center embrace diversity?

### **4. REFRACTING AN ARC TO THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY:**

Tutors are essential to every academic area.

- How can our tutoring centers bridge tutors' professional abilities to deliver excellent instruction to our students and faculty confidence/recognition of that ability?
- How can we build better bridges between the classroom imbedded tutors and our tutoring centers?
- What special activities or projects is your tutoring center engaged in to collaborate or outreach to the college community, and what makes yours center unique?

### **5. SHEDDING SOME LIGHT: BUDGETS AND FINANCES**

An economic model based on debt affects everyone in a tutoring center.

- How does the center's budget impact available resources?
- Tutor training?
- Conference attendance?
- How can we address the obstacles imposed?

## **Proposal Guidelines**

Successful presentations engage audience members in active hands-on learning which inspires dialogue and discussion.

Please prepare a 250-400-word proposal and a 75-word abstract for an individual presentation, panel presentation, poster presentation, roundtable discussion or interactive workshop.

## **Definitions:**

**Individual Presentation:** 20-25 minutes.

**Panel Presentation:** 35-40 minutes. Panels should plan to reserve 10 mins for questions at the end of the session.

**Poster Presentation:** A poster session is an opportunity for you to get feedback on a work-in-progress or to share research that in the form of a visual poster presentation. Posters frequently include images, such as photos, charts and graphs, as well as explanatory text on the project or research. Posters may include current findings, future directions. Presenters may invite feedback or ideas on their posters.

**Roundtable Discussion:** 30 minutes. Up to 5 minutes of introduction by the leader on a specific theme or question, followed by a facilitated dialogue among participants.

**Workshop Session:** 30-45-minute interactive sessions that teach and engage participants through discussion, collaborative work, group activities, or other methods.

## **Please include the following information in your proposal:**

1. **Title** of presentation, a 250-400-word **proposal**, and a 75-word **abstract** for inclusion in the conference program. For poster presentations, submit a 250-word proposal that includes a description of your project/research and justification for why the poster session is the best fit for your project.
2. **Type of session** (individual, group, poster, roundtable, workshop)
3. Specific **audiovisual and technical requests** (Please Note: Presenters need to provide their own laptops).
4. **Plans for encouraging interaction** and involving the audience.
5. Indication of one or more of the following **keywords** connected to your proposal: Tutors, Administrators, Faculty, Academic Support, Luminosity, Engagement, Empowerment, Collaboration, Teaching and Learning, Research, Training, Diversity, Marginalized, Other Keywords...

Proposals will be evaluated primarily on the basis of relevance to the conference theme, originality of presentation format, degree of interactivity, and relevance/application to tutors and administrators.

## **Submitting Proposals for Presentations and Poster Sessions**

All proposals should be submitted via the Google form link provided.

## **More Information**

If you have any questions about the conference or submission process, please email Jan Robertson at [Janet.Robertson@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:Janet.Robertson@bcc.cuny.edu) , or Kenisha Thomas at [Kenisha.Thomas@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:Kenisha.Thomas@bcc.cuny.edu).

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