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San Jose City  

Gateway Model, Phase II

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Impact on Systemwide Need

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Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

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Underrepresented Latino, African American, Native American, disabled, and low-income students at San Jose City College have poor (below 50%) retention, success, and persistence rates in precollegiate skills classes. These underrepresented students need a comprehensive, highly structured, multi-cultural, inclusive program of instruction and support to prepare them for their educational goals of transfer, AA/AS degree, or vocational certificates. Specific needs to address the problem include:

Underrepresented students often are intimidated by a system they view as hostile or offensive; they need assistance in dealing with this system.

Underrepresented students need an organized support structure tailored to help them overcome academic and personal barriers.

Underrepresented students need help in shaping career and educational goals.

Curriculum should relate to goals of underrepresented students; traditional teaching methodologies are not as successful as methodologies built on students’ past successes and learning styles.

General counseling cannot provide the opportunity for students to bond with one counselor who knows their unique situation and can act quickly when a problem arises.

Assessment needs to ensure the right program for students who have often experienced failure or difficulties.

In 1991, the first phase of the Gateway project was funded by a $55,000 Underrepresented Students grant. Evaluation (Appendix B) shows the dramatic increase in student success with this model: 45% student success in non-Gateway courses, 64% success in Gateway; retention jumped from 53% in non-Gateway classes to 72% in Gateway, with high student and faculty satisfaction. The Phase I Gateway Program offered blocked classes, intervention strategies used by Supplemental Instruction tutors who attended class and offered small group and individualized tutoring outside of class, program aides who phoned students with irregular attendance and followed up on lack of progress and personal situations that hinder coursework, faculty advisement time, and a 20% counselor. A recruitment process was piloted, and seventy students
were initially identified to participate. Phase I activities included a rigorous subjective and objective evaluation. This Phase II Underrepresented Students Proposal takes advantage of results from the first Gateway project, building on our early experiences and evaluation and expanding on Phase I by adding the following features:

- Blocked classes at times to accommodate work and child care responsibilities, located in the same building, and taught by faculty who choose to participate.

- A full-day pre-semester orientation when underrepresented Gateway students can become acquainted with each other, the team, and the campus, listen to guest speakers and begin to match their own goals with the expectations of the college.

- Increase counselor to 50% to provide both academic and personal counseling. Reassigned time for faculty mentoring.

- A math lab, staffed by tutors and the math program aide. This will centralize math tutoring for the Gateway students. Continuing Gateway students will be recruited as tutors.

- A battery of intervention strategies specific to each Gateway level. A counselor aide to record progress and persistence, follow up on why students drop out, and help assemble and summarize the portfolio of assessment information.

- Student get-togethers where community leaders speak on careers of interest to students, and answer questions on educational requirements and job responsibilities. Students will be invited to visit the job site and receive further mentoring, if interested.

- Opportunities for groups of students to attend campus athletic, cultural, and social events, such as those taking place during Black History Month.

- Opportunities for field trips to local universities so that students who plan to transfer can begin to "see themselves" at these institutions.

- Gateway linkages with the Transfer Center, EOP&S, and DSPS
At San Jose City College, 26% of the total student population of 12,000+ are low income and 67% are from historically under-represented groups. A demographic report released in 1990-91 reveals that 80% of all students entering San Jose City College have academic deficiencies in reading, writing, and/or mathematics, and as few as 50% of these students typically succeed in basic skills courses and persist in college after the first semester.
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Objectives

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Why do underrepresented adults struggle with school? A February, 1993 survey of 67 Gateway Latino, African American, Native American, disabled, and low-income students at San Jose City College confirms the needs and barriers:

17 students were high school drop-outs (1 later got the GED).

26 students were single parents with an average of 2 very young children each.

26 students received support from EOP&S, 3 from GAIN, 1 from Veteran's benefits, 1 from Work Study, and 7 listed "other," suggesting AFDC.

9 students listed a range of disabilities from dyslexia, auditory disability, to "never does well," while 3 others named physical disabilities.

14 students depended on the bus to attend classes, 3 on the light rail/bus, 8 walked, 3 rode bikes, and others owned cars or depended on car pools or rides.

Additionally, conversations and classroom assessment questions provided feedback on the topic of individual student perceptions of the barriers:

- low self-esteem and low self-worth
- lack of motivation
- poor study skills and time management ability
- lack of self-discipline
- lack of knowledge about college, including the system, expectations, and logistics
- lack of family role model (in the survey, only 8 students indicated one or both parents were college graduates; most were the first in family to attend college.)

For the purposes of this proposal, we must recognize these problems in order to structure a setting in which the student can be successful, empowered, and independent.
Solution/Response. Introduction. This proposal provides a comprehensive network of specialized instruction and support for underrepresented students to prepare them for college level coursework, whether it be in vocational or general education/transfer programs. This Phase II proposal extends and enhances the 1991 plan and is designed to support 105 students entering basic skills instruction at two levels. The following charts the sequence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 1993</th>
<th>Spring 1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (35 students)</td>
<td>start level 1 work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 (35 students)</td>
<td>start level 2 work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (35 new students)</td>
<td>start level 1 work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level 1: Introduction to Reading, Basic Writing, Arithmetic or Introduction to Algebra, and Study Skills.

