CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
AND
CERRITOS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

#91-0038
Cerritos College Piano Lab Up-Grade Project

FUNDING CATEGORY & AWARD | ELIGIBLE PROGRAM | PROJECT CATEGORY
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Loan = $53,250 | B --- Improvement of Teaching Abilities | 

PROJECT PRODUCT | PROJECT TOPIC #1 | PROJECT TOPIC #2 | ACADEMIC SUBJECT
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Curriculum Develop | Digital piano | Music | 

PROJECT DIRECTOR | PROJECT SUPERVISOR
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This project will replace obsolete, worn out, and inadequate equipment in the music laboratory. With the up-grade, faculty will increase the level of academic standards and become current in the area of keyboard instruction. In addition faculty will develop new course syllabi to prepare students for upper division keyboard proficiency exams and for entering the Applied Music Program. Instructors will attend training programs on the use of the new equipment.
The Cerritos College Piano Lab Upgrade Project addresses two of the eligible programs stated in the Request for Proposal: Improving Teaching Abilities of Faculty members, and Improvement in Traditional Instructional Programs. It will improve the course curriculum, and improve the current methods of music lab instruction at the college. The upgrade will allow our teachers more freedom in developing curriculum, and the new lab’s computer-driven environment will allow them to closely monitor students' work, completely control the learning environment, and quickly respond to questions and difficulties in the classroom. The current lab is obsolete, worn-out, and inadequate for upper division preparation, and does not lend itself to effective teaching of basic musicianship and theory. The proposed lab would not only rectify this situation, but allow the introduction of new curricular elements.

The proposal objectives are:
1. To increase the level of academic standard and become current in the area of keyboard instruction by replacing outdated equipment with state-of-the-art equipment that produces digital piano sounds. We will study similar facilities at local schools, after which we will purchase equipment that has been pre-determined to meet the program needs for our piano lab classes. We will then install the new equipment as it becomes available.

2. To better prepare students for upper division keyboard proficiency exams and for entering the Applied Music Program by offering a more complete range of piano instruction. New course syllabi will be developed by keyboard instructors. We will pilot the new syllabi, along with the new piano lab, in the Spring Semester of 1992.

3. To increase the creativity in keyboard teaching methods. Instructors will attend training sessions on the new equipment and continue to dialogue and modify teaching methods and course structure as the program is piloted.

4. To evaluate the program and disseminate findings. We will conduct Classroom Assessment and qualitative evaluation and modify syllabi. Results will be disseminated as appropriate.

The benefits of this project will transcend the boundaries of the Cerritos College Music Department. The College provides a natural avenue for offering musical opportunities to the community and to our students and this project opens that door of opportunity even wider.
1. Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

Specific Educational Programs Addressed In the Proposal.

The Cerritos College Piano Lab Upgrade Project addresses two of the eligible programs stated in the Request for Proposal: Improving Teaching Abilities of Faculty Members, and Improvement in Traditional Instructional Programs. Our proposed program will enhance the quality of music instruction currently being provided, bring the course curriculum up to the standards required in upper division university work, and improve the current methods of music lab instruction at the College.

After analyzing input from faculty and students, upper division university requirements, the limits of our available class space, and an extensive pricing survey of available systems, we have decided on a lab unit designed for us by Kawai America Corporation as the most cost-effective and best suited to our current and future needs.

By upgrading our piano lab to the state-of-the-art, our teachers will have the freedom to move beyond the limitations of the current facility, into a computer-driven environment that will allow them to more closely monitor students' work, more completely control the learning environment, and more quickly respond to questions and difficulties in the classroom.
2. Specific Problems Being Addressed

Specific Problems Addressed By the Proposal.

Our current piano lab is obsolete and does not adequately prepare music students for the environment encountered in upper division work, nor does it lend itself to effective teaching of basic musicianship and theory.

