

Student Support & Academic Success



California State University, Northridge

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The program's goal and strategies

California State University, Northridge is excited to launch this fall a five year federally supported program aimed at increasing its undergraduate students' support services and academic success. The Department of Education Title V grant provides funding to increase the capacity of Cal State Northridge to serve its students by institutionalizing effective pedagogies and support services. The five years objectives of this project are aligned with Cal State Northridge's five year goals of increasing the rate of six years graduation rate and the freshman retention rates.

To meet these goals, CSUN will implement a three-prong Activity. Under the first Component of the Activity, CSUN will strengthen student academic support by (a) expanding the Discipline-Based Freshman Connection Program; (b) offering the Peer Learning

Facilitators Program; (c) expanding the Community Service-Learning Program; and (d) expanding the Math Pre-Remediation Program.

Under the second component of the project, CSUN will strengthen student support services by: (a) expanding the Peer Mentorship Program; (b) expanding the Faculty Mentorship Program; (c) launching the Career Pathways Program; and (d) conducting outreach to local high schools.

Finally, under the third component of the project, CSUN will enhance faculty development through the Faculty Learning Community Program and implementation of the Faculty-to Faculty Mentorship Program.

Through this grant, CSUN will be able to substantially change the way it educate thousands of its students. The effort, focused on improving retention and

graduation rates, will affect all areas of the university. By the end of the grant period, this project will have affected 21,582 university students, 300 staff and faculty, and 4,200 high school students.

The goal of this bi-annual newsletter is to share with students, faculty and staff as well as with the surrounding community information about the progress made in this important initiative.

Over the next five years, we look forward to having you take an active part in the implementation of this project. It is with your support and advice that we hope to be able to meaningfully impact the academic success of our undergraduate students.



Dr. Cheryl Spector, Director, Academic First Year Experiences

Discipline Based Freshman Connection Program- College of Health & Human Development

As part of the Discipline-Based Freshman Connection Program, the College of Health and Human Development will offer during the spring 2011 semester three sections of a discipline-based cohort targeting freshman students.

Each section will be led by a faculty from the relevant discipline who will facilitate sessions on how to attain a successful academic experience in the relevant major and develop a career strategy. Dr. Tami Abourezk will facilitate a

Kinesiology focused cohort of freshman student that will be linked to another Kinesiology course. In addition, during the spring semester, the College of Health and Human Development will explore extending the Discipline-Based Freshman Connection Program into a yearlong cohort experience.

For example, the Learning Living Community that was offered for Kinesiology freshman students in the fall semester will be extended during the spring semester.

Similarly, twenty-five freshman students majoring in Child and Adolescence Development will continue their cohort based learning experience during the spring semester along with their University 100 faculty, Dr. April Taylor, who is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Child and Adolescence Development.

In total approximately 150 freshman students will take part in the Discipline-Based Freshman Connection Program during the spring semester.

Peer Learning Facilitators Program- College of Health & Human Development

Studies have documented positive correlations among participation in peer learning, course grades and retention (Harris & Sander, 2007), particularly among minority college students (Drane, et al, 2005).

In this project, we will develop and implement a Peer Learning Facilitators Program that increases student engagement, performance, and retention. The program will target students having difficulties in gateway courses with low passing

rates. Under the PLF Program, students who have difficulties with course materials will be given *incentives* by faculty to attend the review sessions in which, the PLF will go over key concepts and facilitate group problem solving.

Upper-division undergraduate students who have successfully completed the identified courses will be hired to be the PLF for that course. The PLF will regularly attend class and schedule review sessions outside of class.

Next spring, the PLF Program will offer support to students taking Kinesiology 346 (Dr. Kim Henige) and Family and Consumer Sciences 380 (Diane Lewis-Goldstein and Erin Matthews). These two classes were selected because they have the highest failure rate in the College of Health and Human Development.

We expect to serve approximately 280 students each semester beginning in the spring 2011 and reduce the failure rate in these two courses by 15% over the next five years.

