Proposal for a Vision 2020 Grant

Project Title      Disability Support Services Summer Workshops

Team             Jim Hasse, Anne Drake, Dennis Rodriguez, Virginia Heidemann

Abstract

Workshop presentations will focus on critical themes for incoming freshmen and transfer students, and will introduce students to the peer mentoring program run by the Disability Support Services (DSS) office. While building strong college success skills is important for any incoming student, the additional challenges facing students with a disability make establishing a strong initial foundation particularly important. Existing data also clearly indicates a strong relationship between the academic success of entering students and their engagement with the DSS office. The summer workshops will support student engagement with DSS and other University resources, as well as better prepare students to begin the fall semester.

The capturing of class content, particularly note-taking, is often difficult for the student with a disability. Traditionally, the academic accommodation was the use of a note taker. The note taker has largely been replaced, however, with a digital recorder. Whether vision, hearing, learning, or some other physical disability, having the ability to record lectures and listen to them again is a great benefit. The recorder allows the student to take notes on their own from the recording, rather than depending on someone else to do that for them. It enables the student to pay more attention to class lectures and activities rather than trying to take notes. Not only are students more fully engaged with the class, it makes them a more self-sufficient and self-directed learner. Each student attending the workshops will be provided with a digital recorder to support their academic progress.

Assessments via surveys, focus groups, and cohort tracking will be completed in an ongoing manner.

Program Goals

- Increase student awareness of college expectations
- Increase student engagement with the services provided by the office of Disabled Student Services early in the semester with follow up throughout the semester
- Encourage new students and transfer students to engage with peer mentors early in the semester with follow up throughout the semester
- Increase student engagement with campus resources and opportunities for personal and academic growth
- Increase persistence and retention for degree completion
- Increase peer mentors experience and opportunities to develop leadership skills

In Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter (2005, 2010), George Kuh and his colleagues discuss policies, practices, and conditions that are worth emulating in the creation of
supportive campus environments that incorporate impactful relationships among students, faculty and administers. These practices include the following:

- Transition programs that welcome and affirm newcomers
- Mentoring and other initiatives that help students understand and successfully navigate institutional policies and comply with procedures
- Peers who provide academic and social support in formal and informal ways
- Faculty and staff members who are perceived by students as accessible and helpful
- Campus administrators who are responsive and supportive

The goals of this transition program for IU South Bend students who are eligible for services from the Office of Disability Support Services match these best practices.

Alignment with the Blue Print for Student Attainment

Strategic Initiative 2.3: Student Support for Success. To ensure that students achieve their degree and career objectives, it is essential we provide them with purposeful pathways and proper support, beginning with their transition from high school to college and continuing throughout their college careers.

2.3.1: Develop and enhance existing programs that provide mentoring for students making the transition into higher education by pairing them with faculty, staff, more senior students, or alumni.

2.3.6: Offer targeted student support services, such as supplemental instruction or tutoring, that extend throughout the entire undergraduate experience and facilitate degree completion through increased student engagement.

2.3.10: Increase student employment both on- and off-campus in a strategic career-focused manner to help students overcome financial barriers to degree completion and to expand their awareness of available career opportunities. (See also BSA Action 2.4.2.)

Assessment

Assessment will target increased understanding of the value of engagement with DSS services and other campus resources (qualitative via surveys and focus groups), development of the peer mentor program (increased contacts, feedback via surveys and focus groups), and investigations into correlations between the workshops and interactions with peer mentors, DSS professionals, and campus resources with higher academic success and progress (quantitative data such as average GPA, persistence, retention).

The Registrar can provide grades, GPAs, and enrollment (credit hours at census and at the end of each semester) for tracking on a semester basis for the cohort of incoming freshmen and transfer students who attend the workshops.

Relevance and impact of the targeted early intervention will also be measured with qualitative methods in the form of surveys and focus groups after the fall semester ends and after the spring semester ends
to investigate the influence of early and consistent engagement with a peer mentor, with DSS office professionals, and with campus resources, and with regard to adherence to testing policies on the development of effective time management and self-regulated learning strategies.

A short survey will be administered to the students on Day 1 of each set of workshops to establish a baseline for knowledge and understanding of college expectations and resources available. The information gathered from these surveys will help inform peer mentors and DSS professionals on how to improve interactions with students throughout the semester. This information will also be compared with the results of other surveys and focus groups conducted later in the year.

