

Cuyamaca College

Title III Faculty Stipend Abstract

A primary challenge facing Cuyamaca College concerns the low success rates of young, first-year students in comparison with those of other students. The overall impact of this problem is institution-wide and on many levels. These young, first-time students drop out of Cuyamaca College at a higher rate; sixty percent of these students do not come back to the College for their second year. These students are also less likely to progress from basic skills to collegiate-level courses, and they have lower GPAs and higher probation rates.

Cuyamaca College is also positioning itself to address other challenges to student success. Currently, over one-third of new students do not go through the assessment process. There is also minimal use of the newly-established early alert system by the faculty. The rate of degrees, certificates, and transfers has not increased proportionate to Cuyamaca's growth in student enrollment. Exacerbating these problems, the College does not yet have a student tracking system, so counselors and instructors cannot effectively monitor the progress of students as they attempt to navigate through their crucial first year. Lastly, although student application data are available to help identify students with particular needs, this information is not effectively used to notify students of relevant campus resources available to them.

An additional weakness is that staff development programs are not accessible to all faculty. Part-time faculty (who teach over half of all classes at the College) are at a serious disadvantage. While there is a core group of dedicated faculty who have made strides integrating technology into their classes, resources have dwindled over the years and staff development programs are no longer cutting edge in the area of technology.

Furthermore, a lack of facilities and resources has significantly inhibited the growth and expansion of support services and curriculum at Cuyamaca College. Counselors and other support services have been unable to keep up with the increase in student enrollment and demand for services. Online options for certain services are still not available. While student enrollment continues its upward trend, the curriculum is not fully comprehensive. Capstone classes are not offered in key areas, causing many students to leave the College to complete their undergraduate transfer program, resulting in a static transfer rate. Moreover, Counselors have been unable to keep up with the increase in student enrollment and demand for services. Many students are not aware of the most efficient manner to progress through their required courses and there may be unnecessary delays in degree and certificate attainment. This is evidenced in a static number of degrees and certificates awarded over the past five years relative to student growth.

Many of the problems and weaknesses are addressed through the Title III grant, but it is recognized that the faculty may have innovative ideas and plans for improving student success and retention. The Title III Task Force urges you to apply for a stipend in order to implement your idea.

There are three major components of the Title III grant:

- (1) **Faculty Training.** This component of the activity is on professional development that focuses on: helping faculty and staff identify and address the needs of high-risk students; familiarizing instructors with diverse learning styles; teaching faculty to integrate and utilize special software and technologies that reach and engage high-risk students; and helping faculty to maintain currency with new technologies in the classroom through ongoing technical support.
- (2) **Technology.** This component of the activity focuses on increasing the utilization of technology as a tool to enhance educational programs and services so that students persist at the College and attain their educational goals, particularly high-risk students. This will consist of on-line access to career and academic advising, financial aid and other services, increased integration of technology in academic programs and an Institutional Effectiveness System for faculty and administrators to make key decisions.
- (3) **Curriculum Development.** This component of the activity will focus on ensuring a smooth transition from one academic course level to the next, ensuring that the college curriculum is aligned and articulated with other institutions; and ensuring that the curriculum is comprehensive in key areas, i.e. where programs need capstone classes and where there is an established need, such as in the teacher preparation programs.