The existing keyboards are not accurate representations of actual piano keyboards, having approximately half the range of a normal instrument. In addition, the electronics are outdated and badly worn by heavy use. As a result, the lab is often dosed for repair and thus unavailable for use by students. Since the piano lab classes are the greatest generators of Music Department ADA, this situation must be remedied as soon as possible.

With our proposed piano lab in place, we can make use of MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) technology. The system’s controlling unit, used by the instructor, is computer-driven, and allows the instructor to program scales, note and rhythm patterns, chord progressions, and simple orchestrations, then move through the classroom, attending to the progress of each student. The current lab configuration has no such programming capability, and the instructors must remain at their keyboard in front of the class, separated from their students, repeating the patterns and progressions for each lesson.

Another advantage of this new laboratory setup is the opportunities it will give our faculty to introduce new curricular elements into the classroom. With the new lab, instructors will be able to teach theories of melodic harmonization as well as improvisation with previously unavailable techniques. The instructor’s computer-driven central unit allows for an audio complexity unavailable with conventional keyboard technology.

Another benefit of the proposed system is the increased hands-on time students will have with the equipment. Class need not come to a halt when a student raises a hand to ask a question, as is the case with the current system. With the new technology, the teacher may simply step away from the keyboard, which will continue with the programmed lesson and is free to help the students experiencing difficulty. In the mean time, students not having questions, or who are ready to progress may do so. There is no need for them to be held back by another student's questions.

Another advantage of the Kawai lab system is its weighted lead key action, and digitally sampled sound which replicates the key action and sound of a piano keyboard. Our current lab uses a contact method, which involves a hammer striking a tuned metal plate. It is noisy and distracting to students and instructors alike and does not replicate the sound of an actual piano. Sampled sounds of digital recordings increase the reality of the classroom environment.
3. Population To Be Served

Populations Served By Project.

Our Music Department piano lab serves 600 to 700 students in a year. The program feeds into our applied and performance music programs, helping music majors meet the basic piano proficiency required for graduation in the universities. As mentioned previously, the lab classes are the Music Department's highest ADA generators. The lab classes are usually full, and have high student retention rates.

With the College being located in an area that has been declared "the most ethnically diverse" in the United States, we find that our Music Department student population reflects this diversity. We also find that music is a common denominator among the many social and cultural differences our students bring, and our program is far richer because of the experiences they have to share.
4. Objectives

Proposal Objectives.

1. To increase the level of academic standard and become current in the area of keyboard instruction by replacing out-dated equipment with state-of-the-art equipment that produces digital piano sounds.

   To accomplish this objective, members of our music department will study local installations in other schools that have recently updated their piano labs, after which we will purchase equipment that has been pre-determined to meet the program needs for our piano lab classes: Music 60, 61, 62, and 63. We will then install the new equipment as it becomes available.

2. To better prepare students for keyboard proficiency exams and for entering the Applied Music Program by offering a more complete range of piano instruction.

   To address this objective, new course syllabi for each of the four classes will be developed by two of our full-time keyboard instructors. We will pilot the new syllabi, along with the new piano lab, in the Spring Semester of 1992.

3. To increase the opportunities for faculty teaching keyboard to become more creative in their instructional methods.

   This objective will be accomplished by conducting two four-hour training sessions on the new equipment for the five keyboard instructors at the College during the Fall Semester and offering subsequent opportunities for training and sharing of ideas and successes during the Spring Semester.

4. To evaluate the program and disseminate findings. We will conduct ongoing evaluations of the new classes during the Spring Semester using Classroom Assessment Techniques. Based on these inputs, modification of syllabi and teaching methods will be undertaken as needed. Qualitative evaluation will take place at the end of the inaugural semester and the results, program availability, and opportunities for visitor observation will be disseminated as appropriate.
5. Workplan Narrative

[NO “WORKPLAN” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]
6. Expected Outcomes

Expected Outcomes of Project Activities:

a. Objectives

The current piano lab is composed of obsolete, worn-out equipment that is both unreliable and noisy and distracting to both students and faculty. By upgrading to a state-of-the-art system, we hope to increase the level of academic standard and create a musically realistic classroom environment that is more conducive to productive work.