Project Activities

- Peer Mentor Training for Workshop Participation. Peer Mentors receive training on their roles and responsibilities and how to engage their mentees. This training will be expanded to specifically address the summer workshops.
- Two sets of workshops, in late June and in August. Each set of workshops will consist of two days (3 hours each in the mornings) with 2 days in between for reflection and preparation for the second day’s activities
  - The Day 1 workshop will include a faculty presentation on college and classroom expectations and a syllabus review; a discussion about the peer mentoring program; and a presentation from the ACE Director on campus resources, academic support, and the importance of time management and self-regulated learning.
  - The Day 2 workshop will include a quiz on the syllabus reviewed on day 1, a computer lab and technology discussion, and a question and answer session with a student panel, peer mentors, DSS professionals, the ACE Director, and Professor Rodriguez.
- Individual peer mentor weekly meetings with each student in their assigned group to encourage the development of college success skills. Each peer mentor will be assigned a group of students to individually meet with on a bi-weekly basis. For training, service, and reporting each peer mentor will be awarded a scholarship of $750.00

Budget for AY1

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity/Price</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships for 2 Peer Mentors per semester</td>
<td>4 @ $750.00 each</td>
<td>$3,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospitality at Workshops*</td>
<td>4 days @ $150.00 each</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital recorders for workshop participants</td>
<td>35 @ $40.00 each</td>
<td>$1,400.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures for AY1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$5,000.00</strong></td>
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Budget for AY2
Scholarships for Peer Mentors 4 @ $750.00 each $3,000.00
Hospitality at Workshops 4 days @ $ 150.00 each $ 600.00
Digital recorders for workshop participants 35 @ $40.00 each $1,400.00

Total Expenditures for AY2 $5,000.00

Project Budget Fiscal Sustainability

This project has the potential to be fiscally sustainable in the future with increased university support. Funds for the scholarships would need to be directed by university scholarship dollar initiatives or converted to hourly wages. Costs for copies and workshop materials would be absorbed by DSS and the Academic Centers for Excellence (ACE).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March – April 2014</td>
<td>Revise peer mentor training materials and contracts</td>
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<td>March – April 2014</td>
<td>Develop and finalize workshop materials and agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>April - May 2014</td>
<td>Purchase digital recorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>March – August 2014</td>
<td>Recruit students for workshop series</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>Training of Peer mentors</td>
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<tr>
<td>June and August 2014</td>
<td>Workshops and baseline knowledge/understanding assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>September – December 2014</td>
<td>Peer Mentor regular meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2014</td>
<td>Request made to Financial Aid and Scholarships for application to Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>Collection and compilation of grades, GPAs, and enrollment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February-March 2015</td>
<td>Surveys and Focus Groups scheduled and conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-June 2015</td>
<td>Surveys and Focus Groups scheduled and conducted</td>
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Team Contact Information

Jim Hasse  
hassej@iusb.edu  
AI 113  574-520-4832  
Director, Office of Disability Support Services
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Drake</td>
<td><a href="mailto:anmdrake@iusb.edu">anmdrake@iusb.edu</a></td>
<td>AI 112</td>
<td>574 520-4256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabilities Specialist, Office of Disability Support Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Heidemann</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vmheidem@iusb.edu">vmheidem@iusb.edu</a></td>
<td>AI 117C</td>
<td>574-520-4823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, Academic Centers for Excellence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Rodriguez</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pdrodrig@iusb.edu">pdrodrig@iusb.edu</a></td>
<td>DW 2131</td>
<td>547-520-4396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Routing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen White</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kwhite@iusb.edu">kwhite@iusb.edu</a></td>
<td>AI104</td>
<td>574-520-4477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Dunn</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elizdunn@iusb.edu">elizdunn@iusb.edu</a></td>
<td>DW 3300C</td>
<td>574-520-4322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences</td>
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INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND
Internal Proposal Route Sheet
Office of Research Administration
(574) 520-4181 | FAX (574) 520-5549 | sbres@iusb.edu

Erika Zynda
Office of Research Administration
A247
South Bend

Project Director: Jim Hasse
Name
Submitting Dept.
Phone #
E-mail

Office of Disability Support Services
574-520-4832
hassej@iusb.edu

Co-Investigator: Dennis Rodriguez
Name
Submitting Dept.
Phone #
pdprodrig@iusb.edu

Department of Psychology
574-520-4396

Project Title: DSS Summer Workshops

Amount of this request: $ 5,000

Type of Proposal:
☐ Faculty Research Grant
☐ Curriculum Development
☐ Seed Grant
☐ Research Project Initiation Grant
☐ Regional Research Grant
☐ Other: Summer Workshops

Brief layman's description of project:
A transition program for new and transfer students to IU South Bend who are eligible for services from the Office of Disability Support Services.

Special Needs:
☐ Human Subjects
☐ Animals
☐ Biosafety: ☐ Pathogenic agent
☐ Human tissue or fluids
☐ Recombinant DNA

APPROVALS:

Project Director:
Jim Hasse, Director, Office of Disability Support Services

Date: 3/1/14

Comments:

Karen White,
Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Services

Date: 3/9/2014

Comments:

Elizabeth Dunn,
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Date: 3/5/14

Comments: