

## Grant Award - Detail

U.S. Department of Education Grant/Cooperative-Agreement Award

### **LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE -- DISABILITY SERVICES [ 2008 ]**

4000 EAST 30TH AVENUE  
EUGENE, OR 97405

Obligated Amount	\$340,402.00
Award Date	08/29/08
CFDA Subprogram	84.333A
CFDA Title	Demonstration Projects to Ensure Students with Disabilities Receive a Higher Education
Award Type	Discretionary
Grantee Project Director	NANCY HART
Project Director Phone	(541) 463-3010
Start Date	10/01/08
End Date	09/30/11
ED Grant Number	P333A080082
ED Program Office	OPE
Grantee Name	LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE -- DISABILITY SERVICES
Address1	4000 EAST 30TH AVENUE
City	EUGENE
State	OR
Zip Code	97405
Cong. District	04
Unit ID	209038
Sector	4
Sector Text	Public, 2-year
HBCU	No
Tribal	No
HSI	NO
Fiscal Year	2008
New Award Year	2008

Source: <http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/grantaward/start.cfm>

Note: This award is for the first year of a three year grant. The total dollar amount of the grant is more than a million dollars.

## **Project ShIFT, Lane Community College Proposal Abstract**

Project Shift, SHaping Inclusion through Foundational Transformation, will build on the excellent resources created by previously funded grants to demonstrate a model that offers sustainability in institutional change by addressing underlying systems and campus-wide conceptualizations of disability. Curricular change and faculty development activities will be implemented through a systemic analysis and retraining of the campus disability service (DS) staff. This initial emphasis on creating progressive philosophical constructs of disability within the DS office, uncovering and correcting negative messages that are transferred to faculty, and assuring skills in faculty development will provide the basis for a profound campus shift. Once DS offices have begun to incorporate social model thinking and universal design (UD) into their own operations, project activities will guide them in transferring this knowledge and skill to faculty. They will serve as leaders for faculty in the redesign of curriculum, the use of UD instructional strategies, and the infusion of disability into course content.

Project ShIFT consists of a three-part Summer Institute that will provide resources and professional development activities for two groups of higher education professionals: DS staff and faculty. In Year I, DS staff will examine the policies and practices of their offices and create an action plan to infuse a social construction of disability and UD into their operations. In Year II, the DS staff will invite one faculty member to accompany them back to the Institute and guide that faculty in creating curriculum and teaching strategies that infuse new conceptualizations of disability and UD into their classes. In Year III, emphasis will be on summarizing, documenting, and sustaining successful changes and in increasing capacity. Project participants will be supported in their activities through curriculum materials and guides, monthly technical assistance conference calls, and a Project Web site.

The ultimate objective of Project ShIFT is to improve the quality of higher education for students with disabilities, measured through:

- (1) The difference between the rate at which students with documented disabilities complete courses taught by faculty trained in project activities and the rate at which other students complete those courses, and
- (2) The percentage of faculty trained in project activities that incorporate elements of training into their classroom teaching,

Additionally, the project will create and disseminate training curriculum for DS staff to analyze and enhance their own policies and practices and guide faculty in the development of more inclusive courses, the template for a DS action plan, implementation plans for faculty, and a replication manual. Campus-wide dissemination will be through trained DS staff and faculty with the goal of increasing institutional capacity; national dissemination will be through publication, presentation, and a Project Web site.

Recognizing the importance of a strong evaluation plan, the project includes a full-time evaluator who will track long-term data on student outcomes and develop assessment measure for all project activities throughout the project duration. All objectives are presented in measurable terms.

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## **Project ShIFT, SHaping Inclusion through Foundational Transformation**

### **A: NEED FOR PROJECT**

*A1: The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.*

Despite legal protections and increasing social awareness of access, people with disabilities continue to be more likely to live in poverty and be dependent on governmental services and less likely to be employed or own a home (Baker, Mixner, & Harris, 20007). While numerous studies document the strong connection between education and employment for the general public, it is important in this context to recognize that this connection is even stronger for those with disabilities (Stodden & Dowrick, 2001). However, students with disabilities are less likely than their non-disabled peers to transition to postsecondary education, be retained at colleges and universities, transition from two- to four-year institutions, and graduate with a college degree (Burgstahler, 2006). In 2008, almost twenty years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, these statistics amaze us and underscore the importance of reforming our current systems.