"We expect to serve approximately 280 students each semester and reduce the failure rate by 15% over the next five years."

Service Learning Program – College of Health & Human Development

Studies document strong links between service-learning courses and retention (Woodward, et al., 2001), including among Latino college students (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004).

These studies suggest that service-learning increases retention by its ability to enhance the quality and quantity of faculty interaction and to promote positive academic experiences for students in their adjustment to college (Keup, 2005).

Beginning in the first year of the grant, faculty will be selected to develop curriculum and pilot new

service-learning courses at CSUN around Northridge. Faculty will participate in training and collaboration meetings relating to their service-learning courses. The training will be facilitated by Merri Whitelock, the Director of the Center for Community Engagement.

The service-learning component will expand over the five years of the grant by having an additional college incorporate new service-learning courses into its curriculum each year.

Solicitations for proposals

from the faculty in the College of Health and Human Development have recently been sent out. We expect to award **nine** stipends of \$5,000 each. Each faculty recipient will also receive a \$1,000 stipend to pay a Student Scholar to assist him/her with the implementation of the project.

Each course will accommodate at least 25 students, serving as many as 250 students per semester starting this coming spring.

"Studies suggest that service-learning increases retention by its ability to enhance the quality and quantity of faculty interaction."

*"We expect to award **nine** stipends this spring semester to help further infuse service learning features in the College of Health and Human Development."*

Peer and Faculty Mentorship Program College of Health & Human Development

To further increase retention of freshman, we will expand our peer and faculty mentorship programs. Academic integration through student-faculty interaction has been shown to have one of the greatest effects on student retention, and particularly among Latino college students (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005).

The faculty member teaching the Discipline-Based Freshman Connection Program will serve as faculty mentor for the 25 students in his/her discipline-based freshman seminar course. This faculty will participate in faculty mentorship training facilitated by Glenn Omatsu from the EOP Office prior to teaching the freshman seminar course. The three faculty from the College of Health and Human Development that

will serve as Faculty Mentors starting this spring are: Dr. Tami Abourezk, Dr. Kim Henige (both from Kinesiology) and Dr. April Taylor (from Child & Adolescence Dev).

Academic integration of freshman will also be facilitated through peer mentorship. Research has found that peer support is directly related to the persistence of low income and first generation students in college (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Padilla, 2007).

Through this project we will expand our peer mentorship program by incorporating it into the Freshman Connection Program. Here, successful juniors and seniors will each be matched with up to 10 freshman students enrolled in the Discipline-Based Freshman Connection

Program. Peer Mentors will be expected to attend the regular class meetings of the Discipline-Based Freshman Connection Program and, along with the faculty mentor, co-facilitate in-class sessions on strategies for academic success. Peer Mentors will be available to meet with students individually outside of class and will be responsible for maintaining regular contact with students throughout the semester.

The peer mentors will be recruited, trained and supervised by our new Mentorship Coordinator, Adriana Garcia. She expects to recruit as many as twenty Peer Mentors during the spring 2011 semester. The Peer Mentors will be matched with as many as 150 freshman in the College of Health and Human Development.



Dr. April Taylor, Department of Child and Adolescence Development



Dr. Tami Abourezk, Faculty Learning Community Program Coordinator, College of Health & Human Development

Dr. Tami Abourezk will serve as the Faculty Development Facilitator for the College of Health and Human Development beginning in the spring 2011 semester. She is now in the process of recruiting 10 faculty participants to form the HHD Faculty Learning Community.

"Our Outreach Ambassadors will facilitate presentations to junior and senior high school students in four local high schools serving a predominantly low income and first generation college student population, reaching out to as many as 300 high school students this coming spring at San Fernando High School."

Faculty Learning Community Program College of Health & Human Development

According to the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, "the use of effective pedagogical practices must be at the core of any agenda to promote student success." (NPEC, 2006). Research suggests that faculty development contributes to an increase in student's retention and success (CSSRPG, 2007; McShannon, 2001).

