July 1, 2014

To: Barbara Belle, University of Hawai‘i Community Colleges

From: John Morton, Vice President for Community Colleges

Subject: Academic Year 2014-2015 Part Time Student Innovation Projects

The UHCC System is pleased to support the project, “Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Course Challenge and Student Information Sessions” in the amount of $8,500.00. The project focuses on developing a stronger network of support to meet the needs of part-time students by reducing their time-to-degree through prior learning assessment. The reference number for your project is “TO BE ASSIGNED”.

The project funding is subject to the following requirements:
1. Implementation will occur in Academic Year 2014-2015.
2. All funds must be expended, not just encumbered, by June 30, 2015.
3. The project final report (in the form attached) must be submitted in electronic form to Gayle Ishii (gayle@hawaii.edu) with a copy to Suzette Robinson (suzette@hawaii.edu) and to Cory Ando (cando@hawaii.edu) not later than September 30, 2015.

The final report should outline:
2. Results on the measurable outcomes compared to baseline data identified in your application.
3. Data aggregated by those students who were part time versus full time.

Tuition and Fee Special funds will be transferred to your campus for this project after July 1, 2014. Any adjustments to the budget submitted in your proposal must first be approved by Cory Ando and Suzette Robinson. The project proposal and reports will be published on the UHCC website.

Thank you for your work in developing innovations to increase student success amongst students enrolled at the part time level. We look forward to working with you as the project unfolds.

cc: Peter Quigley, AVPAA
Suzette Robinson, Director for Academic Programs
Gayle Ishii, Academic Support
Lisa Tsuchako, Budget Specialist
Cory Ando, Part Time Initiative Committee Chair

Att: Final Report template
Project Title: Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Course Challenge and Student Information Sessions

Date: May 15, 2014

Budget Request: $6,500

College: UHCC System Office

Proposer's Name: Barbara Belle

Proposer's Email Address: bbelle@hawaii.edu

I have submitted a proposal to have this project funded to the following Advisory Board(s):

- UHCC Developmental Education Innovations
- UHCC Perkins
- Achieving the Dream
- UHCC Financial Aid Innovations
- UHCC Developmental Education Innovations
- Other: Prior Learning Assessment

PART 1 PROPOSAL

1. Project Summary

Part-Time students are often mature adults with several years of work experience and they may also hold credentials for various on-the-job training programs. However, these adults also struggle to balance their responsibilities related to family and/or employment. Many of them cannot attend classes full-time because of major financial constraints. UHCC has limited evening and weekend classes and so many of these part-time adults simply don’t attend college because of cost and also because the time to completion is daunting.

One way to avoid repetition of learning that has occurred outside the classroom is to assess the knowledge gained outside the classroom via Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). With help from faculty and counselors, PLA gives our students a methodology of determining what he/she has learned from his/her life experiences, work practices, and matching the knowledge acquired to college-level credit.

There are four main methods of evaluating prior learning: 1) Credit by Exam, 2) National Standardized Equivalency Exams, 3) Non-collegiate sponsored education, and 4) Portfolio-based Assessment.

This Fall project will be a continuation of the Spring 2014 project. Like the earlier project, this proposal has two main components:

- Part I will recruit faculty to create a Course Challenge option. The list of courses will give campuses a pro-active approach to identifying academic areas aligned for Prior Learning Assessment.†
- Part II will recruit students with prior learning potential and provide information about all methods of PLA while creating baseline student data.

Actions to be taken and resources needed

Part I – Recruit Division/Department Chairs and faculty who will create a new hybrid model called the Course Challenge. The Course Challenge option will expand the credit by exam option to include: comprehensive written test, performance test, special projects and/or oral interviews. A $200 stipend will be paid to the 20 faculty members who submit their competency based assessments. Another goal of this project will be to gather data about the amount of time and effort required by the faculty to create the rubrics as well as doing the competency based assessments.

Part II – Recruit students with prior learning potential. An initial information session will be offered at all seven campuses. The PLA Coordinator will work with a campus representative to hold a PLA information sessions during the Fall 2014

† Perkins funds have been allocated for training of faculty in Portfolio-based Assessments.
semester to explain various options and to recruit students for any forms of PLA. During these visits the PLA coordinator will also work with campus faculty/counselors to act as local mentors/coach for each of the students.