Level 2: College Reading, Fundamentals of Composition, Arithmetic, Introduction to Algebra or Intermediate Algebra, and Study Skills.

The College can empower Latino, African American, Native American, disabled, and low-income students to overcome the external and internal barriers they confront. The Gateway plan will offer these students not only the foundation for achieving reasonable educational and career goals but also the opportunity to experience the confidence born of success. Four elements assembled into a comprehensive plan are essential to allow students to experience this success:

1. Selection of Students sincerely interested in furthering their education,

2. Involvement of Faculty who believe that this Gateway program will be successful and are willing to meet the professional demands of implementing it,

3. A student-centered curriculum that uses a variety of methodologies relevant to student goals,

4. A clear system of support and "safety nets."

Underrepresented and underprepared students need these elements, drawn together in a portfolio of strategies, to achieve student equity.

Solution/Response: Element 1 - Students. Assembling a portfolio of information is essential to the success of the plan. Under-represented students have unique problems and experiences; we must be able to
draw from their successes, as well as assist when barriers and problems surface. Selection criteria will include known indicators of success such as full-time enrollment and motivation, as well as data gathered from college placement testing, but additional initial assessment is essential to identify students who will benefit from the model and to provide curriculum and methodology to meet their needs.

For example, we need background information on educational experiences and study skills habits from the student's perspective, a writing sample, a survey of career and/or educational goals, identification of learning styles, and identification of unique barriers to college success. Through an interview, we need to ascertain the student's level of motivation and enthusiasm, as well as desire to work hard at a goal. We need to identify and build on situations where the student has experienced success.

This portfolio of meaningful information has several uses and is dependent on multiple measures, consistent with the statewide Matriculation Act. First, the information will be summarized and shared with the faculty to strengthen their understanding of student needs. Second, by knowing the needs, such as financial aid and child care, we can work through the system to meet application deadlines and prevent crises that might force students to drop out in the first four weeks of college. Third, as individual problems surface, readily available background information will help the team of faculty, aides, and tutors to react quickly. And fourth, we will use portfolio data in the evaluation process for the grant and for the district's efforts to measure retention and success.

Solution/Response: Element 2 - Faculty. The basic skills faculty at San Jose City College are dedicated to helping underrepresented students; these teachers constantly search for ways to increase their effectiveness and encourage students to stay in school. Several activities have already provided these faculty members with opportunities to work as a team:

Authoring a program review in May, 1991; this review roughs out the initial outline of this proposal.
Participating in a Title III grant and developing Reading and Writing lab curricula incorporating computers, CID players, and video and audio players.

Implementing the Phase I Gateway project.

This team has shown that we can work together and be successful. Now, we need to build on what we have learned to formalize Gateway over two years at San Jose City College. Student success starts with the bond between the teacher and the student. Faculty at San Jose City College have already taken the first steps in developing that bond.

Solution/Response: Element 3 - Curriculum and Methodology. The third element is the basic skills classroom and lab curriculum: the theories, skills, and problem-solving strategies, what we teach, and how we teach it. For underrepresented students, curriculum must be multicultural and sensitive to specific needs and interests. Cultural exploration with specific readings and writing assignments not only lends itself to skill instruction but allows the Latino, African American, Native American, disabled, and low-income students to learn more about themselves and each other. This approach has major implications for our entire curriculum.

Blocked classes offer an environment where skills can be transferred so the concepts learned in one class can be used in another. Strategies such as using a common text and joint assignments, team-teaching, and offering combined classes encourage idea crossover. For underrepresented students, most of whom have known failure within the educational system, this cohesiveness and relevance will foster success.

As an additional aspect of the specialized curriculum, career exploration will now be included in all areas to draw in undecided students and further focus those who now express only vague interests. Research by Rouche and others has determined that students who lack specific goals are more likely to drop out of school. Resources such as the Career Center and the counselor will help, but goal exploration and refinement must be an on-going part of the classroom setting, where discovery through discussion, readings, and writing assignments takes place.

A February, 1993 survey of Latino, African American, Native American, disabled, and low-income Gateway students asked: 'What are your educational goals?' "What are your career goals?" "What do
you plan to major in at San Jose City College?” The following responses reflect students’ lack of focus:

- to become financially set
- to take classes and get a job
- for career preparation
- to get a higher education
- to work for a large company
- to study hard

for personal growth
to further my education
to get a GED
to open a business
to improve my communication skills
to better myself and get a good paying job

Twenty-one of the 67 students indicated some interest in exploring a vocational goal such as firefighter, accountant, or juvenile, alcohol or drug counselor. Seven others indicated interest in general studies, such as music, the environment, or behavioral science. Lessons relevant to students’ educational/ career goals and applicable to real life are essential.

