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PRESS RELEASE

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CSUSB Palm Desert Campus nursing peer ambassadors meet with students at Cathedral City High School on March 10.

New mentoring program connects CSUSB Palm Desert Campus nursing students with local high school health academies

PALM DESERT, Calif. – Nursing students at Cal State San Bernardino’s Palm Desert Campus are stepping into leadership roles through a new Nursing Peer Mentoring Program, designed to inspire and support local high school students interested in pursuing careers in healthcare.

Funded by the Inland Empire Regional K-16 Education Collaborative, OneFuture Coachella Valley’s Regional Healthcare Initiative connects CSUSB Palm Desert Campus nursing students with high school health academy students, providing mentorship and career guidance.

Program Highlights:

- **Strengths-Based Mentorship:** Each participant completes the CliftonStrengths assessment to identify their unique talents, which serve as a foundation for career planning and leadership development.
- **Engaging Mentoring Sessions:** Students take part in three structured mentoring sessions, one in-person and two via Zoom, within small cohorts of 5-10 students. Each cohort is led by a trained CSUSB nursing peer ambassador.
- **Expert Guidance:** Mentoring sessions are supervised by OneFuture Coachella Valley staff and CSUSB nursing faculty, with health academy teachers welcome to join.
- **Mentor Training:** CSUSB nursing peer ambassadors undergo mentor training, including their own strengths assessment and guidance on effectively supporting mentees.
- **Resource Accessibility:** Participants have access to shared program materials and assessments via a digital platform.
- **Career Readiness:** By the end of the program, high school students will gain valuable insights into patient care, college readiness, and career pathways in healthcare.

The program is already making an impact, with two mentoring sessions completed at Desert Mirage High School in Thermal and Cathedral City High School.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for both current nursing students and high school students interested in a career in nursing,” said Justin Schneider, assistant professor, CSUSB Department of Nursing. “Nursing is a demanding profession, and admission to nursing programs is highly competitive. Through this mentorship, nursing students are developing leadership skills, while high school students gain insight into what it takes to succeed in a nursing program. I especially appreciate the focus on leveraging strengths — mentees can apply this knowledge to build their own path to success. It was inspiring to see our PDC nursing students leading discussions so naturally with high school students, engaging and asking thoughtful questions. I can’t wait for the day when one of our mentees steps into my classroom as a nursing student.”

To further support aspiring healthcare professionals, the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus Department of Nursing and OneFuture Coachella Valley hosted a Dinner and College Night in November, offering high school students and their families the opportunity to explore the CSUSB nursing program, tour state-of-the-art labs and engage with faculty and current students.

For more information about CSUSB’s nursing programs, visit the [Department of Nursing website](#).

About the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus: The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus is dedicated to providing a transformative educational experience in the Coachella Valley. With a focus on academic excellence and community engagement, the campus offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs designed to meet the diverse needs of its students and the region.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Marketing and Communications at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the [PDC website](#).