



News from LABORATORY ALLIANCE of Central New York, LLC



The Value of Serving as a P-TECH Career Coach: An Act of Cognitive Philanthropy

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The Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) program is a progressive educational model designed to provide academically at-risk students with the opportunities to graduate high school, complete a two-year degree and secure employment in high-demand STEM careers — **science, technology, engineering and mathematics**. P-TECH is a collaborative model incorporating a K-12 school district, an institution of higher education, and a business partner. Each of these participants contribute to the development of students' academic, technical, and career readiness skills and prepare them to hit the ground running as they enter the workforce.

Laboratory Alliance is the proud business partner for the Syracuse City School District's Clinical Laboratory Technology (CLT) P-TECH program. Each academic year, Laboratory Alliance encourages employees to serve as career coaches, which coincidentally provides them the unique opportunity to nurture the professional development of their future co-workers!

Students' career readiness, technical and academic skills develop naturally when they engage with our career coaches during monthly mentoring events. At the 2017 CNY P-TECH Employer Forum, held in May and attended by several of our career coaches, students from P-TECH programs across Central New York spoke of the effect their career coaches had, not just on developing their skills, but also in reshaping how they envision their future. The testimony of these students confirmed the power of career coach engagement and the value it brings them.

As we are quickly approaching the 2017-18 academic year, we could use more career coaches. We will continue to work with the students from the first cohort as they enter 10th grade and, in addition, we will be working with students from the incoming freshman class (the second cohort). With the coming of each academic year, we add a new cohort of students to the roster, making our need for career coaches increasingly important.

The 2016-17 academic year was the first year our career coaches participated in mentoring events with the first cohort of P-TECH students and it was an overwhelming success! Here is what some of our veteran career coaches have to say about their experiences:

Regardless of your title or role within the organization, everyone at Laboratory Alliance has the ability to influence these students in a positive way, playing an active role in their academic and professional attainment. Who among us has not benefitted from the privilege of working with a career mentor? Serving as a career coach is an opportunity to pay forward the gift of mentorship, one we have all benefitted from at some point throughout our careers.

Perhaps the two most impeding questions one may be asking are (1) *do I really have the time to commit to this?* And (2) *will I really add any value?* To answer the first question, the time commitment is minimal. There will be two mentoring events each month (one for each cohort) from September through May during normal school hours. Each mentoring event requires 1.5 to 2 hours of time, including travel. Being a career coach does not require attendance at every mentoring event; in fact, we do not expect that. Attend what you can, even if it is only one mentoring event a year. We are never awarded more time. Time is something that we have to make and it is amazing what we can make time for with a little prioritizing and rearranging. This is an endeavor worth making the time for.

To answer the second question, reflect on the following quote from one of our veteran career coaches Debra Shannon, right, as she described her experiences working with the P-TECH students: **"You don't have anything to lose, but everything to gain."**



"It is a great opportunity to make a difference in a career path for a student."

— Daria Lebduska



"I see that I in fact do have a role to play in helping the future of others."

— Michael Adetu



"Professionally, this shines a light on the things that I love about the different aspects of my job."

— Sarah Pluff



"The students are bright and good listeners. I wish I was able to work with them more."

— Morgan Thomas