With this new lab, our teachers will gain the freedom to design courses to meet the specific educational needs of each class and student. This will result in improved skills not only for the students, who will receive more personalized instruction, but for the teachers as well, since they will have a freer hand to develop their curriculum. The new software and technology is highly conducive to creative development of curriculum. The programmability, the variety of sound, and the increased interaction with students gives the teacher more options in presentation. And, because the MIDI software permits more complex audio displays, new elements, including improvisation and harmonic theory and practice, may be taught in the new lab.

Two of our full-time instructors on our staff will develop the new syllabi for the four affected classes. The new syllabi will reflect the new elements and teaching strategies made possible by the improved technology. The five keyboard instructors will be fully trained on the equipment in November/December 1991. Training will take place in two four-hour sessions during which time instructors will gain hands-on experience on all equipment and in all required operations, including familiarizing themselves with the system's MIDI programming language.

Based on the classroom assessments, instructors will alter class structure and teaching methods during the course of the Spring Semester, in the case of minor changes, or after the semester, if major changes to the structure are required.

b. Impact of Project

The benefits of this project will transcend the boundaries of the Cerritos College Music Department. By implementing this new laboratory, the College will be able to offer innovative, fee-based courses to members of the general public through our Community Services programs. It is expected that this lab will not only enhance our reputation in the area among students, teachers, and musicians, but will help generate badly needed revenue in both user fees and increased ADA figures. It is anticipated that this program will give our Music Department increased community visibility and be the first step in a pattern of growth and expansion into more high-tech music instruction techniques.
Cerritos College also recognizes its obligation to provide meaningful cultural opportunities to the community. Increasingly, community colleges are shouldering the responsibility for music education previously met by programs in elementary and secondary schools. Music is a common ground for people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnic derivations. The College provides a natural avenue for offering this musical opportunity to the community and to our students. In this way, and in the recruiting program we hope to build with local high schools with the lab as a centerpiece, the impact of the new lab will extend beyond the music department and campus into the community at large.

We also foresee this lab as the first step in developing a commercial, vocational music program, and it is anticipated that the lab will be the first step in the acquisition of a commercial accreditation certificate.

c. Potential For Continued Support After Loan Expiration:

Since this request is for funds to purchase equipment and upgrade an existing program, there is no doubt that the piano lab will continue to operate after the expiration of the loan. In fact, the College sees this upgrade as a first step in an ongoing expansion program for the Music Department. Once the lab is in place, no additional software, sheet music and manuals will be required for operation. In addition, Kawai America has assured us they will continue to supply us with newly developed research and software programs as they become available at no cost to us. Our past history with Kawai assures us this is a valid commitment.

d. Potential Adaptation to Other Institutions or Programs:

One of our goals for this project is to serve as a pilot to other institutions who may be interested in pursuing a project of this nature. While we are not piloting this particular laboratory configuration, there are very few operating piano labs in our service area. We would, therefore, serve as a good working model for other institutions and musicians in the area.
Evaluation Plan.

Once the system is installed, we will conduct ongoing evaluation, using Classroom Assessment Techniques, among the students who take the inaugural classes in the Spring Semester of 1992. The results will indicate the success of the configuration, of the teaching methods, of the layout of the facilities, of its accessibility, etc. Adjustments to class structure, teaching methods, and the lab itself will be made in response to these suggestions and comments. A final qualitative evaluation will be conducted with the assistance of the Research and Development Office at the conclusion of the Spring Semester.
8. Dissemination Plan

Dissemination Plan.

We plan to disseminate our experiences with the lab upgrade, training program, piloting, and evaluating of the system to local high schools and other community colleges. We would be willing to serve as a pilot lab and a working model for others to emulate and build from.

Our articulation with local high schools through our 2 + 2 program affords us a well-used pipeline through which to disseminate the availability of this much needed state-of-the-art opportunity for those seeking advanced piano training.
9. Budget Narrative

[NO “BUDGET NARRATIVE” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]