Financial Aid Project Proposal Form
2011-12

College: Kapi‘olani Community College

Project Title: "I can afford college" Outreach Campaign

Proposer’s Name and email address: Mona Lee, VCSA


Year 1 ____x___

Budget request: $14,460

Complete the following sections:

1. 250 word description of the proposed project or service. Include data supporting the need for the project or service. (30pts)

For Fall 2011, Kapi‘olani Community College received 2034 application from freshman/first time of which 1375 enrolled for a yield rate of 68%. Of those enrolled freshman/first time students, 200 or 16.9% received aid by the first day of the semester. Based national literature, it is recognized that students find the current application process to be long and complicated, and this could discourage them from submitting the necessary documentation that is required before an award can be made. Additionally, it is common for community colleges to experience late applications for both admission and financial aid, placing enormous burden on financial aid offices to process awards quickly to meet students’ needs to pay their tuition and purchase books. During the peak months just prior to the beginning of the fall semester, students in all categories (freshman/first time, transfer, returning, continuing) at KCC experienced a four-month wait period for their aid to be awarded. For example, those applying in July will not receive awards until late October.

While our long term plan is to meet this challenge of improving the administration of financial aid services at the college through improved staffing and internal restructuring, our short-term plan for our freshman/first time students is to improve our outreach and collaborations with our local high schools to encourage more students to complete the FAFSA and to apply by the April 1 priority deadline.

Our proposal is to hire 2-3 peer mentors to reach out to our prospective students on-site at their high schools to actively educate them on the financial aid process
and to provide step-by-step assistance to them and their families with the goal of having their application files complete by April 1. Our strategy is to go where they are to communicate about financial aid in a setting where they are comfortable. Our goal is to reduce the complexity of the process and increase their confidence that “they can afford college”.

2. Refer to research that influences or serves as foundation for the project, if any. (10pts)

Research on financial aid conducted by the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center in 2010, revealed that “programs that have been effective in getting students to complete and submit financial aid applications rely on the personal relationship between the student and his or her mentor. The mentor serves as both an expert on the college enrollment process and an advisor for financial planning.”

Additionally, the college has had previous success through a project funded by ARRA funds where we trained peer mentors to serve as financial aid coaches to high school students. During that year, our application and conversion rate increased beyond the target goal of 5%. Official data will be reflected in the 2011 ARPD for student services.

3. List partners in the CC system or explain how the design lends itself to export. (10pts)

The project will serve as a pilot which when completed will have data on outputs, including but not limited to, increased no. of awards and timely award schedule.

4. Refer to the Campus and the System strategic plan section that demonstrates the relevance of this project. (10pts)

Of the eight collegewide strategies in our 2008-15 Strategic Plan, the second strategy includes a statement that the college will “diversify, improve and increase the College’s financial aid portfolio for students by communicating the availability of aid and focus on strategies that ensure that students complete the application process in order to determine their qualification for aid”. This is directly aligned with Strategic Outcomes A and B of the UH System Plan.

Specific performance measures from the college’s strategic plan include:
- Promote low income student success and graduation by increasing their Pell Grant Participation from 16.1 to 38 percent.
- Promote low income Native Hawaiian students’ success and graduation by increasing their overall financial aid participate rate from 19.4 to 38%

5. Discuss how this project will sustain itself after system funding ends. (10 points)
If this strategy is proven success, the VCSA will reallocate funds from other student services initiatives to fund this project beyond the coming year.

6. Indicate the way in which the success or failure of the project will be visible through measurable and reportable outcomes. (25pts)

The college will measure the success of early and improved outreach by Peer Mentors through the following measures:

- The # of freshman/first-time students who complete the application process by April 1 (priority deadline date) will increase by 5% over the previous year on the same date
- The # of freshman/first-time students receiving their financial aid award by 6/10/12 will increase by 5% over the previous year on the same date
- The # of freshman/first-time students who apply for financial aid by June 30, 2012 will increase by 5% over the previous year on the same date.
- The # of freshman/first-time students receiving their financial aid award by the first day of instruction for fall 2012 will increase by 5% over the previous year on the same date (to be measured after the end of the proposal period)
- The # of freshman/first-time students receiving financial aid award by the end of the 2011-12 award year will increase by 5% over the previous award year (to be measured after the end of the proposal period)

Additionally, the college will compare the retention rates of Native Hawaiian and all students receiving financial aid as a means of analyzing the importance of financial aid for satisfactory academic progress.

7. Describe how this project reduces time to certificate or degree for students. (15pts)

This project reduces time to certificate or degree because those students on financial aid can take more classes without having to work as many hours. Also, the college’s satisfactory academic progress policy for financial aid recipients is more rigorous than the regular probation/suspension/dismissal policy meaning that financial aid recipients receive more academic monitoring than the general student population.

Peer mentors can also assist with monitoring students for making satisfactory academic progress as part of this project.

8. Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Pay Rate</th>
<th>Total cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid peer mentors</td>
<td>2-3 for a total of 40 hours per week x 36 weeks</td>
<td>$9.00/hour</td>
<td>$12,960</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supplies | To cover 1375 new freshman/first time students (postcards, handouts, folders, materials) | $1500

Total | | $14,460

The campus is committed to sustaining the project in year 4 if evidence of its success is warranted and funding is available.

Signed:

_________________________________________________  ________________
Chancellor                      Date

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Signed:

_________________________________________________  ________________
Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs                      Date

Criteria

• Projects receiving between 80-100 points will be supported for funds.*
• Projects receiving 60-79 points will have an opportunity to revise and resubmit.
• Projects receiving below 60 points will not be supported for funds.

*final approval of projects made by VP Morton

9/7/2011