

My name is Salvatore Pisciotta, and I have worked at Queensborough Community College since July of 2015. I began work as an English tutor and then moved into Academic Advisement, where I served as an advisor from March 2016 until February 2020, when I began work as an advisor with the ASAP program.

In my time in working with ASAP, I have worked with hundreds of students, and I have seen these students grow in their confidence, their abilities and critical thinking skills, and their understanding of the world around them. The ASAP program has played a vital role in the success these students have experienced.

Many of our students are first-generation college students. For such first-generation students, ASAP provides a vital service in helping students acclimate to college life, stay on track, develop professional skills, and graduate.

I have worked with many students who have begun their journey doubting whether college was for them or feeling like they did not belong. By the time of graduation, these students felt that they not only belonged in college, but they also saw vast improvements in academic achievement, interpersonal skills, and confidence. Many of our students go on to study for their Bachelor's degrees, they take part in internship experiences, and they obtain admission into competitive programs. They leave ASAP with a plan and a direction.

With our personalized advisement and one-on-one meetings, these students are able to make connections and build rapport at Queensborough. The community-building is a vital part of keeping students enrolled in college and moving forward. Our conversations are holistic, ensuring students not only are doing well academically, but that they are receiving necessary services within the community as well. Many students report never having had the kind of support that ASAP offers.

Compared to non-ASAP students, we see greater levels of retention, graduation, and academic achievement. While the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly hurt enrollment figures, Queensborough ASAP is still serving thousands of students. As of 2020-2021 data, Queensborough is one of the most diverse campuses in the United States, with 31% of new students identifying as Black, 29% Hispanic, and 23% Asian/Pacific Islander, and the campus overall representing 111 countries and 67 different languages. To cut ASAP funding is to hurt our students, many of whom are members of under-represented groups in higher education, low-income, or first-generation students.

ASAP is a lifeline for these students.

In e-mails and messages I have received from students over the years, they have thanked me for my work as an advisor, under the guidelines of ASAP advisement practices. While anonymized, selections read as follows:

“If it wasn't for all of you, I wouldn't be able to be here after all the hardship and medical challenges I've faced these past three years. “

“I would like to thank you for all of your help and guidance throughout my two year college experience. [...] I hope that you continue to do the great things you are doing.”