



Request for 2020-21 Funding Services and Activities Fee Committee

BUDGET PROPOSAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Department Name: Teaching and Learning Center

Create Date: 02/05/2021

Due Date: 02/05/2021

Submitter Name: Cara Farnell

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Department Head Approval:

Department Head: Bonnie Becker

Requested Amount: **\$14,959**

Departmental Information

STUDENT UTILIZATION

These funds will pay the wages of the continuing and new Peer Success Mentors, who help their peers with the skills required for academic success. This program is now established and well-known, students are frequently referred to us by campus partners and professors. The First Generation Fellows Program requires all of their cohort members to meet with a mentor. The Peer Mentors provide workshops on topics like time management and goal-setting, often sought-after topics. Other universities and some high schools already provide this service, and so our students who are transferring or are already familiar with this type of help find a void when they come here to UW Tacoma.

This year, we don't need supplies and have reduced our Marketing budget, in response to how much was used last year (we learned we won't need as much in this area going forward). Instead we hope to use that money for wages of our third mentor, who was covered last year by funding that runs out this year. With this additional funding from the Division of Academic Affairs, we were able to make their hourly rate equal to other comparable positions on campus (at the time they were hired, writing and quantitative consultants made 16.32/hr); we ask again that this wage rate be used. The mentors are hired and trained for their highly specialized skills, and the job is demanding in a way that the Teaching and Learning Center considers them equal.

CORE VALUES/MISSION ALIGNMENT

The impact goals aligning with our program are most definitely 'students' and 'equity.' A program like this should increase the access and persistence of students with whom our mentors work by providing them strategies, support, and resources both necessary and helpful to their academic, and often social, connectedness and success. A program like this should reduce disparities in achievement by leveling the playing field by giving all students access to strategies that encourage and equate to academic success. We aim to 'Improve the satisfaction of traditionally underrepresented students, especially racial/ ethnic minority students, with the UW Tacoma experience' through our partnership with First Gen Student Initiatives. With Yanira Pacheco co-developing the program, there is a sizeable and consistent focus on making the program approachable and useful for underrepresented populations.

When students come to UW Tacoma underprepared, they enter classes where faculty are prepared to teach about the content of the class; professors do not teach them 'how to be a college student.' We know this leaves many students feeling left behind and overwhelmed. The peers in this program bridge that gap, giving students tips and skills on 'how to college' as well as being a person who cares to guide them in this need. The program normalizes 'the struggle' and that it is okay to have to work hard; we are here to support that opportunity for growth rather than leave them to sink or swim. We partner with the completion coaches who help students persist toward graduation by giving students the often missing support of academic skills like time management, study strategies, test-taking strategies, goal-setting, etc.

Other alignments with the Strategic Plan: As our mentors complete a unit on campus resources, we'll also help the campus meet the success indicator of increasing student awareness of UW Tacoma resources. We also contribute to the goal of 'growth' since our services should increase retention of students toward a timely graduation.

SAF-FUNDED PROGRAM OR SERVICES GOALS AND OUTCOMES

We would like to increase the usage of our mentors. We did see an increase from Spring to Fall, of about 10%. We serve about 25 students, a few of whom make multiple appointments, meeting with their mentor 2-5 times through the quarter. Starting during COVID-19 and remote learning has made it hard to really be 'seen' as easily as if we were all on campus, but here are the things we've done to try and overcome this:

- 1. Use of SAFC funding creatively: We used our SAFC funding to work with Media Services to create a video to make more transparent what an appointment looked like, in case that was a barrier to entry (https://youtu.be/O9BjEnYPR_g). We realized some students might be unsure of what to expect or why to use the service and the video makes this more clear. We shared that video with the Center for Student Involvement to share at Welcome Days as well as really any other campus partner we interacted with!**
- 2. Continued and widened our normal activity: We worked closely with the First Gen Fellows office to make sure our services were available for their cohort, we collaborated with SAB to have the peer mentors be co-hosts of their Study Lounge event, we offered**

workshops in Time Management, and peer mentors attended a Pack Advisor event about setting up your workspace since that is something the mentors help their mentees address (so our presence there was both to learn and to say 'for more help in this area, meet with a peer success mentor').

