

# **Initiative Report for Counseling 2009-10**

## **Student Service Associate (SSA) Program**

### **Summary:**

This initiative financially piece-meals a team of Student Service Associates together, that will provide peer student services as a team. This initiative would fund approximately five positions working fifteen hours/week.

### **Description**

As peer mentors, SSAs are hired by the Counseling Department and housed in the Career & Employment Services (CES) unit. Career & Technical Education students, which make up approximately 50% of Lanes student population, are served by SSAs.

Specifically, SSAs assist CTE students with career center resources; researching jobs, assisting in resume writing, and career exploration. These services support preparation for employment. They:

- Provide mentorship and contribute to the career development of students in our CTE programs.
- Are familiar with Oregon Career Information Systems, Vocational Biographies, and WinWay Resume software.
- Assist Career Center Advisors with special career-related projects such as presentations and CES group tours.
- Assist CES professional staff with the annual Career Fair, assisting employers in linking with graduates from Lanes CTE programs.

The SSA program is an existing program that survives each year on non-recurring funding. SSAs connect with students at Student Orientation and Registration (SOAR), Lane Preview Night, campus tours, and New Student Information Sessions, to name a few events. SSAs empower students through peer-to-peer assistance, modeling how to be successful in college. An SSA is on the same page as the new student, allowing the SSA to support the new student in a way that a non-student can't easily recreate. SSAs are a group of highly trained peer assistants to help new, prospective, and current students, access resources, navigate complex procedures, and learn how to be successful in college. SSAs play a valuable and critical role in providing CES/Counseling department services to students.

### **Questions and Answers**

**How is the initiative linked to the Unit Plans most recently submitted?**

- 1. How does it continue the achievement of those goals?**
- 2. If this is a continuation of an initiative started last year, make sure that relationship is clear.**

**How is this initiative linked to the efficiencies and productivities plans you had last year?**

- 1. How does it continue the achievement of these plans?**
- 2. If this is a continuation of an efficiency or productivity plan started last year, make sure that relationship is clear.**

Retention and student success are strong components of all six of the units within the Counseling Departments Unit Plans. The SSA program is based on student success and retention, and would compliment all six of the Counseling departments areas. The other link would be the link to supporting student diversity in the Counseling Department.

The SSA program is a feasible and efficient use of college resources. A group of highly trained peer assistants to help new, prospective, and current students, access resources, navigate complex procedures, and learn how to be successful in college, makes a positive impact on student retention. In 2006-2007, each SSA accounted for approximately 900 in-person contacts in CES, according to check-in system records, which we know are under-reported. Those figures are just for CES; they don't include the hundreds of other students assisted by SSAs at other on- and off-campus events.

Student Service Associates (SSAs) are peer mentors and information specialists who assist students, including CTE students, with support services designed to help students succeed academically. They:

- Provide scholarship guidance for retention.
- Are knowledgeable of Lane Community College policies and procedures.
- Are familiar with FAFSA, ExpressLane, HigherOne and other enrollment programs.
- Assist the Counseling Department with special projects as needed, such as Student Orientation and Registration (SOAR), New Student Information Sessions, presentations and group tours.
- Assist Counseling Department with special retention focused projects such as Lanes Preview Night for high school recruitment, Lanes annual Scholarship Workshops.
- Assist with pilot retention projects as class mentors.
- Assist students navigating ExpressLane registration, FAFSA, entrance advising, Direct Loan entrance advising, and in enrollment and registration processes.

It is a continuing program, but new initiative. Student employees do peer work. Peers helping peers help students succeed and be retained. With additional, stable, on-going funding for Student Service Associates, CES/Counseling will be able to hire more peer assistants who make a significant positive impact on student success. Not having to rely

solely on scarce Federal Work-Study applicants will allow CES/Counseling to increase the likelihood of hiring students from diverse backgrounds, as our goal is to hire a team who represents the diverse student population at Lane. Ideally, each year, at least one SSA would be bilingual in Spanish. Increasing funding would both increase the number of positions offered each year and increase the number of hours each SSA could work, which meets the departments need for peer staffing and the SSAs needs for adequate part-time employment. More SSAs with more hours would help meet the peer service demand in the Counseling Department, and Enrollment and Student Financial Services, especially during peak times.

**Describe the resources needed:**

Perkins funds are being requested. This initiative requests \$22,680 to help fund the SSA program. This funds approximately 5 positions paid at student worker wage \$8.40 per hour, 15 hours per week for 36 weeks = \$22,680.