Prior year’s outcomes for continuation projects

Part I – During spring 2014 semester, eighteen (18) faculty agreed to create a Course Challenge within the parameters of one semester. At the time of submission of this proposal (May 15, 2014) eight (8) were completed. The faculty were given a deadline of submission of their projects of May 24, 2014 to intentionally occur one week after the end of the semester.

Part II - Because the training of faculty members did not occur until mid-March 2014, most campuses were not comfortable and not ready to begin recruiting PLA students within the same semester. No funds were expended for travel or promotion of the student sessions. The new plans are to promote the new program at the same time we promote student information session. These have been more appropriately moved to the fall semester. The PLA Coordinator will continue to work with a campus representative to hold a PLA information sessions to explain various options and to recruit students for any forms of PLA. During these campus visits the PLA coordinator will also work with faculty/counselors at the participating campuses to act as local mentors/coach for each of the students.

Data supporting need for project

More than 5 years ago, Articulation agreements were established for many academic areas that identified the need for award of credit through Credit-By-Examination or Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). The agreements suggested procedures that have not been successful. The agreements states: “each campus will establish procedures where an applicant may take instructor developed exam.”

UHCC has created PLA policies and procedures during 2011, as well as defining options in the articulation agreements as long ago as 2008. So far, those statements are not much more than words on paper. Using a system approach takes significantly more time, instead of selected campuses undertaking the project alone. The exact cost of student assessment fees have not yet been established and need Board of Regents approval before actually being assessed to students. This project will provide funds for faculty actions until those fees are approved.

Although a small number of brochures have been mailed to selected groups, the current PLA strategy has been to proceed cautiously to inform faculty before the students come to their offices asking for the faculty support. The funds from this project can help to more aggressively promote the program at the same time campuses move from policy development to actually implementing some assessment models. Unfortunately, full implementation of the program procedures will take more than one semester.

Explanation of how project reduces time to certificate or degree

The UHCC PLA program has helped faculty to recognize that measuring competencies instead of seat time will include learning outside the classroom, as well as recognizing that learning at other campuses should easily transfer with the UH system.

When students are awarded credits for learning that has occurred outside of the classroom, they reduce the time and cost to complete their degree. According to Complete College America’s article “Reduce Time and Accelerate Success” Student success at any and all state institutions should be honored — and counted. Nearly a third of students at four-year colleges will change schools; 60 percent of those at community colleges will do the same ... policies must ensure they can carry their credits with them so valuable effort and time are not lost — and precious financial resources and need-based aid are not squandered...

2 http://www.hawaii.edu/offices/acad/aa/articulation/articulation.html

2. **Effectiveness Indicators/outcomes and Benchmarks**

The purpose of this project is to increase the number of part-time students earning college credit; not necessarily to convert part-time students to become full time. However, since PLA awards credit for learning as measured by competencies instead of seat time, students progress in their degree programs in a more timely manner; because they are not forced to repeat courses and spend time on content they already know.

A goal of this project is to increase the enrollment in the 200 and 300 level courses through participation in PLA. The project hopes to accomplish the following:

**Proposed Outcomes:**

- **Part I** - Twenty (20) new competency based assessments will be created that align to the course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and submitted to the system office during Fall 2015. These rubrics must be written so that another faculty expert (possibly from another campus) will be able to use their professional judgment in evaluating the level of the student's knowledge in one particular course. These Course Challenges will be secured and distributed by the system office. The PLA Steering Committee will be asked to promote these assessments to allow maximum transferability of credit within the UH system. In accordance with the faculty contract, these documents are considered works for hire. The original author will be credited but other faculty can adapt as needed to match their own SLOs. The content areas for which these assessments are created will provide the "menu" of academic areas and specific courses that are eligible for PLA.

- **Part II** – Student information sessions will be offered (one evening and one Saturday — specific dates to be determined) at any participating campuses who wish to recruit new part-time students. Not all campuses are at the same stage of development for PLA. Information sessions will be offered to all CC campuses. The project will be effective if:
  - at least three campuses hold information sessions;
  - at least 60 students (system wide) attend the information sessions; and
  - at least 10% of the students who attend will apply for prior learning credits.

3. **Background Research**

![Figure 1. Degree Completion by PLA Credit-earning for All Students](image)

CAEL conducted a study on Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and adult student outcomes. The study examined data on 62,475 adult students at 48 colleges and universities across the country. CAEL found that graduation rates are two and a half times higher for students with PLA credit. PLA students also had higher persistence rates and a faster time to degree completion.