3. **Using campus resources:** We invited CAPS, DRS, and student conduct representatives to our weekly team meeting to expand awareness with those campus partners.
4. **Campus partner outreach:** Cara Farnell met with Levon to reach the RISE scholars and the mentors were invited to one of their meetings, presented to the Access in STEM cohort, did a presentation for 2 of the TUNIV 250 classes, met with the Student Success completion coaches to ask them to refer students our way, met with the coordinator of the Pack advisors to expand that partnership.
5. **Digital/Online Presence:** We created a DawgDen page and events and increased our Instagram activity and engagement by assigning one of the mentors this as an extra responsibility (she increased our followers from about 100 to 191 followers). We created weekly themes that were relevant to each week in the quarter ('Get organized' at the beginning, 'Study Strategies' around mid-terms, for example) to raise awareness for the topics we cover and coordinated those with our Instagram activity for cohesion and reinforcement.

If there are other ideas the SAF committee has for us, we'd be happy to learn about them! Seeing all these proposals means you are privy to some of the best ideas on campus for increasing engagement with various services.

STUDENT UTILIZATION (COMPARISON OVER PAST 2 YEARS)

We serve about 25 unduplicated students, a few of whom make multiple appointments, meeting with their mentor 2-5 times through the quarter. We did see an increase from Spring to Fall, of about 10%. We have only been a program since last Winter, so we do not have more historical data to compare. Each quarter the vast majority of our mentees are the entirety of the latest cohort of the First Gen Initiatives Program, so we know the majority of our demographics reflect the first gen program:

Demographics

Gender

- 53% Female
- 47% Male

Ethnicity

- 39% Caucasian
- 20% Asian American
- 15% Hispanic/Latino
- 9% African American
- 9% Two or More Indicated
- 4% International
- 1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 1% Native American
- 2% Not Indicated
- 93% in-state residents
- 83% of students attend full time
- 56% students whose parents do not have college degrees
- 68% of students receive financial aid
- 44% of students eligible for Pell grants
- 10% of student receive veterans benefits (17% of students are military-affiliated)

Starting in Spring of 2020 meant we began during COVID-19 remote learning. As was noticed campus-wide, student engagement was at an all-time low, so we anticipate an increase in usage once we are back on campus. While 25 is not nothing, and we're proud to have helped that many students each quarter our first few quarters, we fully expect to see more students using this service going forward. We're also happy that we now have an infrastructure for serving students remotely in case students don't want to come to campus for an appointment in person.

COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK & IMPROVEMENTS

The appointment software program we use is called WOnline. It is part of the TLC system for making appointments and tracks utilization rates to get us data on how many students we reach. When the numbers in our first quarter were low, we made greater efforts in subsequent quarters to publicize the service. We implemented a self-assessment and evaluation process for the mentors that has improved their confidence and ability to help their peers. We plan to create and send a survey to program participants to get their feedback as to how the program helped them.

SERVICE BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

As this program is a collaboration with First Gen Initiatives, all members of each new First Gen Fellows cohort are required to meet with a mentor at least once. Our services benefit students by providing them personally-tailored tips, tricks, and approaches to their studies. Our appointment form asks students if they would allow their session with their mentor to be recorded. If they permit it, we are then able to view and listen to the session and see what was shared, suggested, and taken away from the appointment (this also helps the mentor be more personally reflective on what they could improve in future sessions). If we were to conduct qualitative

research on this collection of sessions, we would see the themes are that students coming to meet with a mentor are not using a time chart or a planner, they've never heard of many of the reading strategies we suggest, they haven't tried the study strategies we have for them. At the end of each session we ask them what they will take away from the appointment to try and apply on their own going forward and they are able to pick out at least one helpful new approach that should improve their retention of knowledge, engagement in content, and maybe even grades in their class. We know from returning users that we have helped in these ways, as they report to us and also their continued use of the service supports the notion that it is working.

Staff Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Student Staff ³	At the time the mentors were hired last Winter quarter, TLC writing and quantitative consultants made 16.32/hr; we ask again that this wage rate be used. The mentors are hired and trained for their highly specialized skills, and the job is demanding in a way that the Teaching and Learning Center considers them equal. E001	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$11,750
	Fringe @ 22.2%:	\$2,609
	PERSONNEL TOTAL:	\$14,359

Other Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Other Services	Marketing outreach materials S001	\$600
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:		\$600

PERSONNEL TOTAL:	\$14,359
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:	\$600
COMPLETE PROPOSAL TOTAL:	\$14,959

Supplemental Documents



BUDGET PROPOSAL SPREADSHEET

Tabs for the current proposal, along with 10 and 20% reductions, last year's request, and a worksheet are included.