**What specific measurable program outcomes do you expect to achieve with this initiative? The outcomes should be specific enough to be measurable. Also, outline the method that will be used to determine the results.**

The services are promoted and accessible to ALL Lane students. The number of student contacts made by SSAs can be counted in SARS-GRID, our student check-in system. Unduplicated participants can also be counted. In addition, the number of students and prospective students served in workshops and outreach presentations promoting student success can be counted. We will also use a student satisfaction survey for the first time this year that will ask the respondent if they are a CTE student as well as surveying them for satisfactory services provided by SSAs.

This initiative supports Perkins goals II and VII. With increased funding, we will be able to hire a more diverse group of SSAs who fully represent Lanes special populations. Because of the SSAs role in providing peer-to-peer assistance, they will be able to reach out to and work more effectively with special student populations, helping students overcome barriers, access appropriate resources, and navigate college policies and procedures. This, in turn, increases retention for professional technical students. In addition, because SSAs work primarily in CES, increasing funding will allow the center to provide more comprehensive, in-depth, and individualized career development services to CTE students.

**Department Priority:**

4

**Unit Resources:**

Office space, computer, and supplies will be devoted by the Counseling department for this position. No other resources would be needed, and faculty workload would not be

impacted, other than to relieve the growing workload pressure from the present Counselor/Advisor staff, supplementing workload with peer support.

### **Funding Request: Carl Perkins**

**Is this a Career & Technical Education program approved by the state and offered through Lane for credit?**

No

**If not a Career & Technical Education program, does your request provide considerable support for students enrolled in these programs?**

Yes

**Do you have an advisory committee that meets 2-3 times per year?**

Yes

**If request is for personnel, will funds be used to replace an existing position?**

No this does not replace an existing position.

**How will funding this initiative increase or sustain the academic achievement and technical skills attainment (GPA of 2.0 or better) of Career and Technical Education students?**

This is not a position that directly impacts a students GPA.

**How will funding this initiative increase or sustain the number of CTE students that graduate or receive a one year certificate from Lane and help prepare the students for employment?**

Students who receive the accurate and comprehensive information SSAs provide, dramatically increase their chances of college success.

Due to inadequate funding last year, a proposal to link SSAs with the Office of High School and Community Relations did not occur. We would like to develop this relationship in 09-10 given the resources. In this relationship, SSAs would assist with events such as high school visits, campus tours to prospective students, Lane Preview Night, the Youth Career Fair and Career Exploration Day. These outreach and recruitment efforts support Perkins goal IV. SSA involvement in the Youth Career Fair and Career Exploration Day in particular would further underscore the important role they play serving the needs of Professional/Technical students. (CES received Perkins funding for SSA positions in 04-05 and 05-06; our request has not been funded the last three years, which significantly decreased the capacity of student peer mentoring).

**EQUIPMENT \$**

0

**COMPUTER HARDWARE \$**

0

**COMPUTER SOFTWARE \$**

0

**MATERIALS & SUPPLIES \$**

0

**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT (Hours)**

0

**PART-TIME FACULTY \$**

0

**TIMESHEET STAFF \$**

22680.00

**TRAVEL \$**

0

**Can this initiative be partially funded?**

Yes

**EQUIPMENT \$**

**(E) Explanation of effect of partial funding:**

**COMPUTER HARDWARE \$**

**(CH) Explanation of effect of partial funding:**

**COMPUTER SOFTWARE \$**

**(CS) Explanation of effect of partial funding:**

**MATERIALS & SUPPLIES \$**

**(MS) Explanation of effect of partial funding:**

**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT (HOURS)**

**(CD) Explanation of effect of partial funding:**

**PART-TIME FACULTY \$**

**(PF) Explanation of effect of partial funding:**

**TIMESHEET STAFF \$**

13608.00

**(TS) Explanation of effect of partial funding:**

This initiative could be partially funded, however, the result would be risking the loss of requested student employees, resulting in a loss of student achievement and career services. The Counseling department is willing to supplement the SSA budget by pursuing Learn & Earn funding, and Federal Work-Study funded students. Counseling also commits a Career Advisor and a Counselor to coordinate and manage the program.

**TRAVEL \$**

**(T) Explanation of effect of partial funding:**

**Funding Request: Curriculum Development**

**Funding Request: Technology Fee**