Since 1999, the U.S. Department of Education has funded demonstration projects to ensure that students with disabilities receive a quality higher education. Funded projects have developed excellent resources for faculty and have impacted the national dialogue on pedagogy, yet lower retention and graduation rates for students with disabilities persist. A foundational transformation in the way disabled students are perceived and addressed on campuses is needed to maximize the work of previously funded projects and to lead to equality in retention, graduation, employment, and inclusion.

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The Disability Service (DS) office on a college campus is the entity entrusted by campus administrators to address all issues related to disability. This role is usually operationalized to mean that the DS staff has responsibility for ensuring the institution remains in legal compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, and so DS staff spends the majority of its time requesting and reviewing disability documentation, determining and implementing individual reasonable accommodations, and consulting on physical facilities. With this focus on legal compliance, DS offices typically lead their institutions to consider “what must be done” rather than “what can be done.” Indeed, unpublished research by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) (2008) shows that over 75 percent of DS staff members use a legal definition of “disability” to define their work rather than a social one. This emphasis impacts their interactions with students and faculty, affects the development of policies and procedures, and keeps the DS office, and by turn the campus, stuck in minimal compliance, without an appreciation of the underlying negative messages about disability that it sends.

Social thinking about disability is often described as a progressive alternative to “medical model thinking.” In medical thinking, the disability is seen as a deficit that is abnormal and negative, a problem of the individual’s to be “fixed” by professionals so that the person is able to approximate “normal” and use products designed for the “average person.” Social thinking removes this comparison to the “normal” and postulates that disability is a normal human difference, neither positive nor negative and that “problems” are the result of the interaction between the individual and interactions with society.

There is no degree program, certification, or licensure for postsecondary DS staff. The vast majority of individuals working in DS offices have little background that would provide them the opportunity to frame disability in a progressive way, with 40 percent coming from special education, 38 percent from student affairs, and 34 percent from general education and 33 percent from social work. (Percentages total over 100 percent due to individuals with multiple backgrounds [Harbour, 2004].) DS administrators recognize their need for additional professional development and report a need for more information about models of disability (84%) (Harbour, 2004). Without specific exposure to newer conceptualization of disability, DS staff is socialized like the rest of society to view disability as a personal tragedy and, so, operate from individual or deficit-model thinking. They translate need into deficiency, locate this perceived deficiency in the individual student and establish policies, procedures, and practices that perpetuate a deficiency model on their campuses. Most faculty, students, and administrators willingly engage in this system.

The majority of projects funded under this initiative have been built on a model that immediately focuses on enhancing teaching strategies among faculty, attempting to build campus capacity through pedagogical reform. In most of these projects, the DS office plays a significant role in developing and delivering faculty training and providing resources and supports to increase understanding of disability and access. The focus has been primarily on the implementation of universal design (UD) in teaching, the development of resources to support professional development for faculty, and the assessment of faculty knowledge in regard to inclusive pedagogy and legal mandates to serve students with disabilities (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/disabilities/awards.html>). However, with the limitation of background and training

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mentioned above, the DS staff most often grounds its training efforts in deficit thinking and minimalistic legal compliance, even when purporting to advance universal design.

Universal Design: The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation of specialized design. The project sees the application of UD as a natural flow from social thinking about disability. As having a disability is framed as “normal,” it becomes expected that designers would build more flexible products and environments that would fit a variety of naturally occurring human differences. UD concepts can be applied to all environments, including the curricular environment, or classroom pedagogy.

As growing numbers of DS offices begin to concentrate on changing their campus cultures with regard to disability and access, they are finding that “a paradigm shift must occur in the disability service office before it can occur across the campus”(Thornton, 2007). The changes that faculty are making in their courses are more likely to be sustained if the response from the disability service office is consistent with the philosophy of social conceptualizations of disability and universal design (Downs & Thornton, 2008). However, at this point, no U.S. Department of Education Demonstration Projects have grounded their work in the preparation of the DS staff to address the underlying philosophical constructs that define and conceptualize disability on the campus and in the classroom. This project will do so.

