Proposal for WOX Grant
January 2012

Strategies for Success Workshop
For Non-Traditional Undergraduates

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Strategies for Success Workshop for Non-Traditional Undergraduates

Amount Requested: $3000

Abstract:

This proposal requests funds to develop and offer a workshop for the non-traditional, first time college student or students who have little prior college experience. The workshop will prepare the student for a successful college experience and will include reading and writing skills, study skills, time management, and technology. It has been reported that adult students represent the majority of prospective college students in our country and this population is expected to grow. Although most of the non-traditional students have prior college experience, our reports show that those who are entering college for the first time or return to college after a long absence may take a few courses then drop out. This workshop will aim to improve the retention of non-traditional students and will help the student gain the confidence and tools they need to succeed in college and meet their goal of earning a college degree at Xavier University.
Proposed Budget Amount: $3000

If approved, the amount requested will be used to develop and offer the workshop twice, once each in the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters for an estimated total of 30 students. It will initially be planned as a two day workshop. Students will not be charged for attending.

Development costs:
- Materials and travel expense for course development and consulting $200

Course Materials:
- Kolb Learning Style Inventory $375
  ($125 for packet of 10 – 3 packets)
- Xavier Planner ($7.50 ea. x 30) $225
- Misc. course materials for students $200
- Lunch for students and presenters $200

Presenters - $300/session for two sessions each:
- Writing Skills $600
- Technology $600
- Math $600

Total $3000
Narrative:

At Xavier University, the non-traditional undergraduate student is defined as 22 years or older. The decision to begin or return to college as an adult brings with it many challenges. Often students that enter college as an adult for the first time or after a long absence are unsure about their readiness and ability to succeed. They have reservations about writing papers, taking tests and balancing this new venture with their work and family life. Some didn’t attend college or complete a degree due to personal, family or financial reasons. Others may have attended college right out of high school and weren’t ready for the rigor of academic life. They now have a family and most work fulltime, yet feel something is missing, or they realize they need a degree that will give them the opportunity for professional development and growth in their career.

This proposal is for the funds to develop and offer of a workshop that new first time adult college students or those with minimal college credit would be required to take to give them a strong start to their college experience at Xavier. Many of these students have professional experience and are confident, contributing individuals in their work and personal life, but are lacking the credentials to move ahead. They have chosen Xavier University to pursue their degree because of its academic reputation and Jesuit values. The introduction of this workshop falls in line with the mission of Xavier to educate each person intellectually, morally and spiritually. It also speaks to the mission of the Women of Excellence Giving Circle in providing a path for Xavier students of all ages to become representatives of Xavier and develop as leaders in their professions and communities. This proposal meets the purpose of the WOX grant in that the non-traditional undergraduate population at Xavier is approximately 57 % female, many of whom would benefit greatly from this type of college preparation.

Students entering Xavier through the CAPS office have a wide range of experience and knowledge. Some have little or no prior college experience and others have quite a bit, only needing the minimum amount of hours to complete a degree. There are also students who return for a second bachelor’s degree or to take pre-requisite courses for a graduate program. It’s possible that all of these categories of students could be represented in one classroom, with varying degrees of knowledge. Students with extensive or more recent college experience tend to do very well in this environment. However, those entering college for the first time or after a long absence need to have a better understanding of what is expected in a college classroom and gain the skills and confidence to help them succeed. Many get frustrated and don’t continue. Ebersole and Patrick (2011) state that what the new or returning adult experiences during their first few terms will “determine eventual persistence and success”. This workshop will fill a need that currently is not being met at Xavier for the non-traditional student and will be instrumental in increasing the retention of this population of students.

Faculty teaching the non-traditional students often report that the one area that the most help is needed for adult students is with their writing skills. In a survey of recent Xavier graduates earning a Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree through the CAPS office, writing skills, time management and technology were mentioned as areas that presented a challenge.
The objectives of the proposed workshop will enable students to:

- Recognize their individual learning styles
- Apply time management techniques to their academic and personal life
- Set realistic goals for a successful college experience
- Demonstrate critical reading and writing skills
- Develop or improve basic technology skills
- Identify campus resources and understand the students responsibility
- Understand what constitutes academic honesty and be aware of Xavier’s academic policies
- Know how to locate and use Xavier’s Library resources and learning tools

The initial success of this workshop would be measured by assessing how well the students meet the objectives upon completion. Over time, the success would be measured by the retention of the students and their academic performance throughout their time at Xavier.

If this proposal is accepted, I would contact experienced faculty to assist in their specific areas, such as writing, math and technology. I have found this type of course offered by other universities such as St. Louis University and University of Indianapolis. I would plan to consult with colleagues from these schools in development of this course and to determine what format, timing and requirements would best suit the needs of the Xavier student.

The WOX Giving Circle will be recognized in the workshop description and on the syllabus for their contribution to the development of this workshop and for its support of the adult undergraduate students.