Under this Title V grant, we will incorporate a faculty development component by offering faculty curriculum development stipends to enhance the Freshman Connection Program and the Community Service-Learning Program. In addition, each year, we will

host and facilitate a Faculty Learning Community for ten faculty members. The Faculty Learning Community will meet regularly throughout the year to identify pedagogical strategies currently used at CSUN that foster student success, and explore other potential practices which they and their colleagues might adopt to further support this goal. Each participant in the Learning Community will receive a \$1,200 stipend and be eligible to receive an additional \$1,000 stipend to attend a conference or seminar on pedagogical strategies.

In the following semester, the ten Faculty Learning Community participants will serve as Faculty Peer Mentors. Each participant will be matched with one interested faculty to engage in mutual classroom visits, individual mentoring and feedback designed to promote and inform teaching practices aligned with student success.

Dr. Tami Abourezk will serve as the Faculty Development Facilitator for the College of Health and Human Development beginning in the spring 2011 semester. She is now in the process of recruiting 10 faculty participants to form the HHD Faculty Learning Community.

High School Outreach Program College of Health & Human Development

High schools students who develop strong educational goals as early as the 10th grade report a significantly higher retention rate subsequently in college (Arbona & Nora, 2007). The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative recommends that sophomores in high schools should begin receiving information about post-secondary educational opportunities (NPEC, 2006). Working in collaboration with the university's Student Outreach and Recruitment Services and the EOP Office, we will expand the university's outreach capacity and have our **Outreach Ambassadors** facilitate presentations to junior and senior high school students

in four local high schools serving a predominantly low income and first generation college student population, reaching out to as many as 300 high school students this coming spring at San Fernando High School.

These presentations will include information on the value of higher education and career opportunities following completion of a bachelor degree.

Outreach Ambassadors will be senior undergraduate students trained and monitored by the Mentorship Program Coordinator, Adriana Garcia, who is herself a recent graduate of one of the high schools participating in this outreach project.

Twelve workshops will be conducted at each school each year. Each presentation will last for approximately 30 minutes and will be facilitated by a team of Outreach Ambassadors. The Outreach Ambassadors will be expected to maintain contact with students attending the information sessions and prompt them in their path of pursuing a college degree.

The four high schools that will participate in our outreach program are:

- San Fernando High School
- Northridge Academy High School
- Reseda High School
- Canoga High School

Five College Leads

The five year project will be launched this academic year in the College of Health and Human Development and will be led by Dr. Lou Rubino, who is a Professor in the Department of Health Sciences and the Director of the Health Administration Program. During the second year of the grant, the activities will be expanded into the College

of Business & Economics under the direction of Dr. Rafi Efrat from the Department of Accounting & Information Systems. During the third year of the grant, the College of Science and Mathematics will join the project led by Dr. Paula Schiffman from the Department of Biology. In the 4th year of the grant, Dr. Ellis Godard from the Department of Sociology

will lead the efforts in infusing the project's activities into the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences. Finally, during the fifth year of the grant, Dr. Nhut Ho from the Department of Mechanical Engineering will lead the efforts in integrating into the project the College of Engineering & Computer Science.



Dr. Lou Rubino, College Lead, College of Health and Human Development

Team Members

Aside from the five College Leads, the project activities will be supported by a number of key faculty, administrators and staff. Several of them have already joined us, including:

Project Coordinator: Roberto Aguirre, who brings with him over two years of federal grant administration experience, will serve as the Project Coordinator.

Research Analyst: Through the Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing, an internal evaluator will be retained to assess the impact of the project's activities.

Mentorship Coordinator: Adriana Garcia, who is a graduate of our EOP Summer Bridge Program, bring with her four years experience working in the EOP office as Peer Advisor. She will be responsible for coordinating the peer mentorship program and our high school outreach efforts.

