



Leveraging Existing Efforts to Enhance College Fluency

Insights from Montgomery County
Community College

Elmira Jangjou
Melissa Blankstein
jean amaral

April 15, 2025



ITHAKA S+R

Ithaka S+R provides research and strategic guidance to help the academic and cultural communities serve the public good and navigate economic, demographic, and technological change.

Ithaka S+R is part of ITHAKA, a nonprofit with a mission to improve access to knowledge and education for people around the world. We believe education is key to the wellbeing of individuals and society, and we work to make it more effective and affordable.

Copyright 2025 ITHAKA. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of the license, please see <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.



Introduction

Navigating the landscape of higher education takes more than just attending classes, passing courses, and graduating. It requires a set of skills known as “college fluency,” or the knowledge and corresponding set of abilities that enable students and staff to effectively locate and use relevant college services, programs, and resources. College fluency, in short, can help students successfully engage with and self-advocate within the culture and bureaucracy of higher education institutions to achieve their goals.¹ Libraries can play a pivotal role in helping fluency flourish by training their employees, as well as collaborating with faculty and staff members across their institution, to adapt to the needs of students in an ever-changing world.² As students and staff grapple with challenges beyond the syllabus, such as basic needs insecurity and employee turnover rates, the need for college fluency becomes even more evident.

As students and staff grapple with challenges beyond the syllabus, such as basic needs insecurity and employee turnover rates, the need for college fluency becomes even more evident.

To further examine and develop effective strategies to foster college fluency, the Borough of Manhattan Community College Library (BMCC) and Ithaka S+R have collaborated on the College Fluency Capacity Building initiative with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).³ Looking specifically at the development of college fluency services in community colleges across the US, this initiative takes a deep dive into the nuances of programming aimed at increasing librarians' own college fluency and that of their students. As part of this project, we are

¹ Melissa Blankstein and Jean Amaral, “College Fluency Capacity Building,” *Ithaka S+R*, 8 December 2022, <https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/college-fluency-capacity-building/>.

² Christine Wolff-Eisenberg, “The Case for Academic Libraries and ‘College Fluency,’” *Ithaka S+R*, 11 February 2020, <https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/the-case-for-academic-libraries-and-college-fluency/>.

³ For more information on this IMLS-funded project [RE-252364-OLS-22] visit: “What Is College Fluency? – College Fluency Capacity Building,” accessed 26 January 2024, <https://openlab.bmcc.cuny.edu/college-fluency/what-is-college-fluency/>.

conducting case studies to investigate how institutions are currently addressing college fluency and to identify strategies to better enable academic librarians and library workers to equip their students with skills to successfully navigate institutional resources and services.

The fourth and last case study in this series looks at Montgomery County Community College in Pennsylvania. It does not yet provide formalized college fluency support through dedicated staff, technologies, or services. Instead, using this college's example, we are able to identify both the opportunities to build college fluency capacity and the challenges to doing so. This case study also explores how effective MCCC has been at connecting students to resources even in the absence of a dedicated college fluency program, while pointing to the additional impact these efforts could have if they were formalized.

Key Takeaways

- Leverage libraries as one of the central campus hubs for non-curricular information dissemination and ensure they remain accessible and appropriately staffed to maximize their role in supporting students holistically.
- Identify the valuable college fluency efforts already enacted across different departments and scale them to enhance efficiency and foster greater interconnectedness.
- Develop and maintain updated, accessible resource lists and standardized guidance, such as staff manuals or referral cheat sheets, to provide consistent and accurate referrals and support to students.
- Prioritize meaningful referrals and warm hand-offs between departments by focusing on guiding students with clarity and empathy, ensuring that referrals are personalized and support students' understanding of next steps.
- Expand professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to help them better understand institutional resources and processes across the campus.
- Utilize a range of communication methods—for instance, flyers, social media, and in-person guidance—to accommodate different student preferences.
- Identify opportunities to provide students with repeated exposure to information about campus resources, increase their familiarity

with available support services, foster engagement, and promote access.