A unique part of this proposal is the expanded study skills class. During Phase I, the class focused on traditional study skills such as note-taking and test-taking. In Phase II, we propose that the class be team-taught by the counselor and an instructor; content will include information on the educational system and campus services, active learning skills, student empowerment and motivation activities, computer literacy and word processing, and tools to help underrepresented students evaluate their own study processes. The multicultural and student-centered emphasis will greatly improve the impact of this powerful class.

The comprehensive assessment portfolio, new to the Phase II proposal, will include a description of how each Latino, African American, Native American, disabled, and low-income Gateway student learns and how the student has experienced success. One common successful experience for many underrepresented students is employment. How did they find out about the job, and how did they get hired? How did they learn what to do? By doing, by talking to someone who was doing it right, by asking questions, or by experimenting? How did they become better at it? Faculty can expand on these student experiences, define and frame already successful problem-solving methods, and relate them to classroom learning situations incorporating a variety of cultural activities.
In addition Phase II emphasizes a variety of student-centered methodologies based on self-discovery, cooperative learning groups, and sharing with fellow students. At several points in the semester, faculty will initiate an early-alert process to notify students with below-average grades in time for students to recover and pass. Self-checking strategies will be introduced so that students learn to monitor their own progress. In Phase I, methodology focused on incorporating Classroom Assessment Techniques (Cross and Angelo) to draw students into the learning process; we plan to augment that approach with a variety of methodologies.

Solution/Response: Element 4 - Support. Phase I showed that underrepresented students need a network of support with their courses and the college system. In Phase II, we propose to strengthen and expand this network. Different intervention strategies will be developed for each level. We will formalize and centralize Gateway math tutoring by staffing a "homework lab" with curriculum and practice tests so that students who need more practice can get help on a drop-in basis quickly. In addition to academic advising and program planning, the counselor with increased time will act quickly to resolve problems such as helping a student locate an emergency textbook loan, referring a student for learning disability testing, or recommending coping skills and appropriate college behaviors for a student struggling with college life. As a personal counselor, the counselor will listen to students and work to alleviate stressful situations.

This project provides many opportunities for students to bond with each other and members of the Gateway team. Such relationships, especially those between the instructor and student and the counselor and student, will nurture and encourage culturally-diverse, underprepared students to succeed and stay in school. The orientation, blocked classes, study skills classes, and various types of get-togethers are all conceived to build and strengthen relationships. Special projects of this kind are time-intensive; as students are empowered to take responsibility for their learning, they will make more and more demands on the team, have more questions, and need more resources. We will respond to these demands.
80% of Level 1 and Level 2 students will be retained and 75% will succeed during the fall 1993 semester (compared to 50% prior to the start of Phase I).

Of Level 1 students succeeding the first semester, 70% will persist through the second semester and will be prepared to enter college-level coursework by June 1994.

Of Level 2 students succeeding the first semester, 70% will enroll in college-level coursework in spring 1994 semester and succeed.

With two years of student follow-up, we will be able to develop a two-year tested model.

More students will be served (Phase I - 70, Phase II - 105)

Retention and persistence strategies will be refined for underrepresented students for dissemination purposes.

Specific Outcomes
100% of the students will be placed into the Gateway program accurately.

95% will attend the orientation.

100% of the students will participate in at least one additional outside group activity on campus each semester.

100% will set a tentative educational goal during the first semester, and

100% of the returning students will meet with the counselor in the second semester to prepare a comprehensive educational plan which provides for an AA, transfer or vocational certificate.

Curriculum will be developed to meet students' special needs. 100% of the students will meet individually with the Counselor at least once each semester for a progress check or personal counseling.
100% of the students who are retained but not successful the first semester and who want to continue in college will receive an educational plan.

Faculty given reassigned time will increase their office hours to meet with Gateway students for advisement and mentoring.

75% of the students will meet with tutors regularly or as needed outside of class time for additional help.

100% of the students with irregular attendance or poor progress will meet (or talk on the phone) with an aide.

80% of those interested in a support group will attend at least one meeting
Objective evaluation will take place at the end of each semester:

Retention, success, and persistence data will be collected and charted. (See Appendix B for Phase I accountability model)

Positive attendance for the lab classes will be totaled.

Comparisons between the success of Gateway and non-Gateway classes will be provided by the District Dean of Academic Standards.

Essential to this evaluation package are the subjective comments of students and staff. Students withdrawing from the project will be interviewed, and their responses will be seriously considered in cases where intervention might have prevented the drop. Student contacts with support staff will be recorded. Evaluation will be conducted in the spirit of improving and refining the project and will be discussed openly with the team and students. A final report will be prepared for the state summarizing results and recommendations.
Faculty participants will make Gateway presentations at local, state, and national conferences, such as the Chancellor’s Office Conference, Northern California College Reading Association, College Reading and Learning Association, LARC, State Academic Senate, as well as campus and district Instructional Improvement meetings. A summary report of the project will also be sent to each California Community College so others can replicate the model at their own campuses.
[No information provided in this document for this section.]