CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
AND
GROSSMONT - CUYAMACA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

#90-0010
## Grossmont College Student Retention Program

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**PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION**

The specific objectives of the project are: (1) to recruit and enroll 60 academically underprepared and ‘underrepresented’ students; (2) to develop a comprehensive retention program that will result in a 10% increase in student retention; (3) to evaluate program effectiveness through ongoing program monitoring and statistical analysis; (4) to disseminate final program results to faculty and staff as part of the Student Services Newsletter as well as all California Community Colleges via newsletters, professional publications and presentations at professional conferences.
Grossmont College Student Retention Program

The Community College Fund for Instructional Improvement provides funding to address the Board of Governors’ Basic Agenda priorities which include Student Services. This project will identify, recruit, and increase retention of academically underprepared and "underrepresented" students, specifically Black, Hispanic and Native American. The population to be served will include 60 first-time college students with a high school G.P.A. of less than 2.2, or a less than tenth grade reading level.

This program will require participation in a three-unit Freshman Seminar clustered with specific precollegiate English and reading courses.

Coordinated support services which will be available in the Fall semester include: individual and group tutoring, assistance in obtaining on-campus employment, individual counseling and advisement. Each student will have an assigned counselor, who will assist in the development of an educational plan. Follow-up will be an integral part of the program with an "early alert" system that will require monthly progress reports from all instructors. Gatherings to facilitate self-esteem building, cultural awareness and transfer opportunities will be provided. Students will continue to participate in the program in the Spring semester through monthly workshops focusing on transfer opportunities, goal setting, time management, successful role models representing industry, continuation in the "early alert" program, and individual counseling.

Almost 15% of the students who were tested in English and reading in the Fall of 89 fell below the 10th grade reading level. A two year analysis prepared by the Learning Skills Coordinator indicated that retention will significantly increase if the students enroll in a reading course the first semester. A study of Grossmont Union High School District students who transferred to Grossmont college with a less than 2.2 G.P.A. indicated a significantly higher drop out rate for this group. Underrepresented students, Black, Native American and Hispanic, particularly, have a higher drop-out rate at this time than the overall college population. They need special assistance to increase their academic skills. Students who can't relate their studies to career plans will not be motivated to remain in college and succeed academically. Without a feeling of belongingness and a sense of "community" students will lack persistence. This project proposes to address these problems.

The specific objectives of the project are: 1) to recruit and enroll 60 target-population program participants; 2) to develop a comprehensive retention program that will result in a 10%
increase in student retention; 3) to evaluate program effectiveness through ongoing program monitoring and statistical analysis; 4) to disseminate final program results to faculty and staff as part of the Student Services Newsletter as well as all California Community Colleges via newsletters, professional publications and presentations at professional conferences.

The total program costs amount to $75,608 of which $14,869 is requested to be funded by the fund for Instructional Improvement.
Grossmont College Student Retention Program

1. Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OR SERVICE ADDRESSED
The purpose of this project is to identify, recruit, and increase retention of 60 academically underprepared and "underrepresented" students. This will be accomplished through the development of a comprehensive "retention" program.

The project will provide a three unit Freshman Seminar block scheduled with six units of precollegiate English reading and composition. This block of nine units will be a core curriculum designed to provide the English and reading skills required coupled with the college survival skills needed for college success. Students needing 12 units will be encouraged to complete their full-time schedule with coursework that will not require intensive reading to succeed. Several speech courses have been recommended for this low reading population.

The Freshman Seminar will encompass college survival skills including: study skills, time management, communication skills, career/educational decision making and planning, and transfer opportunities. Motivational speakers will make classroom presentations on various related topics, and campus support programs will be shared with special attention to assisting students in identifying financial aid and scholarships. Individual and group tutoring will be provided as well as individual counseling to develop an educational plan.

Grossmont College Faculty will be informed about the opportunity to act as student mentors. A list of those interested will be developed and shared with students. This will be the first step in the development of a future mentoring program.

Emphasis will be placed on providing students access to the financial support needed to participate in college. Assistance in applying for financial aid and coordination with EOPS will be a strong focus. The financial Aid Officer will be available for individual appointments and will make group presentations. For students in need of employment, every effort will be made to secure on-campus employment to incorporate the student into campus life.
Tutors will be selected and supervised by the Grossmont College Tutoring Center Supervisor. Each student enrolled in the program will receive one hour of individual tutoring per week for the Fall semester. Additionally, group "study" sessions staffed by experienced tutors will be scheduled for two hours per week. Each group will consist of 10 students. All tutors are required to have successfully completed the course that they are tutoring and many tutors are recruited upon the recommendation of their instructors. Additionally, most tutors will have completed 12 upper division units in English or a related subject. The Tutoring Center Supervisor will provide attendance reports to the Project Coordinator on a weekly basis and students will have an opportunity to evaluate their tutor after each session.

