

Title III article for ESLetter

CCSF was fortunate to win its third Title III grant in the history of the College this year. The project, entitled "Delivering on the Promise of Student Success," will provide funding for five years, beginning October 1, 2002. The purpose of the project is to introduce systems and services that will increase the persistence, retention, and achievement of students, particularly those who enter unprepared. ESL will be involved in the grant in several ways, so that by the time the grant is finished, its effects will have produced visible and meaningful changes in ESL at all the campuses.

The first component of the project involves the development of a computerized learning laboratory for ESL students, which actually commenced operation at the beginning of the Fall, 2002 semester. Title III is providing funds for additional computers, for software, and for coordination of the learning laboratory during its initial year of development. (Coordination of the laboratory will gradually become a college-funded expense.) During the third year of the grant, October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005, the ESL learning laboratory is supposed to expand to other campuses that offer credit ESL classes to serve credit students at those campuses.

An interesting aspect of the project is that its focus is on credit students (by definition Title III is for credit programs and students,) but its benefits are likely to be felt by credit and noncredit students alike. How will this happen? Very simply, a computer can have a variety of programs available, so that software appropriate to noncredit students can be available on the same computer that has software appropriate to credit students. In addition, much of the software is likely to be helpful to students enrolled in both instructional modes. We are expected to spend Title III funds to meet the needs of credit students, but we are in no way expected to prevent noncredit students from benefiting as well, whenever possible.

A second component of the project is to develop instructional technologies that integrate basic skills and learning strategies, connecting instructional labs with the classroom. ESL faculty are working on developing materials for the lab and for the classroom and they will work on faculty development activities to insure that all faculty are knowledgeable about the materials and able to incorporate the technology into their classes.

A third component of the project that is likely to be of major interest to ESL faculty is a computerized assessment system, a system that would essentially replace our current system of paper and pencil placement testing. What is envisioned is a bank of computers that would allow students to take placement tests at their convenience rather than at specifically scheduled times. Here too, this component will need to be extended to all campuses in 2004-2005. Computers that are purchased for credit placement testing can also be used for noncredit placement testing.

Most Title III funds will be spent on equipment, software, and faculty development. The College will match these funds with the salaries of college personnel who work on the grant. Additional funds will be provided by the College by absorbing the costs of

construction modifications to accommodate new laboratories and testing centers, not just for ESL but also for English and mathematics. Moreover, and perhaps more important, the commitment of the College to provide for ongoing faculty costs, like the money needed to continue providing laboratory coordinators, is built into the grant: by the time the grant ends in 2007, laboratory coordinators will have been made a part of the ongoing budget of the College.