Vision 2020 Grant Application (AY2)

Project Title: WGS Peer Mentoring Program

Team:
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Abstract:
Peer mentorship is a high-impact practice that benefits both mentors and mentees, establishing a learning community and social engagement. Mentees are able to take advantage of mentors’ knowledge and familiarity with the university, as well as their guidance on time management and study strategies; mentors are able to act as role models while learning facilitation skills that will help them in their future careers.

This grant will allow us to help our students create mutually beneficial mentoring relationships, promote the development of social responsibility in our students, and further our campus mission to create “engaged citizens prepared to build strong communities.”

Project Goals from Year 1:
Our original goals were:

1. To increase retention and GPA for beginning college students by building their knowledge and skills with regard to self-efficacy, access to institutional resources, time management, and academic work.
2. To create a sense of community and a feeling of belonging among both mentors and mentees.
3. To provide students practice in networking and building relationships that will serve them in their future careers, allowing them to enter into workplace and community mentoring relationships with confidence and experience.

Project Assessment of Year 1:
When we originally proposed this project, we had intended to use the summer months for planning, organizing and developing materials. By the fall, we wanted to be ready to recruit students, match mentor and mentee pairs and conduct the initial training for our peer mentors. This timeline proved to be unrealistic.
However, we are still planning on using the following funds during the spring semester:

- Mentor/Mentee Meeting on February 1st (Pizza/Soft Drinks) $75.00
- Mentor/Mentee One-on-One Meetings (2X each semester) – Dining Cards from Sodexo ($15/meeting, 10 mentoring pairs) $300.00
- Mentor/Mentee End of Year Meeting (Pizza/Soft Drinks) $75.00
- **Total Cost** $2450.00

**Goals for year 2:**

1. Assess our initial data
   
   We would like to use the summer months to conduct a preliminary assessment of our initial data. Even though we will only have the data from the spring semester rather than the entire academic year, we are hoping to use student feedback to improve the program for next year. At this point, we are hoping that the same students will continue on in the fall and that we will be able to add a few more mentor/mentee pairs. By spring 2017, we should thus have sufficient data to assess the effects of peer mentoring on GPAs, retention, and community building.

2. Continue to work towards the goals that we outlined for the first year (increase retention and GPA for beginning college students, create community, and provide students practice in networking and building relationships that will serve them in their future careers).

3. Create promotional materials
   
   One of the major obstacles that we encountered in the fall was the fact that very few students were familiar with peer mentoring and were thus reluctant to sign up for the program. We would thus like to create informational materials that will help us promote the peer mentoring program and gain more interest.

4. Create a peer mentoring website/Facebook page
   
   In addition to print materials, we would like to design a peer mentoring page with information about the program, its goals, successes, and feedback from students.

5. Continue to offer training for peer mentors and mentees that are new to the program and meet with them throughout the academic year.

**Budget for AY2**

- Summer Salary ($2,000) + Fringe Benefits ($540) for Christina Gerken (Evaluate assessment data; create promotional materials and design a website; identify participants and revise assessments/guidelines/training protocols accordingly) $2,540
- Gift Card for Jennifer Jones, the contact person for our mentees $250
- Gift Card for Nicole Micolichek, the contact person for our mentors $250
- Mentor Training (coffee, juice, & muffins for approximately 15 people @ $7.50 each) $120
- Mentee Meeting (coffee, juice, & muffins for approximately 15 people @ $7.50 each) $120
Mentor/Mentee Meeting (Pizza/Soft Drinks – 2x per year) $200
Mentor/Mentee One-on-One Meetings (2X each semester) – Dining Cards from Sodexo $900
(Printing & Copying $100
Gift Card Drawing for Survey/Assessment Participants $100
Total Cost $4,580

Fiscal Sustainability:

Once our peer mentoring program becomes more established, we expect that it will be sustainable with a much smaller budget. While we are still in the process of recruiting students and training mentors, free food and gift cards are used as a small compensation for students’ time and their commitment to the program. In later years, we expect that at least some students will continue on and won’t need additional training. Even more importantly, spreading the word about the benefits peer mentoring should provide an incentive for other students to join the program. Furthermore, updating the website and our handouts and materials will be far less time-consuming than developing them in the first place.

Timeline:

Year 1: 2015/16
- Recruit appropriate mentors and mentees
- Create explicit mentor/mentee guidelines and agreements based upon evaluation of mentorship best practices data
- Conduct peer mentor training to establish guidelines and requirements
- Have mentee meeting to establish guidelines and requirements/finalize commitments/address any questions or concerns
- Formally pair up mentors/mentees
- Do pre-assessment and post-assessment of student goals and concerns
- Contact mentor/mentee pairs to check in and establish functionality throughout the semester

Year 2: 2016/17
- Recruit and formally pair up mentors and mentees
- Revise mentor/mentee guidelines and agreements based on feedback from previous year
- Schedule meetings and training sessions for mentors and mentees
- Conduct a pre-assessment and post-assessment of student goals and concerns
- Develop promotional materials + design a website
- Assess our initial data

Year 2: 2016/17
- Continue with activities from year 2