

## Student Success Initiative Year Three/Summative Report

As part of CSUSB's commitment to our students and our accountability regarding the use of their student success fees, it is important to periodically provide detailed, succinct information regarding how SSI funds were utilized to support specific outcomes-based programs, the intended goals and outcomes of those projects or programs, the measures used to assess said outcomes, the results of those measures.

Please use the following template when preparing your unit's Year Three/Summative Report for the SSI Executive Committee. Keep in mind this report should serve as both a summary of your Year Three activities, as well as a cumulative report of your project's/program's experience and results over the course of the entire three-year period since SSI funds were first allocated.

Reports will be due to **your respective vice president or dean by April 15**. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the completion of this report, please contact *Joanna Oxendine* via email at [joxendin@csusb.edu](mailto:joxendin@csusb.edu).

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Department/Unit Receiving Funding: **College of Arts and Letters**

University Division: **College of Arts and Letters**

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**SSI PROGRAM/PROJECT OVERVIEW:** (Describe the original overarching purpose, goals and outcomes of your SSI-funded project(s), program(s), etc. Bulleted lists and/or tables are encouraged.)

In general, the SSI-funded projects undertaken by the College of Arts and Letters endeavored to:

- Improve student success in courses identified as "high-risk" sites for students;
- Improve retention and graduation for CAL majors by providing advising materials for faculty;
- Equip CAL peer advising offices with technology to facilitate student advising;
- Provide supplemental instruction in software applications for CAL students.

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**SSI-FUNDED ACTIVITIES:** (Please list and describe the activities undertaken for each year of the initial SSI allocation. If no activities were undertaken or funded for a particular year, please explain why.)

### **Year 1**

1. Provide instructional support for students in “high-risk” classes: Graduate and skilled senior students were hired to provide tutoring for specific classes, with tutoring for Philosophy and Music Theory located in existing lab spaces. Twelve courses were identified:
  - Spanish 415
  - English 311, 385, & 400
  - Philosophy 200 & 300
  - Music theory sequence (five courses)
  - Communication Studies 400
2. Provide instructional support for Art students using paid Lynda.com accounts: A Lynda.com kiosk was set up in the Visual Resource Center. Students had full access to software training programs to support their training in a variety of art-related software applications.
3. Update College of Arts and Letters Advising Manual: Professor Johanna Smith completed a complete revision of the CAL advising manual to better enable sound advising by both faculty and peer advisors.
4. Development of interests-to-major-to-career advising sheets: Professor Chad Luck created program-specific advising sheets that encouraged students to consider academic interests and potential career aspirations to better support students’ selection of majors and tracks in CAL programs.
5. Purchase of supplies for peer advising offices: Computers, printers, and business cards were purchased for the three College of Arts and Letters peer advising programs, Liberal Studies’ PALS, English’s EPIC, and World Language and Literature’s FLAGS. PALS used some of this equipment to establish an electronic sign-in system that leverages built-in software specific to the Apple computing platform.

### **Year 2**

1. Provide instructional support for students in “high-risk” classes: Graduate and skilled senior students were hired to provide tutoring for specific classes, with tutoring for Philosophy and Music Theory located in existing lab spaces. Courses included:
  - Spanish 415
  - English 311 & 385
  - English 385
  - Philosophy 200 & 300
  - Music theory sequences 400
2. Provide instructional support for Art students using paid Lynda.com accounts: A Lynda.com kiosk was set up in the Visual Resource Center. Students had full access to software training programs to support their training in a variety of art-related software applications.

### Year 3

1. Provide instructional support for students in “high-risk” classes: Graduate and skilled senior students were hired to provide tutoring for classes in Philosophy’s Logic sequence through the department’s Logic Lab as well as English’s Literary Theory course. Courses addressed included:
  - English 311 & 385
  - Philosophy 200, 190, 194, 300, 312, 313, 386

(Reasons for the reduction in courses addressed are unclear, but may owe to the inconsistent promotion of the opportunity by the Assistant Dean’s office, which has seen high turnover in recent years.)