College and university faculty are experts in their academic disciplines, but few have training in effective teaching strategies. Rather, most teach as they were taught, lecturing for 50 minutes and giving in-class, timed assessments. While this is problematic for all students and

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faculty developers who make a profession of working to develop more effective postsecondary instruction, disabled students are doubly disadvantaged. Faculty are often confounded by how to serve and respond to any student who does not fit the norm, but the complication of legal ramifications and “reasonable accommodations” make disabled students even more overwhelming. A critical factor in the success of students with disabilities is the treatment they receive from faculty and the classroom climate (Beilke & Yssel, 1999).

Virtually all DS offices engage in at least some form of educational activity for faculty. However, with their focus on legal compliance, plans to implement reasonable accommodations, deficit thinking, and lack of background in faculty development, these interactions are not as successful as they could be. While most faculty are willing to provide accommodations, research has shown that they also struggle with concerns of fairness, integrity, and rigor when accommodations are in place (Bourke & Strehorn, 2000). If faculty can be guided to consider that the problem of access is in their course design rather than the student’s disability and to implement universal design strategies, their hesitation to trust that all students are receiving the same quality of education can be relieved; and they can become more comfortable in working with all their students.

An important part of students’ success is their ability to develop meaningful relationships with their faculty members (Astin, 1993). Current approaches to access for disabled students are based in legal requirements and deficit thinking and are defined by the provision of reasonable accommodations. However, students are not comfortable approaching faculty members to request accommodations (Norton, 1997) and are less likely than other students to request assistance (Fichten & Goodrick, 1998). This gap in communication and barrier to the development of positive relationships impacts the success of students with disabilities.

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*A2: The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.*

The needs of disability service staff, faculty, and students with disabilities described above are even more significant when we reflect on the following:

- Employment statistics for individuals with disabilities are profoundly impacted by higher education: increasing from 16 percent employment for those without a high school degree to 50 percent for those with four years of college. This is compared with non-disabled individuals who show 75 percent employment with no high school degree and 90 percent employment with four years of college (Stodden & Dowrick, 2001).
- While the rate of participation in postsecondary education for those with disabilities is only 50 percent of the rate for non-disabled individuals, the number of disabled students currently identifying as having disabilities in college is over 6 percent of the average institution's student population (Harbour, 2004).
- The U.S. Department of Defense (<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>) reports that as of May 14, 2008, over 14,000 troops have been wounded in action and unable to return to duty within 72 hours. Many of these individuals will be returning home to claim their veteran's benefits, including educational benefits. Additionally, many more will develop posttraumatic stress disorders that will qualify them as disabled students and present educational challenges to our systems.

Clearly college and university faculty and administrators will be called on to work with growing numbers of disabled students and those students' futures will be dramatically affected by the outcome of their college experiences. The Department of Education has funded 63 projects to impact the quality of education available to students with disabilities over the past nine years. That funding has produced excellent resources and is making a difference in the



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educational experience of many students; however, as long as disability continues to be framed on campuses as an individual deficit that requires individual course modifications / accommodations, students cannot have an equitable educational experience and faculty development materials will not be effective to the level of their potential. The leadership of DS offices, the ‘go to’ individuals on a campus for issues of disability, is needed in guiding a fundamental change that is sustainable and provides the basis for sweeping changes.

*A3: The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.*

**Overview of Project Design:** The proposed project consists of a three-part summer Institute (Institute) which will provide resources and professional development activities for two main groups of higher education professionals—Disability Service Office staff and faculty. During project start-up, project staff will develop a detailed training curriculum for each year, a marketing plan, and a project Web site. (See project timeline for the timing of specific activities for each year.) In each year of the project, one Institute will be offered, each building on the previous year’s professional development activities. The focus of the Institute in year one is to examine the policies and practices of the DS office and to integrate the values of a social construction of disability and universal design into each office. Due to space restrictions, an application process will be used to determine Institute attendees. The product of the Institute is the framework for an action plan for each DS Office which will be utilized throughout the project. After the Institute, attendees will participate in monthly technical assistance conference calls where they can discuss innovative ideas, report out on progress made, and receive assistance from other attendees and trainers with regard to their action plans. The call facilitator will rotate between the project staff (and participants if there is interest). The Institute

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participants, PI, Project Director, Trainers, and Evaluator will participate in the Technical Assistance conference calls. The Project Director will ensure that participants have all materials necessary for each call.