- Foster cross-departmental collaboration through systematic and regular director-level meetings to bridge information gaps and provide more seamless and effective holistic support for students.

About the College

Institutional Characteristics

Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) was selected for this case study series following the onboarding of their new library director, who sought to enhance college fluency within the library to better support both faculty and students. MCCC, a large suburban public institution, has more than 100 associate's degree and certificate programs—including nearly a dozen online degree and certificate programs and several hybrid online/traditional programs—offered at two campuses (Blue Bell and Pottstown Campuses) and online. In fall 2022, this community college had an enrollment of 8,596 undergraduate students (5,142 women and 3,454 men). The majority of students (70 percent) were enrolled part-time. Fifty-five percent of students were White, 16 percent Black or African American, 11 percent Hispanic, 6 percent Asian, 6 percent two or more races, and 5 percent unknown. Two percent of students were US nonresidents. About 39 percent of students were enrolled exclusively in distance education, while 23 percent were engaged in some form of distance education. Additionally, this college had 461 full-time and 527 part-time staff members, including five full-time and five part-time librarians.⁴

⁴ Demographic information sourced from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2022 data, accessed 10 December 2024, <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/institution-profile/222992>.

Methods

In order to acquire comprehensive insights into effective models and obstacles in supporting students navigating college, we conducted interviews with nine library and non-library faculty and staff members. These interviews delved into their knowledge about college fluency, and we also explored the existing collaborative partnerships across the institution that help students navigate college and access resources. We used snowball sampling to identify potential interviewees, with the library director providing contact information. BMCC and Ithaka S+R conducted the interviews virtually via Webex and Zoom and recorded the sessions with the interviewees' consent. Each interview session lasted approximately one hour. Subsequently, a member of the research team cleaned interview transcripts automatically generated by the web meeting software using the session recordings. One analyst analyzed the interview transcripts, undertaking a comprehensive open-coding process to create a thematic codebook. She next conducted a thematic analysis using NVivo to analyze interview transcripts and report case study findings.

Sample Characteristics

The IRB-approved study involved nine participants who represented library and non-library roles, including four library faculty and staff members. Interviewees' work experience at this institution ranged from one to 20 years. Our sample predominantly represents staff members who have been at this community college longer than five years, offering insights grounded in years of practice and institutional familiarity.

Student College Fluency

Interviewees expressed varying perspectives on Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) students' college fluency skills based on their personal observations, while acknowledging the challenges of assessing college fluency due to limited direct data. One librarian highlighted that students frequently ask librarians navigational questions about how they can access non-curricular resources, which underscores that students generally lack awareness about the support systems in place. It is important to consider that this may stem from students not retaining information when it was not immediately relevant to their needs at the time of exposure. The interviewees have observed over time that many students face difficulties identifying their needs, accessing available resources, and effectively advocating for themselves. One shared,

I feel like there's probably less than 50 percent of students that really probably understand all the resources available to them. Of those that do know the resources available to them, they do make good use of them. But I would say that most students that we initially encounter when trying to help them overcome a challenge, we are informing them of resources, and it is their first time ever hearing it.

The complexity of navigating college can also be attributed to limited familiarity with academic terminology and the complexities of college processes. For example, interviewees at MCCC believe that terms like "bursar," "registrar," and even "financial aid" can feel inaccessible to students unfamiliar with the context. These difficulties are compounded by changes in information and the shift to a more hybrid college experience after COVID, which has increased the demand for tailored, specialized support. According to a librarian, "things get complicated very fast, just because there is so much specialization for everyone's individual situations." This interviewee highlighted the necessity of supporting students' college fluency:

I don't think that students naturally are going to have the information they need because it is so complicated and foreign, and there will be a wide variety of information, some of it which might be out of date and hearsay that they've gotten anecdotally

from other people. Maybe even from us, too, because, you know, things can change very quickly.

