



Request for 2022-23 Funding Services and Activities Fee Committee

BUDGET PROPOSAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Department Name: Teaching and Learning Center

Create Date: 01/04/2023

Due Date: 02/17/2023

Submitter Name: Cara Hale

UW Email Address: carahale@uw.edu

Phone Number: 2536925781

Department Head Approval:

Department Head: Rebecca Disrud

Requested Amount: **\$16,101**

Departmental Information

STUDENT UTILIZATION

These funds will pay the wages of the continuing Peer Success Mentors, as well as fund laptops. PSMs support their peers toward academic success. This program is established, well-known, students are referred to us by campus partners and professors. We offer workshops to the entire campus on topics like time management and goal-setting. Other universities and high schools provide this service. Our transfer students familiar with this type of help find a void when they come to UW Tacoma. We'd like to continue to support the UW Tacoma campus with 2 mentors.

We also have a need for laptops for the mentors. Mentors need a computer to access Canvas (for training and professional development) and our appointment system, as well as develop and create the study skills presentations we provide to the campus. We'd like to provide a university computer since the use of their own laptop comes with an additional liability to the University doing work on a computer that isn't the University's. Also, a laptop is needed, as opposed to the desktop computers in the TLC, because the mentors will be moving from class to class as well as hosting large study groups outside of the TLC space. They also bring these laptops with them into a mentoring session in order to share online resources like HuskiesCare and various academic organizational tools, which typically does not take place in front of a computer station.

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 academics. It also helps students feel more connected to campus, knowing there are people who care and can help connect them with resources and success skills. Our program aims to reduce disparities in achievement by leveling the playing field. This program gives 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. There is a sizable and consistent focus on making the program approachable and useful for underrepresented populations, especially in making it a requirement for First Gen Fellows to have a mentoring appointment.

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 are giving students the often missing support of academic skills like time management, study strategies, test-taking strategies, goal-setting, etc. We are a big part of the institutional team responsible for student retention and success. The skills the mentors share with their peers 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, widen our visibility on campus, and improve their ability to do their job (hence the laptop request). We saw a decrease in our use which we believe was due to having fewer mentors, limiting our ability to offer as many appointments (we had fewer mentors due to reduced SAFC funding). We had 58 appointments in 2022, the most were in Winter 2022. As mentioned, this project is a collaboration with the First Generation Initiatives program, which generates a lot of the interest in and use of the program. Also, we are just beginning a collaboration with the AAPI Thrive Project. Our program's model was noticed and successful in garnering their attention and they've approached us with an offer to use grant funding to hire 4 additional PSMs in order to ensure support for the AAPI (Asian, Alaskan, Pacific Islander) student population. Their grant funding does not have a budget for laptops for the mentors, so we are requesting that as part of this proposal. The specific goal of the PSMs hired for the Thrive Project is to serve up to 75 students per week. In serving these students, mentors will be conducting one-on-one mentoring sessions, large group study sessions, and giving classroom presentations. These activities can be streamlined and improved by having use of a laptop. The several week training itself utilizes Canvas modules, again requiring the use of a computer.

As stated earlier, the mentors are now established and well-known. One of them, Komisi Petelo, has been with us since our inception in 2020. 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 offer workshops to the entire campus on topics like time management and goal-setting, often sought-after topics.

STUDENT UTILIZATION (COMPARISON OVER PAST 2 YEARS)

In 2022 we saw 58 appointments, in 2021 55 and in 2020 77. The decrease is due to reduced funding - we started this program with 5 mentors and then the SAFC reduced our budget so we can only support 2 now. Some of these are repeat clients and so it is about 25 students who make repeat appointments from quarter to quarter, but then they graduate and a new cohort begins that cycle. We've seen 115 distinct individuals since 2020. Reflecting the student population of UW Tacoma, we see mostly juniors (52 of the 115 distinct clients), then sophomores (25), freshman (23), and seniors (11), as well as a couple of graduate students. Most majors are represented, the most popular being biomedical sciences, business administration, and communication. We have offered 2-3 workshops a quarter, attendance being anywhere from 2 to 32 students.

Our appointment system collects home language as a demographic data point and our mentees speak more than 12 different home languages. We can surmise some other demographics from our collaboration with First Gen. 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, the stats of which were as follows last year.

(the data gathering process has changed and FG does not have a breakdown to report for this year):

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)

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. This year we are adding a wider distribution of flyers to our marketing efforts which already include social media. 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 previously stated, students often learn only the content of their classes, but not the most effective ways to learn this content. Our program fills that gap. Many other schools have a program like this and so we want to be able to offer our students a service they've seen at their transfer institution or their friend's school. For example, UW Seattle's program of academic success coaches (<https://academicsupport.uw.edu/academic-success-coach/>) employs 13 mentors! As our program is a collaboration with First Gen Initiatives, all members of each new First Gen Fellows cohort are recommended to meet with a mentor at least once. Our services benefit students by providing them personally-tailored tips, tricks, and approaches to their studies. If we were to conduct qualitative research on observations 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 before tried the study strategies we have for them, and they may not know what campus resources are available (for example, free tutoring or study rooms in case they don't have a conducive space at home, or about the Pantry). 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 their grades. 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. Mentees typically leave our mentoring sessions excited to try one or two things we've suggested and seem reinvigorated about their studies. Beyond this, the mentors themselves are receiving a great professionally developing experience working in this role, and the training they receive prepares them for leadership positions and bolsters their own academic success.

Staff Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Student Staff ³	Wages for 2 Peer Success Mentors for autumn, winter and spring quarters E001	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$8,972
	Fringe @ 21.5%:	\$1,929
PERSONNEL TOTAL:		\$10,901

Other Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Equipment	4 laptops, one for each mentor S001	\$5,200
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:		\$5,200

PERSONNEL TOTAL:	\$10,901
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:	\$5,200
COMPLETE PROPOSAL TOTAL:	\$16,101

Supplemental Documents