Faculty Development Coordinator: Dr. Tami Abourezk, Department of Kinesiology, will be directing the efforts of faculty development in the College of Health and Human Development.

Peer Learning Facilitators Program Coordinator: Karen Abramowitz, who has been the head of the Supplemental Instruction at the Learning Resource Center for the past seven years, will direct the Peer Learning Facilitators Program.

Discipline-Based Freshman Connection Program: Dr. Cheryl Spector, the Director of the First Year Experience Program, will offer guidance in expanding the Freshman Connection Program with a discipline-based focus.

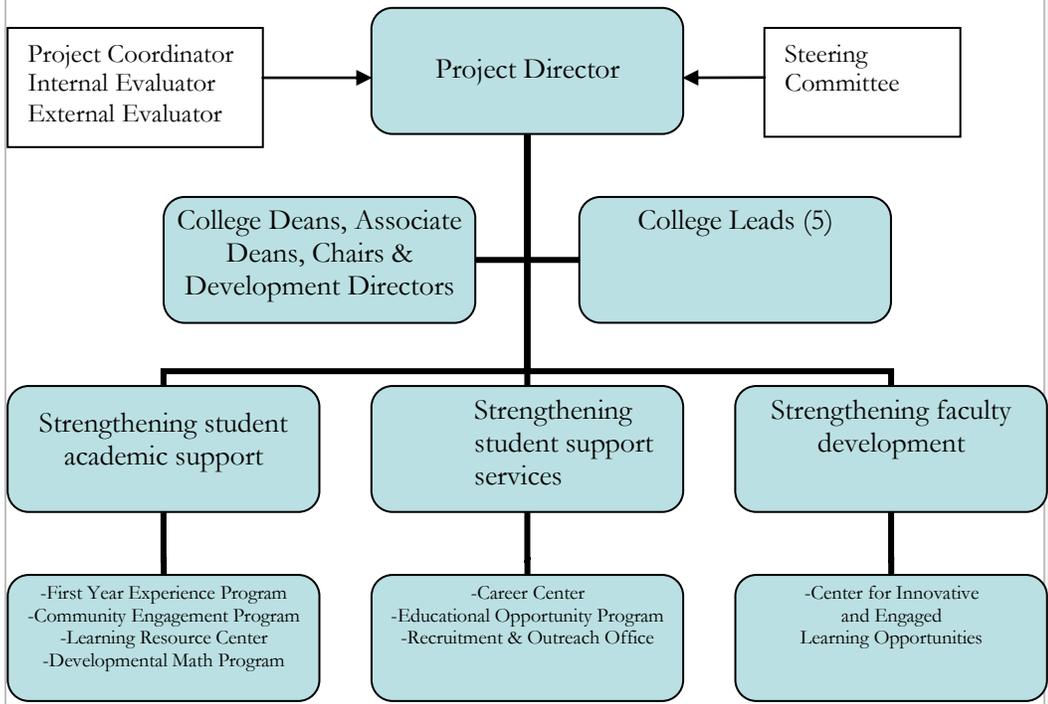
Service Learning Program: Merri Whitelock, the Director of the Center for Community Engagement, will assist in infusing additional service learning opportunities in as many as 45 courses.

Math Pre-Remediation Program: Dr. Katherine Stevenson, Director, Development Math Program, will lead the efforts in piloting and institutionalizing a math pre-remediation program for incoming freshmen.



Roberto Aguirre, Project Coordinator

Title V Grant Organizational Structure



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About the U.S. Department of Education- Title V HSI Grant Program

Our campus has been fortunate to have been selected this year to receive the five year grant from the U.S. Department of Education. As a designated Hispanic Serving Institution, we are grateful for the generous support this grant will offer our university in fostering greater student success, higher graduation rate and freshmen retention. The Title V Program provides

grants to to assist Hispanic Serving Institutions to expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of low income students. The HSI Program grants also enable HSIs to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability. For more information, you may visit them on the web at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/dueshsi/index.html>