

Grants Office Program Review 2008

I. Overview

- A. Program Profile: Provide descriptive information about the program including objectives, funding source, student/client profile, etc.

The ECC Grants Office promotes and facilitates the acquisition of external funding to support ECC programs, projects and related activities. The Grants Office provides resources and assistance to faculty, staff and administrators to foster project ideas, locate funding opportunities, strengthen grant writing and project development capability, develop grant proposals, and to comply with applicable internal and external approval and compliance requirements. It also assists faculty with managing grant-funded projects.

Grants Office is a two person unit, which not only assists with and prepares grant applications, but also serves as a clearing house for all grant-related information and documentation. In addition, it provides support to faculty and staff who serve as project directors, taking an active role in the management of grants that do not have a full time project director. Sometimes, the Director of Grants also serves as project director for certain grants.

Funding:

The Grants Office is funded by the ECC general fund. The operation budget for FY 2007-08 is \$241,254. The bulk of the budgeted amount covers the cost of three full-time positions: Director of Grants and two Administrative Assistants, an Administrative Assistant I (Rudy Lopez, currently on leave of absence and replaced by Kristi Adams) who supports the Grants Office and Administrative Assistant II (Sue Burin) who works for the ECC Foundation and does not support the Grants Office. Without her salary and benefits, the actual Grants Office budget is **\$171,254**.

Objectives:

The Grants Office Objectives for 2008-09 are:

Goal #1

Develop new resources to increase the amount of external support for educational programs and support services.

Evaluation: The amount of funding will increase by at least 10% over 2007-08 level.

Obj. 1.1 Secure funding from new sources, such as government and other contracts, revenue-generating partnership arrangements, etc.

Obj. 1.2 Increase the amount of funding from private foundations.

Goal #2

To align grant applications with the college strategic plan.

Evaluation: An annual grants agenda will be developed that will include unfunded goals/objectives from 2008-09 strategic plan.

Obj. 2.1 Grants Office will review unfunded goals and objectives included in the 2008-09 plan and select those that have potential for external funding.

Obj. 2.2 Grants Office will search for funding sources for identified strategic goals and objectives and develop grant proposals to match them.

B. Status of Previous Recommendations: List the current status of recommendations that were made in the last program review.

There were no previous recommendations.

C. Continuing Recommendations: List prior recommendations that are expected to continue.

II. Program Data

A. Student/Client Satisfaction: List and analyze student/client satisfaction survey data. Work with Institutional Research and Planning to create and disseminate a customer satisfaction survey in order to complete this portion of the program review.

An online Customer Satisfaction Survey was distributed in July 2008. Eighty-nine responses were received. Survey results are attached. Overall, the respondents were satisfied with the quality of services provided by the Grants Office. Close to 97% of respondents who used Grants Office Services indicated that their needs were met, 97% also indicated that the overall quality of service provided was either “very good” or “good”. One hundred percent of respondents who use the grants office’s assistance in managing their own grants ranked the support provided as “very helpful” or “helpful”.

Those who use the services appear to have a high level of satisfaction with the services provided, however, a large number of ECC faculty and staff do not avail themselves of available services and some didn’t even know that the college has a grants office. Only about 50% of the respondents knew where Grants Office was located and only 21% have used the website. Most respondents (over 70%) indicated that one of the reasons why they had not pursued grants was lack of time, however, a considerable number (32%) selected “lack of information about grant development and application process” as one of the reasons. Clearly, continuous outreach efforts are needed.

Among suggestions submitted by the respondents several were related to dissemination of information about funding opportunities. Grants Office sends out electronic newsletters with listings of upcoming grant opportunities twice a year, before the beginning of the fall semester and before the beginning of the spring semester. It could be beneficial to send out a brief monthly piece as well.

Several respondents also mentioned training. Grants office does one or two workshops per year, but a fixed, predictable workshop schedule each year with one or two sessions each semester may be worth considering.

Recommendation: Increase outreach to faculty and staff by sending out a brief monthly funding update and developing an annual training schedule.

- B. Student/Client Outcome Data: Provide trend analysis of program data (metrics) and recommendations for program improvement.

