What’s the time commitment over the academic year?

• Meet with your mentee two times a month (wherever and whenever works for you and your mentee).
• Attend two mentor meetings a semester (these are held Tuesday or Wednesday evening at BC).
• Celebrate your mentee’s success in December and May.
• Participate in one Indaba the beginning of each semester (the first in September is to match mentors and mentees and the second in February is to encourage students to strive for a successful semester).

What do Umoja mentors have to say?

“I’ve mentored one or two students for each of the last three years, and I’ve found the experience completely gratifying and fulfilling. And Dr. Parks runs a quality program!”
— Michael McClenic, EdD, program manager, Bakersfield College

“Building a relationship with a young scholar who shared common career interests was invaluable to me. This component of the Umoja program is essential to the growth of both the mentee as well as the mentor!”
— Ms. Kalisha Hudgins, math instructor, Highland High School

“The Umoja program is so much more than education. It is about people being there for each other. It is about helping people cross those rough areas of life... Thank you, Dr. Parks, for creating a place where our community can come together, support each other and put love into action.”
—Rev. Dr. Tim O. Coston Jr., Pastor, Cain Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church

For more info and to apply, see drpparks.weebly.com/mentor-application.html

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK
@ UmojaCommunityASTEPBakersfieldCollege

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM
@ umojabakersfieldcollege

For more information, Contact:
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pparks@bakersfieldcollege.edu
Office (661) 395-4767 or Cell (661) 232-0191
Humanities, Room 43
What is the Umoja Community ASTEP Program?

The Umoja Community African-American Success Through Excellence and Persistence (ASTEP) is a year-long program designed for motivated African-American students with the goal of increasing their success and graduation rates at Bakersfield College. Umoja ASTEP integrates culture, coursework, and support within a loving community. Students study works by Black authors in their English classes, are paired with a mentor, work with the Umoja ASTEP counselor to plan and stay on track to graduate, and participate in academic and cultural events. Students are encouraged to be full participants in their learning and grow into leaders and role models in their college and community.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who are the students?
The students are part of the Umoja program. They are in the learning community courses: English, research, and student development. These motivated students applied to be part of the Umoja program; most were drawn to the academic support provided, the loving environment, and the African-American curriculum.

Do students get credit for participating in the mentoring component?
Students get extra credit points for each meeting with their mentor.

What do mentors and mentees do when they meet?
One meeting each month is tied to an assignment the student has to turn in. The assignment has a theme, such as goal setting, persisting, or career choices.

The other meeting each month is not structured. It’s a good opportunity to check in about how your mentee is navigating college. Some mentors and mentees meet for coffee or lunch. Some meet on campus at the library; some go to an activity, such as a movie or lecture. What works best is to have a regular time to meet and to text and email in between.

What happens in the mentor training meetings?
You get info on how the program is going (classes, assignments, activities), how to best support your mentee depending on the time of the semester, and a heads up about the next assignments.

Are students required to have a mentor?
No, students have to specifically ask for a mentor. It is an optional part of the program.

How will Dr. Paula Parks keep in touch with us between meetings?
She will send out your mentee’s grade reports in the English class and any information about the student or the program that will help you to support the student.

Am I expected to tutor the student in his/her classes?
No, you aren’t. Dr. Parks would rather you refer students to her or to services on campus. But, you are more than welcome to read the books the student is reading in the English classes and discuss them with the student.