

CENTRAL WYOMING COLLEGE BRIDGE TO COLLEGE & CAREERS

The CWC BRIDGE program is designed to help recent high school graduates prepare to independently and successfully transition from high school to college, start to earn college credit, and explore career interests to help build an education plan that puts students on the path to a meaningful career.

In 2020, 10 students applied for the initial cohort, 7 were selected to participate

- 100% were first in family to graduate from high school
- 100% were first in family to attend college
- 86% successfully completed program

From June 16-August 12, BRIDGE students:

- Attended 108 hours of class time
- Earned 3 college credits for completion of *ENGL 1010, English Composition I*
- Received regular support from BRIDGE Director to ensure readiness for college enrollment
- Connected regularly with Central Wyoming College staff
- Met at least three times with a community mentor
- Toured, shadowed, and interned with at least two job sites of interest



Funding and support for the BRIDGE program comes from the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, Jackson Breakfast Rotary Club, Teton Science Schools & AmeriCorps.

BUILDING SKILLS

With opportunity to practice applying skills immediately to the classroom or in meetings with their mentors and community partners, the BRIDGE program focuses on

- **ACADEMIC SKILLS:** organization, using a daily planner, backwards planning, note taking as a study tool, self advocacy
- **SELF-PERCEPTION:** academic identity, non-cognitive skills associate with college readiness, identifying interests & passions, professionalism in the academic and workplace environment
- **COLLEGE & CAREER PLANNING:** college vocabulary, understanding majors, building a four-year plan, understanding resources, exposure to college systems, informational interviewing, workplace exposure, professional communication
- **LIFE SKILLS:** financial planning, building a professional network

GAINING EXPERIENCE

Each student met regularly with a mentor including

- Brendan Levine, Art Director, Stio
- Fernando Ramos, General Manager, White Buffalo Club
- Kris Shean, Owner, Haagen Dazs Jackson
- Todd Smith, Chief of Police, Jackson Police Department
- Elyse Thulin, PhD student
- Cyndi Weber, Faculty, UW Nursing

Student job tours and shadows included:

- Owens Family Dentistry
- Four Seasons Jackson Hole
- Jackson Hole Mountain Resort
- Stio
- Mountain Modern Motel

Longer term internships included:

- Jackson Police Department
- JH Public Art

IN THEIR WORDS

"I got the opportunity to have an internship with the Jackson Police Department which impacted me in a very positive way. I got to learn and experience work from our town police. I truly loved it and it was amazing."

"The BRIDGE class really is great especially for kids who have difficulty adjusting. I've been a bit of a procrastinator and this summer I realized that, hey I need to get serious about this and not push everything until the last minute. It really helped me with organizing life and knowing how to keep a job and really balance everything including friends, homework/class, and work."

"Because of this program, I realized I'm not ready to be a full time college student and work full time. I need to work so I plan to take two classes this fall at Central Wyoming College and start nursing school in the spring."

"This program helped me a lot to be more organized with my time, to be more courageous with the things I want. It helped me figure out that there is always another option if the first plan doesn't work out and to never give up. I will start Culinary classes at Central Wyoming College this spring."

LOOKING FORWARD

Thanks to support from Teton Science School, Central Wyoming College will host an AmeriCorps member during fall 2020 to evaluate the effectiveness of the BRIDGE program through Semester 1. This evaluation will specifically consider:

- **How does first semester and first year academic performance and retention among BRIDGE students compare overall to BRIDGE-eligible nonparticipants?**
- **What do students report about their college readiness and career awareness after their first semester of college?**
- **After participating in the BRIDGE summer program and experiencing college as full-time students, how do participants appraise the value of the program?**

Additionally, Central Wyoming College will research similar programs at community colleges and universities across the country. Through this summer's experience and with this additional research, the BRIDGE program sees additional opportunity for:

- **Broadening BRIDGE to include students in the college's Adult Education/HiSET program**
- **Providing training for high school college counseling staff on specific barriers to enrollment that can be addressed prior to high school graduation**
- **Facilitating training for college adjunct instructors on supporting students from diverse backgrounds**
- **Providing regular advising and check-ins for first generation college students**
- **Partnering with Teton County School District to integrate programming into senior year curriculum**