2. Provide instructional support for Art students using paid Lynda.com accounts: A Lynda.com kiosk was set up in the Visual Resource Center. Students had full access to software training programs to support their training in a variety of art-related software applications.

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**ACCOMPLISHMENTS/PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES:** (Describe the progress you have made each year toward your original SSI goals and outcomes. Indicate clearly how student success was enhanced by your program or service/s. Be sure to include the measures you employed and evidence/data you collected for each outcome where appropriate. )

Prefatory Note: At the inception of SSI-funded initiatives, there seems to have been little in the way of assessment expectations. As a result, measurement of impact has been minimal. To compound problems, the turnover in the Assistant Dean’s office and the recent retirement of the College’s analyst hampers the collection of data regarding the accomplishments of the funded projects.

### Year 1

1. Provide instructional support for students in “high-risk” classes
  - A combination of tutoring and instructional support assistance was provided for more than a dozen classes in the first year of the program.
2. Provide instructional support for Art students using paid Lynda.com accounts:
  - Visual Resource Center director Heather Lowe reports, “both faculty and students have expressed to me that it is helpful in maintaining or building graphic design and imaging skills. Faculty, across the disciplines within the arts also see it as a valuable tool for our students and themselves. One of our adjunct faculty in particular has used it to download practice files to use at home with his personal Lynda account. However, the current set-up is extremely inconvenient for students because they can only access it on a single computer in our lab during lab hours.”
  - The concerns over the inconvenience of the kiosk have been resolved by the university’s purchase of a campus site license for Lynda.com.
  - Sign-in sheets were used to document usage, but, according to Heather Lowe, may not reflect actual usage, since students may not always have signed in to use the kiosk.

3. Update College of Arts and Letters Advising Manual:
  - CAL faculty providing advising utilize the new College Advising Manual for SOAR throughout the summer sessions. In addition, the manual will be posted among faculty resources on the College of Arts and Letters' newly redesigned website to assure that all faculty can access the manual at any time.
  - The degree to which the new manual has facilitated improved retention, graduation, and time to degree can only be surmised, and no attempt was made to determine how many CAL faculty have used the new manual or the degree to which they thought it useful.
4. Development of interests-to-major-to-career advising sheets:
  - The advising sheets were developed and utilize questions that stimulate students to consider their particular interests in a discipline area. Their answers to these questions encourage identification of areas of focus within majors and the sorts of careers that may yield from education in that area.
  - As above in number 4, the degree to which these sheets have facilitated improved retention, graduation, and time to degree can only be surmised, and no attempt was made to determine how many CAL advisors have used them or the degree to which students found them useful.
5. Purchase of supplies for peer advising offices:
  - Peer advisors now utilize computers and printers to provide students with a place to print PAWS reports, so that advising sessions are more productive in identifying students' needs. Additionally, Liberal Studies' PALS program, under supervision of Katherine Thomerson and managed by Patrick Nicholson, has developed digital sign-in systems and note-taking systems that capture the content of advising sessions and archive it for future visits by advised students. The system built by Mr. Nicholson is currently being considered as a model to be implemented college-wide, as described in the College of Arts and Letters Advising proposal.

## **Year 2**

1. Provide instructional support for students in "high-risk" classes:
  - A combination of tutoring and instructional support assistance was provided for about a dozen classes in the first year of the program.
2. Provide instructional support for Art students using paid Lynda.com accounts:
  - See above discussion under Year 1

## **Year 3**

1. Provide instructional support for students in "high-risk" classes:
  - The number of classes receiving instructional support has declined steadily, likely owing to lack of awareness—a problem bred by the turn-over in the Assistant Dean's office.
  - Support was provided for two English classes, English 385 in the Winter Quarter and English 311 throughout the entire academic year.
  - SSI-funds enabled the College to open the Philosophy Department's Logic Lab for a full 35 hours per week this academic year.

2. Provide instructional support for Art students using paid Lynda.com accounts:

- See above discussion under Year 1

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**CUMULATIVE FINDINGS:** (Please discuss the overall results of your SSI-funded program(s), project(s), etc. as they pertain to your original outcomes *over the course of the past three years*. What improvements should be made?)