Beyond limited familiarity with academic terminology, students may also struggle to navigate the campus itself. An interviewee affiliated with Disability Services at MCCC, described how they try to “make sure that everything is accessible.” Although there are various accommodations that this department offers students with disabilities, this interviewee highlighted how there are additional resources needed, including an example of more accessible parking signage:

One of our parking lots, you have to drive up. It looks almost like a giant sidewalk, because people use it as that ... I was petrified the first time, because I was going to hit someone. I'm like, I think I'm on a sidewalk. I'm not, and then, so that's something, too. I'd like, it's more signage, accessible signage that says where those accessible spots are.

Interviewees also highlighted that financial constraints can limit students' help-seeking behaviors due to factors such as stigma and time limitations, which can also affect their college fluency.⁵ Such financial constraints often compound basic needs insecurity and may force students to juggle seeking support for multiple challenges, leaving little time to visit multiple offices and advocate for essential resources. Some students can also feel stigmatized when seeking help, which requires faculty and staff to take proactive steps to ensure students feel comfortable asking for help when needed. The interviewee affiliated with the Wellness Center explained how some students “can't comfortably say I have all these needs because there's always people around. They're not comfortable with it.” These intersecting challenges underscore the importance of holistic, holistic and inclusive approaches to basic needs support that recognize the diverse circumstances of students.

Despite these challenges, there are recent signs of progress in MCCC students' ability to navigate college and access resources. According to an interviewee, a newly developed First Year Experience program aims to “better train [MCCC] students in understanding their resources.” Some

⁵ Jennifer A. King, “Food Insecurity Among College Students-Exploring the Predictors of Food Assistance Resource Use” (doctoral dissertation, Kent State University, 2017); Lisa Henry, *Experiences of Hunger and Food Insecurity in College* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

interviewees observed improvements in students' college fluency following the establishment of a Wellness Center as a one-stop resource, which has made it easier for some students to find and access support. In addition to the benefits of this resource, one interviewee highlighted its limitations and the necessity of promoting students' self-advocacy as well:

We do a Healthy Minds survey every few years and there's a pretty big difference between the one that we did in 2021 and the one that we just did last Fall 2023 in students saying that they know where to turn if they have a need. And that's partially because the Wellness Center didn't exist before. And now it's sort of a one-stop place to come in and ask questions to get connected. ... because we're such a small team here in the Wellness Center and ... we do a lot of work, so it requires students to do some of their own stuff. We're not making calls to local organizations for them. We are providing them the resources to get in touch themselves through a case management approach. Some students do really, really great with that. Other students really struggle. So, I think it's really highly dependent.

Faculty and Staff College Fluency

In order to help students navigate college and access support, faculty and staff need to have an understanding of how their college works and what resources are available to students. Interviewees shared how they actively work to understand students' needs, finding answers to their questions, and connecting them to relevant resources, often walking students directly to services. A part-time librarian explained, "our job is to find the answer if we don't know it. So, I mean all I have to do is dig around and we look for the answer." Raising awareness about resources is an important part of college fluency efforts. Some non-library interviewees mentioned how they provide students with self-developed tools such as resource lists that they have created alongside campus maps to locate resources. Some also try to assist students' help-seeking process by explaining what to expect next, providing written directions to the appropriate offices, and even suggesting key questions to consider asking other staff. One librarian

highlighted the importance of providing detailed guidance on accessing virtual support when off-campus given the complex and busy lives of students:

Especially at the community college level, you have a busy schedule, you have a family schedule, you have a transportation issue, so you made that point to come to campus to find out information and you don't want to leave because it took a lot of effort to get there and you could see the frustration. So, a lot of times we try to show them exactly on the website where to look and where to go now, and here's a number to call.

However, faculty and staff face challenges in staying informed about institutional resources and accessing efficient tools that keep them updated. Limited information about other departments and campuses, exacerbated by a departmental divide, hinders their ability to provide effective referrals. Additionally, the frequent changes in policies and resources create further difficulties. Interviewees across the campus mentioned that professional development opportunities at MCCC that could enhance college fluency among faculty and staff, such as workshops or informational events (e.g., admin days and opening day events), are often limited and inconsistent, and while some departments hold regular meetings or cross-training sessions to share information, these efforts are not widespread.