Follow-up will be an integral part of the program and will include monthly meetings with the Project Director, instructors, counselors and tutors to coordinate services. In addition to maintaining attendance records the instructors will be responsible for following up on all absentees. They will report student progress in a weekly meeting with the Project Director and develop an action plan with students not making satisfactory progress. The Project Director will detail student progress in a monthly report to the Dean of Guidance and Counseling Services.

Students will continue to participate in the program throughout the Spring semester through monthly workshops focusing on transfer opportunities, goal setting, time management and presentations by successful role models representing industry, continuation of the Early Alert program, and ongoing individual counseling and advising.

Students will have individual appointments scheduled with their assigned counselor at least twice during the Fall and twice during the Spring semesters. In addition to being a resource, the counselor will work closely with the student to resolve any personal or academic problems the student may encounter and assist in setting goals and developing a educational plan.

Participating students will be identified and recruited through several means. High School G.P.A. reports of the nine high schools in the Grossmont Union High School District will provide an initial pool of students to recruit from as well as lists of recent drop-outs. Currently this district has over 19,000 students enrolled. Additionally, all first time college students who have taken the Grossmont College Assessment test and scored below the tenth grade reading level will be encouraged to participate in the program. Brochures will be developed to inform students, teachers, parents and community organizations of the program. Several orientations and testing sessions will be made available specifically for transitioning high school students.
2. Specific Problems Being Addressed

SPECIFIC PROBLEM(S)

Almost 15% of the Grossmont College students who were tested in English and reading in the Fall of 1989 fell below the 10th grade reading level. A two-year analysis of retention and performance of students with low reading ability prepared in 1987 by the Learning Skills Coordinator, has indicated that these students could significantly increase retention and grade point averages if they enrolled in a reading course the first semester in college.

A study of Grossmont Union High School District students who transferred to Grossmont College with a less than 2.2 G.P.A. indicated a significantly higher drop out rate for this group.

Underrepresented students, Black, Native American and Hispanic particularly, have a higher drop-out rate at Grossmont College then the overall college population. One factor is the inability to successfully complete college level courses due to poor academic skills, specifically in English and reading.

The new student population at Grossmont College during the five Fall semesters, 1984-1988, consisted of 13.7% Black, Hispanic, and Native Americans. The percentage of the 3,203 students in this group who currently have a Grossmont College G.P.A. of 2.0 or better is significantly lower than that of other students. While the overall success rate is 58.8%, only 43.2% of Black students now have a G.P.A. of 2.0 or better. The rates for Hispanic and Native American students are 50% and 49% respectively. On-going studies of Grossmont College students demonstrate that students who utilize the tutoring center remain in college subsequent semesters and show higher course completion rates in subjects in which they are tutored when compared to the general student body at large. Vincent Tinto, author of Leaving College, is quoted in a November 29, 1989 article entitled "Colleges Try New Ways to Insure Minority Students Make It To Graduation" in the Chronicle of Higher Education, "One reason that minority students don't graduate at the same rate as whites is that many receive inadequate preparation for college." The article goes on to state that "Tinto and other educators say the failure to graduate is also a result of minority students' feeling unwelcome on many campuses."

In discussing successful retention programs, the author focuses on a program at Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles "The college has retained 81% of its 1988/89 Freshman class with the aid of a mandatory one-semester course to help freshmen adjust to college. It also has a mentor program in which faculty members advise freshmen on coursework and other matters." Students who have unclear academic goals and feel isolated and unwelcome on the college campus tend to drop-out and not persist. These students, especially those who are academically underprepared, in order to be successful need: 1) special assistance to increase their academic skills; 2) definition of their educational and career goals, and 3) a sense of "community". "Freshman Orientation and Career Development: How Effective Is It?", a Summer of 1985 article published in the Journal of College Placement, validates the effectiveness of providing a Freshman Orientation and Career Development course to
increase student retention and academic performance. The article describes a study which measures the effectiveness of a Freshman Orientation and Career Development program at Bronx Community College stating that it had "a significantly positive effect on the academic performance and retention of entering freshman during their first year of study. This is especially true of student retention..." Individual attention and easily accessible support services are crucial to the academically underprepared and "underrepresented" student. Through this program, support services will be made particularly accessible to deal with the special needs of this population. Coordination with the EOPS and Financial Aid programs will avoid any overlap of services provided. Although advisement is a component of the matriculation process, new students who participate in this component will do so in groups. It is not feasible for the current counseling staff to provide the individual attention needed for the academically underprepared and "underrepresented" student. Assigned counselors will meet with individual students regularly to provide support and assist in the development of an educational plan. The program is designed to create a sense of community and shared purpose, in addition to increasing academic preparedness. Clustering the Freshman Seminar with English and reading courses will provide students structured opportunities to interact together and to identify with a group. The program will provide opportunities for students to participate in the cultural activities on campus to enhance a sense of "belonging". We expect the following outcome: Students who participate in the program will perform and be retained at a level comparable to the total student population. This will be evidenced by follow-up studies of retention and student grade point averages.
3. Population To Be Served