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4. 2009-2016 Agreement between the University of Hawai‘i Professional Assembly and the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai‘i.

5. [http://www.cael.org/pdfs/PLA_Executive-Summary.pdf](http://www.cael.org/pdfs/PLA_Executive-Summary.pdf)
PLA and Graduation Rates

PLA students in this study had much higher degree-earning rates than non-PLA students. More than half (56%) of PLA students earned a postsecondary degree within seven years, while only 21% percent of non-PLA students did so. In terms of the specific degrees earned:

- 43% of PLA students earned a bachelor's degree, compared to only 15 percent of non-PLA students.
- 13% of PLA students earned an associate's degree, compared to 6 percent of non-PLA students.

4. Relationship to Campus & UHCC Strategic Plans

GOAL A: Promote Learning & Teaching for Student Success (UHCC System Strategic Plan 2002-2010)

#2. Hawaii’s Educational Capital – Crucial to the success of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program is the early identification of potential candidates before they begin their academic career paths. Just as identifying remedial students is key to getting them on track for success, identifying and acknowledging the accomplishments of well-prepared students is also important to those students and will improve their success.

PLA will benefit part-time students by using the innovative trends toward competency based assessment vs. time spent in class. National data shows, these individuals often matriculate to the senior level institutions and graduate sooner than traditional students. There are external benefits from recognizing learning outside the classroom. An example is goodwill created by affirming the professional training done by community partners. After these students are further educated and persist toward graduation (from both associate and bachelor’s programs); they will significantly contribute to the intellectual capital of the entire community.

5. Scalability

The stipends offered will help both faculty and counselors work together to identify the part-time students with prior knowledge as early as possible to save time in mapping their academic plan. This data will provide each campus with an estimate of resources needed to plan for adaptability and/or applicability of the course challenge model of assessment.

The general information sessions can become more focused as awareness increases. Future sessions could be conducted in a workshop style to assist students in the Focused Portfolio Development process.

6. Sustainability (1) after UHCC funding ends

In the future, student will be charged an assessment fee for the Portfolio Assessment (in lieu of tuition) to cover the cost of the stipends to faculty for each new portfolio assessed.
Project Title: Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Course Challenge and Student Information Sessions

Date: __May 15, 2014__________

College: ___UHCC System Office_________ Proposer’s Name: ___Barbara Belle__________

Budget Request: $8,500

Certification by Proposer

I certify that I have consulted with and submitted this proposal in a timely manner to the appropriate (A) institutional research office, (B) business office, and (C) human resources office for review of all assessment, budget, and resource commitments. Outcomes have been reviewed and are appropriate for the proposal. I understand I will have primary responsibility for monitoring any funds awarded and agree to maintain accurate and current records of expenditures consistent with the attached budget.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: 5/15/14, 2014

Name: ___Barbara Belle________________

Title: ___Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator, Office of Vice President for Community Colleges_____

Confirmation of Support by Director Academic Programs

I have reviewed and support this proposal.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: 5/15/14, 2014

Name: ___Suzette Robinson_____________

Title: ___Director, Academic Programs, Office of Vice President for Community Colleges_____

Confirmation of Approval by Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

The OVPCC approves the proposal and is committed to advance the amounts, if any, described in the proposal as being funded by the campus and is committed to sustaining the project if evidence of its success is warranted and funding is available.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: 5/15, 2014

Name: ___Peter Quigley_______________

Title: ___Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Office of Vice President for Community Colleges_____

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### PART 2 BUDGET SUMMARY

#### Spring 2014 UHCC Part Time Student Project Proposal Form

**Deadline for Proposal Submission:** May 15, 2014

**Name of Project:** Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Course Challenge and Student Information Sessions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
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<td>FACULTY EXPENSES</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>STIPENDS paid to faculty who create competency based assessments</td>
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<td>$200 per course (up to 20 courses)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL FACULTY STIPENDS</strong></td>
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<td>TRAVEL EXPENSES</td>
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<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>AIRFARE - $250 per trip x 6 trips total; including 2 trips (one evening and one Saturday) each to two neighbor islands of Hawai’i and Kauai*</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL TRAVEL</strong></td>
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<td>PROMOTION OF INFORMATION SESSIONS</td>
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<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Recruitment campaign for the Information session – dates and times and place to be determined.</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL PROMOTION</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST</strong></td>
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