Several interviewees identified a need for more systematic methods of connecting faculty and staff to accurate information to better equip them to guide students. A librarian who was concerned about not having consistent professional development opportunities suggested, “I know my other college that I work at, they do a college 101 for the staff and faculty, which would be super helpful.” Moreover, a librarian underscored the necessity of having frequent “director-level meetings” between academic and student affairs:

We have meetings up the chain and we have meetings down the chain, but we don't have any opportunities, except for once or twice a year. Recently, we got into a session about retention and the amount of different things that people in that room were already doing, already talking about. And it's no surprise, we were duplicating efforts. We were doing things the hard way because we weren't working together. But that session was only 45 minutes, and then we all kind of went our separate ways again... We need to

gather up the folks who are middle managers to think about how we're doing things, and to communicate things both up and down in a more unified way.

Others suggested practical solutions to improve faculty and staff college fluency, including developing comprehensive staff manuals alongside standardized guidance on navigating college and offering them on the college website. One librarian believed that “if we have an understanding that this is our quick referral cheat sheet ... students will be getting a more uniform experience when they come and ask a question in the library.” Information guides, as seen at our case study colleges with formalized college fluency resources, are an effective tool in achieving this goal by providing structured and more easily accessible information to support consistent and efficient student assistance. Some respondents also mentioned involving faculty in efforts to better understand the college system to help students with accessing non-curricular support. An interviewee suggested,

If the leadership had a way to very quickly get the information out about everything that exists, like a one pager, and encourage [faculty] to share the information ... that could increase students' knowledge of our resources.

One librarian questioned the efficacy of referrals in improving students' college fluency, urging thoughtful consideration of how single-stop referral models are implemented. According to them, “I think even when we make the referral to the single stop, students are not feeling like we understand their question;” they then suggested a “meaningful referral” explaining, “I've talked to them through where they're at, and I've explained my understanding of what part of the process they're at.” This interviewee expressed concern about the lack of clarity regarding the library's role in student success, especially in providing non-curricular support: “the library lives in the Academic Affairs side of the house, but because so much of [the] work we do is Student Affairs... it necessarily create[s] some ambiguity.” They also advocated for finding a “middle ground” among staff where they can guide students effectively without needing to master every process:

I am interested in creating a platform or a level that we all agree ‘this is where our responsibility begins and ends.’ we have to create kind of a middle ground, where you're not hand-holding someone through the whole process and creating like a concierge

service. ... if they understand, this is what the library kind of sees their role as, and wants to stay actively up to date on, then it's easier for those folks to loop us in when something in that frame changes.

Student Engagement

Interviewees underscored the critical importance of engaging students to foster their connection to campus and its resources. A librarian expressed concern about some students who “barely have a connection to anything outside of the classroom,” resulting in missed opportunities to experience the campus’s “rich culture.” The library was highlighted by both library and non-library interviewees as “a hub for students to ask questions” and receive holistic support. Librarians engage students by creating welcoming environments, providing referrals, hosting social events, and offering non-curricular support, such as digital displays highlighting campus events and activities, as well as de-stressing events. However, one librarian noted a decline in the number of students visiting the library due to the development of “library-like structures” across the college, such as study rooms in various departments. Although librarians would like to “spend some more time” in these spaces, according to this librarian “we haven't really got enough people to make that work and still be able to run our operations when we are also supporting so many online activities and also the two campuses.”

Engaging specific student groups, such as student athletes, can present additional challenges. Wellness Center staff noted that athletes often prefer to stay within the athletics department and are reluctant to seek resources elsewhere on campus. To address this, staff collaborate with the athletics department and make intentional efforts to engage these students. The Wellness Center also employs a flexible approach, reaching students both in person and virtually to accommodate their preferences and schedules:

We're really trying to engage the students in person, but then Montco also has a pretty high number of students who are fully virtual, so we will meet students wherever they are, however they want to talk with us.

