

# Career and Community Studies (CCS)

Kiara F.

## How did you find out about this opportunity?

I found out about the Career and Community Studies program through my EOF advisor Kim Quick during my sophomore year when I was seeking advice on how to get involved in mentoring roles as a future educator. I was an academic mentor during my sophomore year for an hour a week on Wednesdays during study hall before I became a house mentor.

## What has your experience been like?

I have had an amazing experience, met wonderful people, and made several strong connections with CCS student staff and pro staff. I think it's a wonderful program.... You learn valuable skills through joining CCS like how to de-escalate situations, how to better communicate, and how to best support as a future educator.

## What faculty or staff do/did you work with?

I worked with two student staff mentors, my house mentor assistants who would assist me with cleaning once a week and cooking or social once a week. I also worked with Professor Victoria Swift [CCS Student Life Coordinator]. [Contact: [ccs@tcnj.edu](mailto:ccs@tcnj.edu)]



## What should a student know about this opportunity?

Students should know that the CCS program is a four-year certificate program for students with intellectual disabilities between the ages 18-25. [The program is designed to prepare students for adult life through academic rigor, career discovery/readiness, and peer socialization]. It offers multiple paid or volunteer roles for students. [Mentoring experiences include academic, vocational, and student life experiences. Mentors receive training and support from CCS staff]. There are also house mentor and house mentor assistant positions. [House mentors live with about 6 students in off-campus houses on Pennington Road and Carlton Ave. The house mentors are different from the other mentors in that they are selected the year prior for a full year commitment, it is a residential education position and they receive additional summer and winter training].

## Why should ROSCOE students be interested in this?

I think ROSCOE students should be interested because TCNJ offers just one special education course for students pursuing an Elementary or Secondary Ed degree with no specializations. The CCS program exposes students to mentorship, academic support, and social support. It also broadens students' horizons with students with disabilities as all future educators should understand the complexities and diversities which each student brings as well as the accommodations which can be added to future classrooms.

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Sofia M.

## How did you find out about this opportunity?

I found out about CCS because Dr. Pancsofar sent emails to us (ROSCOE educators) frequently with fliers of opportunities to get involved at TCNJ. One of them was for CCS mentors that were needed, I knew another Educator was involved in the past and she loved it, so I decided to try it out!

## When did you join?

I applied at the beginning of winter break of my sophomore year and I began my role as a CCS mentor in the spring of my sophomore year. A student can join transitioning between semesters (since your hours are established at the beginning to support a student during the entire semester depending on that student's classes/schedule or a group). I joined because I wanted a chance to volunteer within the TCNJ community and because I heard such positive feedback about the program. I wanted to be a part of that friendly community and to promote inclusivity on our campus by being a resource for our students with disabilities.

## How has it been a match?

As someone who wants to become a speech pathologist this was a good fit for me because I like working with people and learning how I can support others in an individualized way. I want to continue mentoring next semester.



## What has your experience been like?

I enjoyed being a CCS mentor and I feel like it has taught me a lot in terms of how I can interact with people with disabilities and how I can support them in advocating for themselves in academic settings. It took time before I could establish good relationships with my mentees but patience and communication were key to creating a comfortable atmosphere for everyone. I supported students in EDUC513 class [taking notes and helping to explain content]. I also supported a weekly study lab for Juniors. It was a bit difficult to manage my schedule at first, but I got the hang of it soon!

## Why should ROSCOE students be interested in this?

This is a great opportunity for anyone going into the education setting whether or not you are going into special education because of the skills you learn and because some of the CCS students are quite open to sharing their experiences with a disability, which can give you greater perspective and knowledge on how to be a respectful and supportive ally in and beyond the classroom setting.

## What faculty or staff do/did you work with?

I worked with [TCNJ professor] Dr. Petroff and with the CCS Academic Coordinator. [contact: [ccs@tcnj.edu](mailto:ccs@tcnj.edu)]