PROJECT ABSTRACT

Lake Superior College (LSC) is a two-year, public community college in Duluth, Minnesota. The college proposes a regular Student Support Services (SSS) project which will serve 210 students at a cost of $292,340. LSC has a high number of students who meet the SSS eligibility requirements: analysis of the Fall 2013 enrolled student population showed 67% (n=3,592) are eligible to participate in the SSS Program. LSC's SSS-eligible students encounter academic and other problems and are less likely to use available college resources, like tutoring, than students who are not SSS-eligible. Their academic deficiencies contribute to a disproportionate number of SSS-eligible students testing into developmental courses. Data indicate significant differences between our SSS-eligible and non-eligible students on every indicator, including grade point average, retention and graduation rates, and transfer rates.

The evidence-based services provided by our SSS project will increase persistence, academic standing, transfer, and graduation rates for the students targeted by the SSS program. LSC's SSS Program centers on individualized counseling for participants for personal, career and academic matters. Our counseling services align with the model referenced in Bettinger and Baker's (2011) study. In addition to counseling, LSC's program develops participants' non-cognitive factors: academic behaviors, academic perseverance, academic mindset, learning strategies and social skills. Non-cognitive factors are addressed in the curriculum of LSC's mandatory TRIO Student Success Seminar, which includes an evidence-based intervention that targets academic mindset, based on research by Stephens, Hamedani and Destin (2014).

LSC's SSS program addresses all four of the Department of Education's Competitive Preference Priorities: 1(a), 1(b), 2(a) and 2(b). The study cited for 1(b), non-cognitive factors, is available at: http://www.psychology.northwestern.edu/documents/destin-achievement.pdf. The study cited for 2(b), individualized counseling, is at: http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger_baker_030711.pdf.

The objectives of this project are: (A) Persistence Rate: Seventy-two percent (72%) of all participants served in the reporting year by the SSS project will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or earn an associate's degree or certificate at the grantee institution and/or transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution by the fall term of the next academic year; (B) Good Academic Standing Rate: Seventy-six percent (76%) of all enrolled SSS participants served will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution. (C) Graduation and Transfer Rate: (1). Thirty-six percent (36%) of new participants served each year will graduate from the grantee institution with an associate's degree or certificate within four (4) years; (2). Sixteen percent (16%) of new participants served each year will receive an associate's degree or certificate from the grantee institution and transfer to a four-year institution within four (4) years.

LSC's proposed budget is realistic and necessary to achieve our objectives. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the budget is for personnel, including one full-time Project Director; one full time SSS Advisor/Coach; one three-quarter time Advisor/Coach and one half-time Administrative Assistant. This allows us to offer a student-to-advisor ratio to 100:1 for SSS program participants. Additional program costs include staff travel for professional development; and participant travel and associated expenses to participate in academic, leadership and cultural activities. Strong institutional commitments will support the project and supplement the budget.