Effective communication and outreach strategies are crucial for ensuring students' awareness and access to available resources, which can be improved by the use of multiple modalities to accommodate a range of student needs. Some departments such as Student Life use social media and platforms like “Montco Connect” to effectively promote resources, share updates, and engage students. One interviewee emphasized the importance of “marketing and promotion of the programs to where students actually are paying attention” by leveraging multiple communication channels—including flyers, emails, and social media—to ensure resources are accessible and visible. However, certain methods, such as QR codes, used at MCCC’s welcome desk present challenges. While QR codes streamline processes, they may lack the personal touch of immediately connecting students with a “caring person” and require additional explanation and effective technology. One librarian expressed concern about relying on QR codes: “We have students that don't have phones. They can't afford them. Two, it's all electronic.” Therefore, it is important to have “different modalities of getting the information out.”

Efforts to engage students also include welcome days featuring “fun and games” and “free stuff,” during which faculty and staff can guide students to resources they need. However, MCCC does not offer orientation sessions, which some interviewees identified as a missed opportunity. An interviewee affiliated with Disability Services highlighted the necessity of having orientations for all students: “There used to be an orientation for Disability Services. ... I was very against that, ... that's not equal and that's segregating. Everybody needs orientation.” According to an academic advisor advocating for college orientation,

The more opportunity to show what exists here at the college, the more possibility a student asks a follow up question or seeks it out or searches for it on the website, which is the start of getting them linked into those services.

Peer-to-peer engagement emerged as another promising strategy. One interviewee advocated for bringing back a peer advising program, “where a student could feel like they could walk up and they were talking to a peer with some level of slightly advanced knowledge.” Such programs foster immediate connections, comfort, and a sense of community among students, particularly for those who may feel more at ease interacting with peers than with older staff members or individuals from different

backgrounds. Peer advisors who are bilingual or multilingual could also provide vital support for students who are non-native English speakers navigating higher education terminology in a different language. According to this interviewee,

I wish I had someone here that could speak a native tongue with them, because they speak like seven languages. If I could get one of those represented, that would be helpful sometimes. Sometimes some of the higher ed terminology is dense and tricky, and how do you explain something without using those terms which may not be clear to someone for whom English is not their first language.

Library Efforts Towards Holistic Student Support

Interviewees emphasized that supporting students holistically at MCCC means connecting students to services that aim to address their many non-curricular needs, including food, housing, mental and physical health, transportation, and bill paying. The library at MCCC plays a significant role in helping students navigate non-curricular resources, often acting as an informal starting point for deeper conversations about their needs. Described as a frequent “first point of contact” for borrowing electronic devices, the library assists students with the borrowing process, printing, and other technology needs. Library staff, known for their welcoming and approachable demeanor, build trust through these initial interactions. This trust often encourages students to open up about other challenges they face, leading to referrals to essential non-curricular resources such as food pantries, mental health support, or campus wellness services. A library leader explained how they share information about non-curricular resources and how these interactions with students often uncover deeper needs:

They come for one thing, and then that relief of having been helped and found a person that they feel comfortable asking, it kind of snowballs into these larger questions. So, it's very rare that someone comes up and asks me, ‘Where's the food pantry,’ that's not really, ever how it happens. It's a conversation. It's an unfurling

that then leads to, 'Hey? Do you know, we have a food pantry on campus? It's right down the hall, I can walk you down there if you want. It's free to all, there's no prerequisite.'

The library also enhances student engagement and well-being through intentional programming and partnerships. Digital and physical displays highlight campus resources and cultural events, such as Pride celebrations or Earth Day, often integrating related materials and information to further connect students with support systems. Events like comfort dog visits, sensory rooms, coloring sessions, and hands-on workshops provide opportunities for students to receive mental health support, de-stress, and build community. These initiatives encourage students to engage with the library as a trusted, approachable space where they can access practical tools and support that enables them to better navigate college.

