

National Resource Center Recognizes 2005 Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates



From left to right: **Stuart Hunter**, Director, National Resource Center; **Mabel G. Freeman**, Assistant Vice President, Undergraduate Admissions and First-Year Experience, The Ohio State University; **Cheryl A. Rice**, Director, EXCEL Center for Academic Success, State University of West Georgia; **Marcella H. Esler**, Assistant to the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Director of Student Retention, State University of New York at Brockport; **Phyllis Cremer**, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, Woodbury College; **Philip Shabbaz**, Director of Student Success, Azusa Pacific University; **Maggy Smith**, Dean, University College, The University of Texas at El Paso; **Dennis Cook**, Director, Special Needs Services, Gloucester County College; **Lois Fennelly**, Dean School of General Studies, Bethune-Cookman College; **Richard Kirk**, Director, Student Success, Texas State Technical College - Harlingen; **Carole L. Isaak**, Assistant Director of Academic Advising, Elizabethtown College; **Elinor Gregory**, Marketing Manager, College Survival and Communication, Houghton Mifflin Company.

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and Houghton Mifflin Publishing announced the 10 educators who are the 2005 Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates at the 24th Annual Conference

on the First-Year Experience in Phoenix, Arizona.

These 10 educators share a common goal of improving the educational experiences of entering college students. They have been awarded this distinction for their exception-

al work on behalf of first-year students and for the impact of their efforts on the students and culture of their institutions. For details and biographies of the recipients, please check <http://www.sc.edu/fye/centerinitiative/advocates/currentyear/index.html>

Boston College Seniors Teach First-Year Students the Facts of College Life

Ann Marie Barry, Assistant Director

Boston College Capstone Program

Although at least 700 colleges and universities across the United States have something called a capstone or senior seminar course, the Boston College Capstone Program is unique in its method, content, and focus on the university's Jesuit mission. Since its inception in 1991, almost 300 capstone seminars have been offered by faculty representing nearly 20 different departments throughout the university.

As its name implies, the Capstone Program seeks to “cap off” an education at Boston College by acting as a unifying force at the conclusion of the academic curriculum. Courses are designed to be both intellectually and spiritually challenging, focusing on the inevitable questions that underlie most undergraduate study and form the basis of critical decision making throughout students' lives. Course materials are grounded in the discipline of the capstone professor, but each seminar recapitulates and evaluates the past four years in preparation for determining future directions.

The “Capstone: Beyond Conflict” course, held in spring 2004, was a seminar of 16 seniors representing an extraordinary range of perspectives born of differences in ethnicity, race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. On the verge of graduating, this extraordinarily representative group of seniors agreed that perhaps one of the best things they could leave behind them was the cumulative wisdom of their Boston College experience.

They believed if they had gotten certain advice in their first college year—or if they had taken to heart certain advice they did receive—their four years at BC would have been much smoother and happier. They believed doing well academically, getting involved, and learning their way around

campus and Boston would have been a lot easier if they had been aware earlier—not only of the many helpful resources available to them on campus, but also of the kinds of stresses they would face in housing, friendships, and dating.

The result of the class project was a booklet, full of their most practical academic advice and personal and social wisdom on getting along with roommates, deciding what their real vocations and core values were, coping with problems, and developing friendships to last a lifetime. The booklet, titled *Our Best Advice: Seniors Talk to Freshmen About the Things That Worry Undergraduates Most*, was designed specifically to help first-year students adapt to a new life on campus, to put aside their fears, to polish their dreams, and become an active part of the community.

It soon became evident to me as I advised my students in the project that their insights were quite different in nature from the more standard publications for first-year students. As they got used to facing their problems head-on in our Conflict and Decision Seminar, they gave extraordinarily candid, practical, and—yes—wise advice to those who would follow them. We met together on the project at intervals throughout the semester and combined answers, refined language, prioritized responses. We tried to include two or three different perspectives for each topic, so readers would not get an impression of single, “pat” answers.

Here are some of my personal favorites:

“I feel alone and depressed a lot of the time.
I don't feel I fit in.”