Funding Statistics for 2003-2008 (the past five years)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
# proposals submitted	38	37	25	37	37
# proposals funded	23	23	19	23	27
Funding Ratio	61%	62%	76%	62%	73%
Total amount requested	7,010,823	8,275,374	5,755,063	14,227,292	13,410,743
Total amount funded:	3,385,955	3,033,513	4,821,536	6,278,882	6,225,747
Pending proposals					2

The 2007-08 figures do not include proposals submitted by the Compton Center, in the development of which the Grants Office also participated. The two proposals for the total amount of \$2,933,249 are still pending.

The volume of grants submitted and amount of funding received has been impacted by the fact that the Community Advancement Division hired a full-time Director of Grants for their area. The Community Advancement grants director, Bobby Becka, is responsible for preparing, submitting and tracking all grant applications in that division, which includes all economic development and most workforce development grants. Given the increase in state grant opportunities for economic development projects, this division has been the most active division on campus with 23 grant applications submitted.

Because the number of federal grants appropriate for community colleges is not increasing, and the number of state grants (other than economic and workforce development grants) have been almost eliminated, it is necessary to put more effort into other options for developing external resources, such as private grants, government (and other) contracts, revenue-generating partnerships and agreements.

Recommendation: Work closely with the ECC Foundation on forging relationships with private foundations to attract more funding; develop expertise and involvement in additional aspects of resource development, such as government contracts, private-public partnerships, and other revenue-generating agreements.

- C. Campus/Community Collaboration: List collaborative efforts, ways to strengthen program efforts, and what new effort should be pursued for program improvement.

All grant applications involve collaboration with internal and often also external constituencies. The divisions most active in grant development last year include:

Community Advancement: 23 grant applications submitted
 Behavioral and Social Sciences: 4 applications
 Nursing: 4 applications
 Mathematical Sciences: 3
 Natural Sciences: 1

Special Resource Center: 2

Because the Community Advancement Division now has its own full-time Director of Grants, there is some confusion about the process of maintaining documentation for grants submitted by this division. Information about grants being submitted and funded flows directly from the Community Advancement Grants Director to the VPSS office bypassing the Grants Office. The Grants Office receives information limited to the board items and copies of proposals much later in the process. There is a need for better coordination between the two grants officers so that grant opportunities are used for maximum benefit to the college and also to ensure the integrity of the Grants Office as the central depository and clearinghouse of all the grants submitted on behalf of El Camino College.

Grants Office was also involved in the implementation of the 3-year Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language grant, which included developing international partners for the Global Education Through Technology program. Over the grant period the program worked with international partners from 8 different countries and continues to develop partnerships for the web-based video conferencing component of Global Studies 101.

Some international partners are interested in expanding their relationship with El Camino College via joint programs, joint/dual degrees and training contracts. This area of resource development could be explored in the future as it could not only become revenue-generating, but also provide professional development opportunities for faculty and students.

D. Program Data Recommendations: List all recommendations made in the three Program Data sections (Student/Client Satisfaction, Student/Client Outcome Data, and Campus/Community Collaboration).

1. Improve the coordination process for grants submitted by the Community Advancement Division.
2. Increase outreach to faculty and staff by sending out a brief monthly funding update and developing an annual training schedule.
3. Work closely with the ECC Foundation on forging relationships with private foundations to attract more funding.
4. Develop expertise and involvement in additional aspects of resource development, such as government contracts, private-public partnerships, and international partnership agreements that generate revenue or professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

III. Program Requirements

- A. Program Support: List campus departments that are essential to the success of the program, the impact of those departments on the program, and what is being done to strengthen the partnership with those departments.

The Grants Office depends on faculty and staff from other college departments for ideas for new grant projects and initiatives. It also works very closely with the following college units:

- Institutional Research, which provides data for grant proposals' need statements and helps with evaluation design and the implementation of the evaluation component
- the Accounting Office on grant budgets and expenditure reporting, and payroll on compensating grant-funded personnel;
- Human Resources --on hiring and board approving grant-funded personnel.
- Compton Center Title V grant ---the ECC Grants Office has oversight over the Compton-Drew University collaborative project and assists with project implementation.