Library Connections Across Departments

While many interviewees acknowledged challenges stemming from departmental disconnects, they also highlighted some successful connections at MCCC that enhance student support with college fluency and non-curricular needs. Reaching out to staff in other departments and referring students to them when a need is identified emerged as a common practice, with the Wellness Center frequently serving as the first point of contact for non-curricular needs. Many interviewees believed that this center has made referrals easier across college, with the library often referring students to their office for services and resources.

According to some interviewees, college leadership has strongly invested in supporting student wellness efforts, particularly through its Wellness Centers located on both campuses. One interviewee described: "It's very much embedded in our culture at Montco for students to receive wellness support." An interviewee affiliated with the Wellness Center described how this center with a "small but mighty team" supports students' "mental health as well as non-academic needs, all those basic needs like food, housing, transportation, that a lot of our students face struggles with, which thus impacts their academic performance." A few library staff shared how they raise awareness about the Wellness Center for students in need: "I usually go into 'did you know' phase. I don't try and diagnose or tell them what to do. I just lay out; here's what's available through the

Wellness Center.” Each Wellness Center office features a food pantry and a resource coach who connects students to both on-campus and external public resources. Building a sense of belonging is a priority for this center, especially for students who may lack external support systems. Staff strive to create a welcoming environment where students feel comfortable discussing their needs. One librarian highlighted the Wellness Center’s approach to ongoing support:

They would always follow through. So, they did great at follow through. They help people if they're hungry, they help students with mental health issues, and I think it's just because they really reach out and they stay with the student throughout time. They don't just say, 'OK, here it is,' but they try to get to know the student and they'll reach out afterwards and they'll call a couple times.

The IT department at MCCC also plays an active and integral role in supporting student-centered efforts across departments. For instance, IT staff partner with the library to provide students with essential tech devices, such as laptops, and assists other departments in “leveraging technology,” implementing referral systems, and “flagging” students in need. One interviewee praised these efforts: “They [IT department] are constantly helping us try to find ways for us to be able to identify students in certain populations. Students in need, students that need assistance.” The IT department also facilitates collaboration through its Student Usability Board, which enables departments to gather feedback directly from students to improve services. An interviewee elaborated on this initiative:

They give us the opportunity for us as departments to meet with the Student Usability Board and start tapping them for information about, oh, did you know, did you look at our website? What kinds of things were easy to navigate? What kind of things were poorly navigated? How do you want this service? Do you know about our service? If not, how can we promote it more? If you do know about our services, how are we doing? You know, so the college, the IT department through the Student Usability Board offers that, so that we can better support our students.

Another form of collaborative effort involves providing workshops and training sessions for specific departments. For example, Disability Services offers workshops for library staff that not only provide valuable

information but also help identify gaps in accessibility that need to be addressed at MCCC. An interviewee from Disability Services described this collaboration:

I've met with Library Services. ... I did a workshop to talk to them about people with disabilities and more so the physical space and working, just talking, with individuals with disabilities, what's the language? The physical thing was like, can we put the electrical outlets on tables, rather than underneath? So people don't have to crawl. Can we get chairs with and without arms? ... I know [the director of libraries] is working on getting more accessible.

Expanding Library Connections to Collaboration

Beyond connections, the library has the potential to expand its efforts to support college fluency. While MCCC has various programs focused on financial literacy, academic advising, and support for at-risk students, the library does not currently have a formalized college fluency program to support or supplement these efforts. However, by identifying and scaling existing departmental efforts, the library can help to enhance institutional efficiency and improve student college fluency support.