If I may be allowed space to assert an authorial “I”, I think this section of the report functions best if I undertake it as someone who has been outside the SSI-funded initiatives (until assuming the role of Interim Assistant Dean just this year). My experience has been one of reflecting on what might have been and what could be, but I had no role in constructing the shape of the College’s proposals.

In reviewing the College’s use of SSI funds to support students in high-risk classes, a fundamental problem seems to have been clarity about the exact nature of the kind of support that those funds would establish. In several cases, the strategy was to pay tutors to work in the Learning Center in support of multi-section classes. That strategy, fine in and of itself, may result in underuse of the tutor, since the tutor is not intimately connected to the classes or their students. In other cases, funds paid for Instructional Support Assistants who were embedded in a particular class, attending class meetings and working with students from that place of intimacy and awareness of both students and course trajectory. In yet another set of cases, funds were used to support an entire instructional support center, keeping it open more hours throughout the week.

While none of these approaches is either wrong or right, in my personal opinion (and this is only an opinion, since no assessment was mandated until after the fact), developing true ISA programs stands to benefit students most, since doing so attends to both the social and intellectual challenges that come with tutoring. Undertaking a true ISA program depends on promoting that opportunity to faculty who teach those high-risk classes. I don’t think that there was any promotion of this. If vigorous promotion was undertaken, then we need to understand why faculty may not have taken advantage of it—was it perceived as more work? Were there no students qualified for the work? Might the role of an ISA have been unclear?

Regarding the funding of the Logic Lab, increased availability allowed more students to take advantage of the Lab’s innovative approach to providing applied practice using computer software. The number of different classes from which lab-using students came is impressive and points to the breadth of students for whom the logic lab was perceived as helpful. The College should continue to receive monies to support the Logic Lab.

With respects to the advising efforts, up-to-date information is valuable, so Johanna Smith’s revision of the advising manual is an important contribution to more meaningful advising in CAL. Chad Luck’s advising sheets offer an important strategy to supporting CAL programs, given their orientation to helping students think about career pathways. Degrees in CAL—in the humanities more generally—are often perceived as “degrees to nowhere”. Prof. Luck’s approach addresses this problem by helping students to understand that the Humanities, rather than being degrees to nowhere, offer pathways to an immense range of career possibilities. We should think much further about developing similar programs in CAL to address this profound misperception.

Studies and surveys of employers consistently demonstrate that employers crave students trained in the Humanities, students trained in analytical thinking and clear communication of ideas (in written or visual media), but students continue to migrate to other colleges and into disciplines with clear, vocational career trajectories—we need only look

at our university's four impacted programs to see this. To this end, Student Success may need to be rethought in this context; student success may mean helping students to see the immense range of possibilities the humanities open to them. That would be better supported, too, if CAL undertook to establish a position for an internship and career advisor, someone to work collaboratively with the Career Development Center and the Office of Community Engagement to locate professional experiences for our students.

Finally, on the topic of the technology purchased for our peer advising programs, no program has done more to maximize the potential of its technology than Liberal Studies and their PALS. As has been noted elsewhere in this review, what Pat Nicholson has done under Katherine Thomerson's supervision is simply impressive. They have utilized built-in applications on the iOS operating system to create an efficient means of managing information and advising students well. The College would do well to scale that model up as the structure for its new advising program.

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**CHALLENGES:** (Please list any significant challenges encountered over the course of the past three years that have affected your ability to fully implement your intended activities or to reach your articulated outcomes. How did you address these challenges?)

