Maisha Jameson

From: Chris Weidenbach
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2014 4:17 PM
To: Maisha Jameson
Subject: Student Success Project 2014-15
Attachments: Strengthening English Assessment Proposal--Laney College Student Success Project 2014-15 Project Budget Request Form-Final.doc

Maisha,

Here is a proposal that I would love to implement beginning this August!

I am in San Diego at a Sustainability conference, but can be reached via this email all week.

Thank you.

Peace
CW

Chris Weidenbach
Instructor, English Department
Laney College, Oakland CA
'ease use this email address to contact me.) http://www.laney.edu/wp/chris-weidenbach/

Laney College Student Success Project 2014-15
Funding Request Form
(Please type responses and submit electronically
to mjameson@peralta.edu by Monday, June 16, 2014)

Name of the Project: Strengthening English Assessment

Purpose/Rationale of the Project:

PURPOSE: To supplement and strengthen the English assessment/placement system with English and ESL instructors' critical feedback on enrolling students' reading and writing skills. Instructors in English and ESL would evaluate sample essays written by students, and make recommendations to students and counselors about what we see as the most appropriate course based on each student's proven abilities.

Often students are either under-prepared or under-challenged in courses our current English assessment process indicates as their starting point. In either case, those students tend to struggle and not to persist. Under-prepared students struggle with assignments, and cause distractions and delays that frustrate instructors and other students; under-challenged students tend to wrongly assume that their performance on assignments will overwhelm poor attendance or participation.

With the cooperation of the current assessment administrators, students would be offered a chance to write a 'diagnostic essay' in response to a college-level opinion-editorial (argumentative) essay. During the first two weeks of the semester (before the last day to add), English and ESL instructors would read and score student writing samples, and recommend to students the ESL or English course that seems most appropriate. Instructors and counselors would then work to help students register for those courses we recommend, and facilitate changes in the students' schedules when necessary and possible.

Students deserve classmates who are similarly prepared, so that course content is similarly meaningful to everyone, and so students' performance can be based on clear, fair, equitable standards. With adequate participation from instructors, we can anticipate more cohesive classes, moving at a healthy pace, and challenging students at the appropriate level. We can further anticipate students responding well to their opportunities to prove themselves, and progressing through their English course sequence in a more timely fashion.

Number of Students Expected to be Served:
The number of students served would include everyone doing the assessment, as well as their classmates; in other words, every student enrolled in Foundational Skills, intermediate, and college-level composition courses in English and ESL stand to benefit.

Project Implementation Timeline:
The project would commence at the beginning of the fall 2014 semester. If instructors can be recruited to read essays prior to the start of the semester, we could begin early. Otherwise, the first implementation period would be during the first two weeks of the semester.

Assessment of the Outcome:

Assessment would be based on comparing this coming semester's course success rates with those from previous semesters. Some assessment could be done via surveys with instructors.

Budget:
Staffing would depend on the number of instructors who choose to participate. With more instructors reading, each would work fewer hours. If two hundred students write diagnostic essays, the time for reading them would be approximately thirty-three hours, including some time spent 'norming'. The cost of materials would be negligible, requiring only several hundred photo-copies of the prompt essay, and a supply of lined paper for the students' essays.

  Chris Weidenbach   June 16, 2014
Project Lead (or Author of Proposal)   **Date**

  English Department
Division(s)/Department(s)/Program(s)/Service Area(s)