Institutional Research (IR) has always provided excellent support for all the grant research requests. IR has done everything humanely possible to provide data and expertise needed to prepare quality proposals and to conduct project evaluation. One issue that surfaced recently is related to tightening federal oversight of research involving human subject. Almost all federal agencies now require that proposals submitted to them must be reviewed by an Institutional Review Board to determine if the project involves human subject research. Irene Graff, Director of Institutional Research is now in the process of forming the Institutional Review Board for ECC. Once the IRB is formed, all federal grant proposals will be reviewed by it prior to submission.

There are two grant-related issues that fall within the purview of accounting. Both issues have been raised in previous years, but have not yet been addressed:

1. Negotiating a Federal Indirect Rate

The application to negotiate the rate can only be submitted in conjunction with certain federal grants. We had a rate calculated in 2003 to be 37.09%, but it was never negotiated with the cognizant federal agency. There are at least one or two new NSF grant applications in planning stages. We will only be able to use the 8% indirect rate for them if we don't have a recalculated rate that is ready to be negotiated.

2. Grant Compliance Monitoring

Some educational institutions have a specialized grant accountant(s) responsible for working with all grant-funded projects and with monitoring their compliance including time and effort reporting, matching funds documentation, etc. ECC accounting staff is assigned to divisions and each of them is responsible for grants within this division. Compliance monitoring is a responsibility of the Project Director, but there needs to be some oversight built into the system beyond just Project Director. The Grants Office monitors those grants that do not have full-time project directors only and cannot take responsibility for monitoring all the grants and developing grants proposal with just a two person team.

Success of many of the grants depends on the ability to quickly hire qualified personnel to work on grant-funded projects. While it is fairly easy to hire temporary managers because of the Special Project Manager category, hiring support staff is much more complicated and much less efficient. Essentially, support staff can only be hired as non-certificated temporary employees or part-time casual employees, and both these categories restrict them to 170 working days per year. This creates a significant problem for multi-year grants that have a difficult time attracting

qualified staff for these part-time positions and maintaining quality support for managers. It has been suggested that a category similar to a temporary manager category should be created for classified staff working on externally funded projects.

For faculty working on grant-funded projects, there is also some confusion about using release time versus special assignment and using part-time replacement costs versus the actual salary costs in the budgets.

The Grants Office also works very closely with the Title V grant personnel at the Compton Center. This grant was transferred to ECC after the formal partnership was established between Compton and ECC as a result of the Compton College's loss of accreditation. The purpose of the grant is to strengthen resource development functions at the Compton Center and its partner Drew University. ECC Director of Grants is very involved in project oversight, project Advisory and implementation of some of the project activities. The grant is now in Year 4, with two more years (the final year being a no-cost extension) ahead. A decision will have to be made which components to institutionalize upon completion of the grant. Is Compton Center going to have its own Grants/Resource Development Office or are these function going to be absorbed by the ECC Grants Office?

Recommendation: Explore the idea of creating a temporary classified employee category that will allow hiring full-time classified staff for the period of the grant.

- B. Facilities and Equipment: Comment on the adequacy and immediate- and long-range facilities and equipment needs of the program.

The Grants Office currently includes an office for the director and a workstation for the Administrative Assistant. The Administrative Assistant's workstation is located in a different area (within the Vice President for Academic Affairs suite of offices), which is manageable, but less than ideal. Most of the time, director and administrative assistant communicate via email and phone, but since all the grant files are located in the director's office and in the front office where the Foundation administrative assistant is located, accessing them means that the grants assistant has to go back and forth quite a bit. Small ad hoc requests to locate information in the files or make copies of documents are not very practical either so the director ends up handling these tasks herself.

In the client satisfaction survey, 25% respondents indicated that they have attempted their own search for funding. The Grants Office subscribes to an extensive private foundation database, which is an excellent resource in searching for private funding sources. Because of the expense, the subscription is for one user only, which means that only one person at a time can perform the search. Most searches requested by faculty or staff are done by the Grants Office Administrative Assistant. It would be beneficial to give faculty and staff interested in exploring new funding sources for their projects access to this database by having a dedicated computer in the office that they could use to perform the searches. However, with current office configuration, there is no space where such a station could be set up.