The challenges encountered in the College of Arts and Letters relate to four particular areas of concern:

1. High turnover in the Assistant Dean's office has meant little consistency in soliciting proposals for SSI monies and or overseeing existing SSI initiatives. In the three years of SSI funded projects, three different faculty members have occupied the office, resulting in every Assistant Dean needing to learn about the fee initiative, appropriate uses of the funds, and application procedures. The lessons learned from this are that some sort of committee drawn from the CAL Dean's Office and faculty in the college may need to be formed so that (1) information about SSI-related matters can be disseminated effectively, (2) activities tied to SSI funds will exist in institutional memory, and (3) greater coordination of SSI initiatives in the college can be maintained.
2. Absence of clear expectations for the assessment of SSI monies has caused tremendous problems in the oversight and evaluation of SSI-funded projects. While this perception may owe to the problem with turn-over indicated above, there seem to be no clearly explained or systematized guidelines for assessing programs that are funded through SSI monies. That absence has led to *post hoc* attempts to assess effectiveness of programs that were not originally conceptualized in relation to assessment of their impact. After-the-fact assessment efforts confront profound challenges, since data collection procedures may never have been created to support such assessment.
3. Related to number 2 above, the lack of clear systems and structures for proposing SSI-funded projects has led to confusion regarding the university's procedures for allotting monies to support SSI-related causes. For example, the College of Arts and Letters, as part of the request for information last September, submitted a proposal to fund our ongoing tutoring programs in addition to several new initiatives, including projects to provide stronger advising, internship and career advising/placement, and assessment. No response resulted from that proposal and the college was allotted monies only based on the previous year. This challenge relates to number 2 above in that the lack of clarity regarding a formal process for SSI fund allotment has made knowing (1) priorities for SSI monies (2) proposal format and deadline expectations and (3) procedures for oversight of those funds—per number 2 above—difficult.
4. The nature of our funded programs has made assessment of them challenging. Because tutoring does not necessarily create an immediate impact, observable and measurable in a given tutoring session, evaluating the

degree of success can be difficult. One potential response to that difficulty is to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional support or tutoring programs through classroom performance, but simple course performance measures do not necessarily reveal the success (or lack thereof) of such support initiatives, since students taking advantage of those programs may generally be lower-performing to begin with. While student surveys might capture information about students' perceptions of increasing proficiency or confidence with course material, those perceptions do not ensure that tutoring or supplemental instruction has, in fact, succeeded. The result is that classroom measurement of learning must change to accommodate assessment, with pretests serving as baseline information against which posttest data can be compared. The challenge may be reframed, therefore, as training faculty to alter their own classroom practice to better gauge how students learn in relation to classroom instruction versus instructional support.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** (Please share any additional information you'd like regarding this area not covered above.)

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Lessons learned have been addressed in the preceding two sections on Cumulative Findings and Challenges.

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**SUSTAINABILITY:** (Please explain how your department is planning for the continuation of your SSI-funded programs, projects, activities, etc.)

The College of Arts and Letters should undertake a more thorough examination of how it can use SSI funds to enhance its efforts to provide better support for students as they progress from matriculation into the university to graduation and careers. Instructional support programs are our only SSI-funded program currently, and these have been underutilized and under-conceptualized by the college and its faculty. In short, we have little to sustain. While support of the Logic Lab has been a tremendous benefit to that program and students in the GE Philosophy courses, we have not engaged in true Instructional Support Assistance, which would entail hiring student assistants who participate in classes and hold supplemental instruction sessions during the week as *embedded* tutors.

Given continued funding, the College aspires to continue supporting the Logic Lab, but the development of a true ISA program would be of further benefit. Additionally, the College office has recently drafted a proposal to fund a college-wide advising system that will be submitted for SSI funding consideration.

The particular challenges listed above with the lack of clear procedures regarding SSI funding proposals causes great uncertainty as to how such proposals should be developed, to whom they should be submitted, who will evaluate their merits and who will make decisions on their viability. Until such structures are in place, knowing how to sustain our efforts remains an uncertainty.



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**2013-2014 Budget Summary:** (Please account for all expenditures and/or encumbrances of SSI funds to date this fiscal year. Be sure to include detailed information regarding the outcome and activity or line item to which each expenditure is connected.)

<b>Expenditure Description</b>	<b>Outcome(s) Supported</b>	<b>Supported Activities</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Hours/Week</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Amount</b>
ISAs	Students persist in classes and, therefore, toward degrees	Embedded ISAs, peer tutors, and Logic Lab tutors	8	54.35	\$11.00	\$9,600

**TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_\$9,600\_**