In year two, DS staff will invite one faculty member to accompany them back to the Institute. The DS staff participants will continue to work on their respective action plans and lead the discussion with their faculty in professional development activities, focusing on conceptualizing disability using a social model, incorporating disability into curriculum, and integrating principles of universal design in their teaching. The product of the Institute for the faculty is the framework for curriculum design that the faculty can work toward with their own curriculum. After the Institute, faculty attendees will participate in monthly technical assistance conference calls to discuss plans and progress with the incorporation of disability studies and universal design into curriculum. Administrators will also continue their technical assistance calls for support in both continuing the evolution of their own offices and interacting with their faculty's curricular enhancements.

Year three proceeds as did year two, including the same participants and with part of the Institute dedicated to summarizing and documenting the changes at each institution and disseminating the outcomes of the project. (See section G Evaluation.)

**Timeline:** Upon receipt of funding, the PI will begin filling staff positions. Within the first three months of the grant, the Project Director, Administrative Specialist, Technical Specialist positions will be advertised, and contracts will be drawn up for the three trainers and the evaluator. Other administrative tasks such as contracting for a venue for the first summer Institute, purchasing equipment, etc, will be completed. Procuring office space will be unnecessary since there is sufficient space already available at Lane Community College to

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house the new positions. After all staff have been hired, the Project Director and the PI will begin drafting the curriculum, developing an application process for DS staff participants, formulating the action plan template and creating the framework for the faculty curriculum design. The Administrative Specialist will finalize the meeting facilities and logistics for the summer Institute. The Technology Specialist will begin developing the project Web site and work with the Project Director to disseminate information via the Web site about the summer Institute (including purpose, benefits, how to apply, etc.); this information will also be promoted via national listservs and the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) that reaches over 2,500 DS professionals. The Evaluator will begin drafting the evaluation instruments at this time. Applications will be reviewed by the PI, and acceptance letters will be sent out. The PI will organize a guest presenter for the summer Institutes in Year 1 and 2. The Administrative Specialist will organize travel and lodging for the participants, staff, and presenter. These tasks will be completed in the spring of 2009. Once the curriculum has been completed, a 3-day meeting will take place where the PI and the Project Director will train the three trainers in the summer Institute curriculum and manuals. Also, as part of the training meeting, the Evaluator will present the final evaluation plan and instruments and work with the Technical Specialist to incorporate instruments into the Web site for use by the Institute participants. (See evaluation plans in Section G for a full description.)

Once the trainers have been trained and the Web site completed, the first summer Institute will commence. The week-long Institute will occur in June or July depending on the availability of meeting space. Subsequent to the Institute, monthly technical assistance conference calls will begin. There will be a few conference calls prior to the first summer Institute and approximately 10 calls in Year 2, depending on the timing of the second summer

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Institute. The Web site will be used to provide additional resources and tools to facilitate participants' development of action plans. In the fall of 2009, DS staff will notify the PI as to the faculty member who will accompany them to the second summer Institute. In the fall of 2009 the PI, Project Director, and the three trainers will have several conference calls to ensure the materials for the second summer Institute are prepared and the trainers are prepared to deliver the curriculum. Over several months, progress on DS Office action plans will be reviewed by the PI, Program Director and trainees and the curriculum will be modified to meet the needs of the attendees.

In the spring of 2010, the PI will confirm a guest presenter for the Year 2 summer Institute. The Administrative Specialist will organize travel and lodging for the participants, staff and presenter. The second summer Institute will occur in June or July. As in the previous year, subsequent to the Institute, the monthly technical assistance conference calls will begin. The Web site will be used to provide additional resources and tools to assist faculty in conceptualizing disability using a social model, incorporating disability into curriculum, and integrating principles of universal design in their teaching. Formal dissemination activities begin in the fall of 2010. A replication guide will be developed over the course of the project. Dissemination activities will begin and include publications and presentations, specifically through AHEAD, the Postsecondary Education Programs Network (PEPNet), the growing Project Web site, and incorporation in the third summer Institute. Finally, in the summer of 2011, the final summer Institute will be held.