POPULATION SERVED
The population to be served will include first-time college students with high school G.P.A. of less than 2.2 or Grossmont College English assessment test scores that indicate a less than tenth grade reading level. The program will place special emphasis on recruitment of "underrepresented" students, including Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans and recent high school drop-outs. 60 students in the Fall/Spring semesters will be provided services.
4. Objectives

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

1. Identify and recruit 60 program participants targeting those who are members of underrepresented groups.
   Estimated Cost: Project Director, Clerical assistance: $395
   postage: $200 and
   brochure paper: $100
   A. Assess the basic skills levels in English and math of all program applicants
      • Review high school G.P.A.s
      • Administer/review G. C. assessment test scores
   B. Outreach and recruitment of program participants
      • Develop brochure/flyer
      • Send mailers to PTA, special community organization
      • Make presentations to identified senior classes
      • Develop application process
      • Interview students and review their records
      • Select and notify applicants
   C. Orientation banquet for participants, family and select community members
      • Coordinate speakers, facilities, food, presentation

2. Develop a Retention Program for academically underprepared and "underrepresented" students resulting in a 10% increase in retention
   Estimated Cost: Instructional staff, Project Director, tutoring: $5,670,
   clerical assistance: $2,894,
   counseling: $5,460,
   guest speakers: $200,
   postage: $50
   supplies: $50
   A. Design and teach a three unit Freshman Seminar
      • Prepare curriculum
      • Hire instructor
   B. Coordinate Block schedule of English and Freshman Seminar
      • Establish schedule
C. Coordinate student support services
   • Provide individual and group tutoring services
     - Hire tutors
     - Develop tutoring/group study schedule
   • Provide job matching with on-campus employment
     - Coordinate job placement with job placement center
   • Provide individual counseling, assessment and educational planning
     - Assign counselor/mentor
     - Schedule four meetings per semester
   • Provide individual assistance with financial aid/scholarship applications
     - Coordinate group and individual meeting with F.A. representative
   • Develop a student "Early Alert" program to monitor student academic progress

D. Develop a program of monthly workshops
   • Coordinate Transfer workshops with the Transfer Center staff
   • Develop a "speaker's bureau

3. Evaluate Program Effectiveness
   Estimated Cost: Research analysis: $5,918, Project Director
   A. Design a follow-up study - Survey participants/faculty/staff
   B. Review student records to evaluate grades and retention rates
   C. Complete a final project evaluation

4. Disseminate project outcomes to other community colleges and professional organizations
   Estimated Cost: Project Director and Dean of Counseling and Guidance
   A. Prepare a final report and summary of project accomplishments
   B. Disseminate findings to community colleges, high school districts and Chancellor's office
5. Workplan Narrative

[SEE “OBJECTIVES” SECTION OF THIS DOCUMENT.]
6. Expected Outcomes

EXPECTED IMPACT
This project will provide English skill remediation services supported by the social and cultural orientation to college that will enhance success for those least likely to succeed. Increased academic preparedness, clarification of academic and career goals, improved study skills, better access to vital support services, and intensive follow-up, will be provided. The project can serve as a model for other community colleges who share the goal of retention of academically underprepared and "underrepresented students." It is expected that students will benefit with increased retention rates and greater chance for attainment of their educational goal: certificate, degree or transfer.
7. Evaluation Plan

EVALUATION PLAN
A Retention Committee will be formed and tasked with the purpose of directing and evaluating this project and working towards the continued expansion of activities that increase student retention and persistence. The committee will meet monthly and report to the Vice President of Student Services. The campus administration fully intends to continue to support these efforts once the program is established.

The project Director will monitor and evaluate the procedures and activities throughout the duration of the project through review of attendance records, monthly progress reports from instructors and weekly contact with instructors and counselors. This information will be reported to the Dean of Counseling and Guidance.

A follow-up study will be conducted on students who completed the program successfully and those who did not. Involved faculty, staff and students will also be surveyed to increase the program effectiveness and aid in its ongoing revision. Once the project is completed, participating students will be compared statistically with similar students who did not participate in the program. Students who did take reading their first semester and those who did not will also be compared after one, and two semesters to evaluate retention rates, and grade point average differences.
8. Dissemination Plan

DISSEMINATION AND TRANSFERABILITY

The project director will prepare a final report for the Chancellor's Office which will detail the outcomes, procedures, and results obtained during the course of the project. The outcomes of this project will be shared with the faculty and staff of Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges via the District Digest, the school newspaper and radio station. Each high school in the district will also be notified of the results, as well as the Counseling Centers of other community colleges in California via professional newsletters and publications such as CACD newsletter "The Compass".

The project will serve as a model for other community colleges and will be presented at professional conferences such as CACC. For Grossmont College this program will be a first step towards implementing an on-going retention program to ensure the needed support for academically underprepared and "underrepresented" students.
9. Budget Narrative

[NO "BUDGET NARRATIVE" ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]