To strengthen services for at-risk students, interviewees mentioned the use of a referral system to “flag” students with specific needs and connect them to relevant services. For instance, the Financial Aid office uses “certain identifiers on that FAFSA,” such as foster care history, federal benefit usage, and having dependents, to identify students who may need additional support. After obtaining student consent, flagged individuals are referred to appropriate support offices, creating a cross-departmental network of aid. By collaborating with these departments, and incorporating their already established referral systems, the library can integrate its resources with this system, ensuring that students are also directed to relevant informational and academic support services.

Additionally, library staff can enhance their ability to properly flag students in need. Many staff at MCCC participate in professional development sessions to work on their skills to identify student behaviors that may indicate underlying challenges. One interviewee highlighted how they have attended a lot of professional development sessions, including the ones offered by the Wellness Center, focused on “trying to identify things that a

student might say or behavior that might be triggering.” By actively engaging in this training, librarians can become more adept at recognizing students in need and guiding them toward appropriate resources, including financial aid, mental health support, and academic assistance.

Interviewees also underscored the importance of transparency around college costs and expectations. An academic advisor noted: “I try to be as transparent as possible about anything related to money because that’s a big stressor for these students.” This also includes discussions about “their work life, family balance and responsibilities and... what sort of general responsibilities of a class will be outside of [class].” Staff in Financial Aid similarly help students with navigating the college costs and tuition. The library could also play a key role in these efforts by providing accessible resources focused on building up the capacity of students’ financial literacy and college navigation strategies to find the information they need

Specialized small grant-driven programs at MCCC,⁶ such as the Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS), Act 101, and Partnership on Work Enrichment and Readiness (POWER), provide targeted support to navigate college for students facing challenges. For instance, the KEYS program helps students to build healthy support systems, supports students receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and connects them to other non-curricular resources such as transportation assistance. One interviewee highlighted that the success of these initiatives is due to their small caseloads, which allow for more personalized student interactions and trust-building. A library staff member shared an instance of connecting a student with the KEYS program; through an informal conversation, the staff member realized the student qualified for the KEYS program, which enabled them to secure a monthly transportation pass. This example underscores the potential role the library can play in fostering meaningful connections with students, proactively guiding them to essential support services, and expanding access to resources. The library can also expand on this model by creating dedicated spaces and

⁶ For more information see: Eric Devlin, "MCCC's Educational Partnerships Ceremony Honors Students' Achievements," Montgomery County Community College, 5 June 2023, <https://www.mc3.edu/news/2023/06/keys-power-act101grad/keys-power-act101-graduation>.

services that facilitate peer-to-peer mentorship and assistance with finding essential resources.

By leveraging its central role on campus, the library can act as a bridge between these various initiatives, amplifying their impact, and fostering greater institutional alignment. Strengthening collaborations with financial aid, academic advising, and the wellness center are just some examples of how the library can play a larger and more crucial role in scaling successful college fluency programs, ultimately fostering a more connected and efficient approach to supporting students holistically.

Conclusion

Navigating college and accessing resources that address holistic needs is crucial for students as it lays the foundation for their academic and personal success. Academic libraries are already one of the primary sources of curricular information, and these libraries often also provide students with a diverse range of non-curricular information about services provided by different campus units and contribute to enhancing students' overall college fluency. Conducting this final case study assisted us in developing a deeper understanding of what approaches a college with no formalized college fluency initiatives are employing to provide non-curricular information support to their students and to improve students' navigational skills. We believe that a broad set of audiences will be able to use and benefit from the findings of this project.

This final case study sheds light on the need for adopting a more structured approach to college fluency. While colleges might implement valuable efforts to improve college fluency across different departments, and provide holistic support to students directly, these efforts could be even more impactful if they are reframed and interconnected to foster greater efficiency and collaboration. Recognizing and formalizing existing initiatives would not only enhance their effectiveness but also create a cohesive framework for addressing students' holistic needs and improving their navigational skills. By building on existing strengths and fostering cross-departmental collaboration, colleges can create a multifaceted support system that empowers students to thrive both academically and personally. To that end, it is important for faculty and staff in different

roles to support their own and each other's college fluency to create shared institutional knowledge and a multifaceted support system for students.