Recommendation: Set-up access to the foundation database for faculty and staff.

- C. Staffing: Describe the adequacy/inadequacy of the program's current and future staffing levels and list personnel training needs.

Current staffing is adequate for the current level of activity. However, if the college wants to significantly increase and diversify the amount of external/grant funding in the future, a Project Manager should be hired to assist with project development, proposal preparation and project monitoring to ensure the best return-on-investment. This person can be either a Faculty Coordinator (rotating; release time) or a full-time classified employee.

- D. Planning: Analyze external and internal information to determine changes or trends that will impact the program within the next five years. Explain how the program's planning process involves program staff, ties into the institution's goals and student learning outcomes, and is linked to budgeting.

Trends:

- Gradual decrease in the amount of federal funding for higher education-related grants.
- Increased competition for scarce federal dollars.
- Elimination of state (Chancellor's Office) grants for academic programs and student services. Increase in funding for economic development.
- Considerable increase in interest and demand for community college courses and know-how in developing countries. Opportunities exist for offering programs on location and in distance modes, for customized training, technical assistance, etc. These types of new resource-development opportunities can be quite profitable when given a chance to grow and mature. Many community colleges are choosing to become players in the international development arena and their faculty and students stand to benefit greatly from this involvement.

Grants Office is a two-person office and both people participate actively in developing a plan for the office. The Grants Office plan is directly tied to the college's goals and involves analyzing divisions' unfunded objectives in setting up its own targets. However, not all unfunded objectives are grant-fundable so not all of them can be turned into grant proposals.

- E. Program Requirement Recommendations: List the recommendations from the four Program Requirement sections (Program Support, Facilities and Equipment, Staffing, and Planning).

1. Explore creating a temporary classified employee category that will allow hiring full-time classified staff for the period of the grant.

IV. Recommendations – Provide a prioritized list of all recommendations made throughout this program review. List strategies program personnel will utilize to aid in the achievement of each

recommendation. Create objective statements and success indicators for each recommendation and enter into the College's planning software.

1. Improve the coordination process for grants submitted by the Community Advancement Division.

A meeting will be set up with Bobby Becka, Director of Grants for Community Advancement to develop a coordination process.

Success indicator: Clear process is endorsed and followed by both parties.

2. Increase outreach to faculty and staff by sending out a brief monthly funding update and developing an annual training schedule.

A template for monthly funding update will be developed. It will include upcoming grant opportunities and other opportunities for faculty/staff as well as a list of projects funded during the previous month. The first monthly update will be sent out in October 2008.

A training schedule (one workshop in the fall and one in the spring plus a drop-in consultation time) will be set up and submitted to Staff Development Office to be included in their calendar. It will also be posted on the Grants Office website.

Success indicator: Grants Update is emailed monthly to faculty/staff/management listservs. Training schedule is set; at least 20 faculty/staff participate in each training session.

3. Set-up access to the foundation database for faculty and staff.

Because of space limitations, either a laptop computer or one of the computers in the Innovation Center will be used to set up the database access.

Success Indicator: At least 5 faculty/staff a month use foundation database to search for new funding sources.

4. Work closely with the ECC Foundation on forging relationships with private foundations to attract more funding.

Provide the Foundation with list/description of projects for which private funding is being sought,

Coordinate application submittal and share feedback from funders.

Success Indicator: At least 10 proposals to private foundations are submitted in 2008-09.

5. Develop expertise and involvement in additional aspects of resource development, such as government contracts, private-public partnerships, and international partnerships agreements that generate revenue or professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

Identify local training opportunities for preparing and submitting government contract proposals.

Monitor contract opportunities online.

Assist academic divisions with partnership agreements and faculty involvement in contract development and implementation.

Coordinate contract processing with Community Advancement Division.

Success Indicator: At least 4 partnerships generating either revenue or professional growth opportunities for students, faculty or staff are developed/signed in 2008-09.

6. Explore creating a temporary classified employee category that will allow hiring full-time classified staff for the period of the grant.

This issue has been brought up many times in the past as something that needs to be included in the classified contract negotiations.