They say that the loneliest place
is in a crowd of people, and often

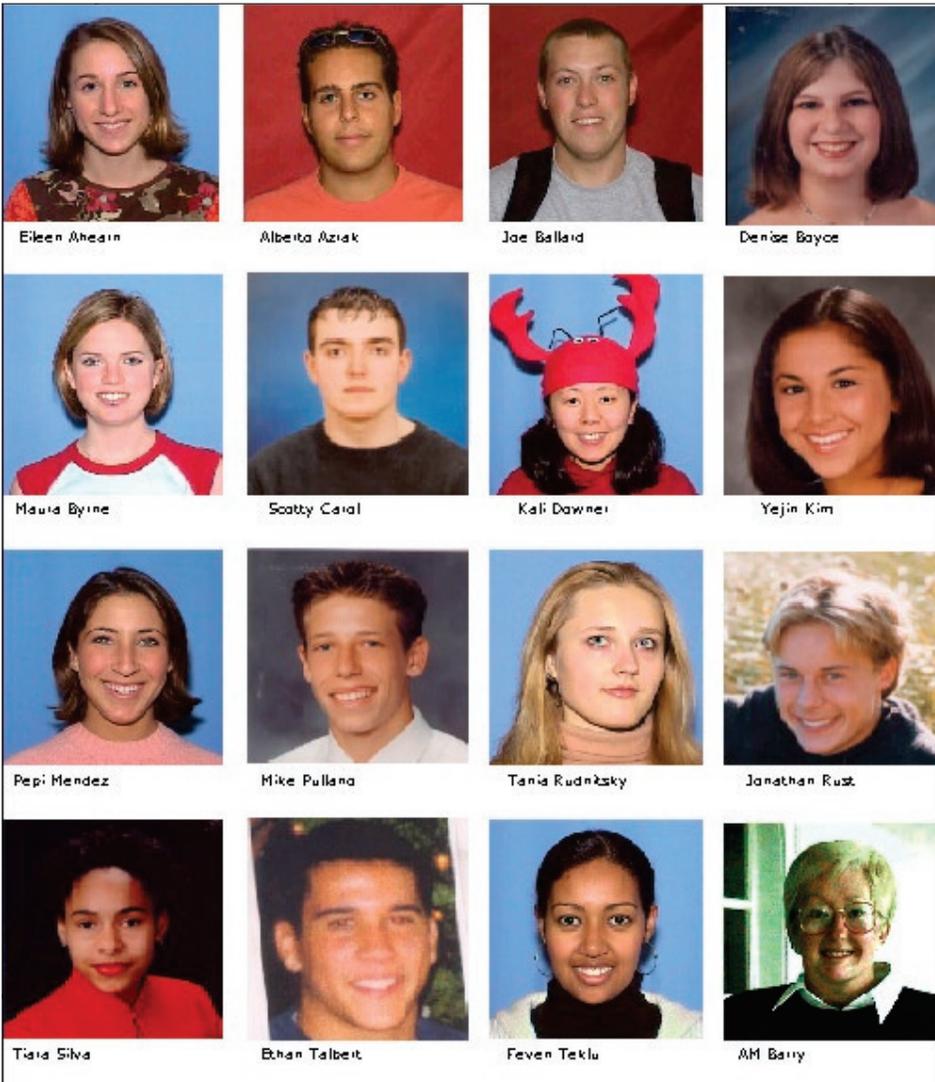
this is true. If you feel alone and haven't found your “niche” at Boston College, you aren't alone, even if you feel that way. Personal problems, the feeling of not fitting in, and many other factors can make you feel isolated and even depressed, and unfortunately, some people may not even notice that you are feeling this way. If you feel depressed, talk to people who are close to you and let them know that you aren't exactly a happy camper. Seeing a counselor is a good idea as well—and it is often easier to talk to a stranger than to someone close.

There will be a few times when you feel you don't fit in, especially during Freshman year, and particularly during first semester. Don't worry. It's normal. It's difficult to find your niche with so many options open to you. Give BC some time and just keep trying. If you find you just can't pull yourself out of the deep blues, don't be afraid to go to University Health Services or Counseling Services. They can help you find someone to talk to. Services are free and the people are friendly and helpful. This is a familiar problem to them.

“I hate my roommate.”

When I moved into my dorm freshman year, I was literally frightened at the prospect of spending an entire year with my roommate. She had a framed picture of her cat, a horse calendar, and when I asked her what kind of music she liked, her reply was, “I don't know, I don't really listen to music.” Since I couldn't stand cats, was petrified of horses, and loved





Authors of *Our Best Advice*.

going to concerts, I thought that this would turn out to be a pretty dismal year. And in the beginning, it was. We were pleasant to one another, but neither one of us really enjoyed each other's company. But towards the end of the year—out of the blue—we started talking like actual friends. As we opened up, we both realized that we had a lot more

in common than we thought. Four years later, she is my best friend, and she is still my roommate. Moral of the story: don't give up on your roommate before you give it your best try to make it work.

As is apparent from the above excerpts, the students shared their experiences in a way that compels other students to listen, to

think, and ultimately, to decide on solutions to their problems from a wider perspective. Throughout the development of the project, I advised, cajoled, even convinced them to rephrase a few responses, but there can be no question that the booklet contains *their* advice, according to their own experience of campus life. By the time they finished the project, I found myself wishing I had had such a booklet when I was an undergraduate. I was humbled and very proud, all at the same time.

Copies of the booklet designed by the Capstone students were subsequently desktop published and distributed—albeit after my students' graduation—to various administrators and student groups throughout the university, including Arts and Sciences deans, Cornerstone Program (first-year student) leaders, Intersection (juncture of sophomore/senior year) Program leaders, and key student development personnel.

Response was immediate and positive, with multiple requests for copies for use in Cornerstone seminars, by Arts & Sciences class deans and others. Currently, discussion around the booklet centers on whether it is better to publish it in print, on the university web site, or both. Whatever form it ultimately takes, it will continue to be a part of the Capstone Program, with students in current and future classes revising the statements of problems and their proposed solutions according to the changing needs of the students themselves. Is there a better way to “cap off” their experience than by distilling all they have learned into advice for first-year students?

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Designed and written by the Capstone graduating seniors themselves, the booklet gives advice in a variety of areas:

- Top six ways to get involved, get educated, and have fun on campus
- Essential advice on choosing the right classes
- Pass-fail choices
- Core courses
- Deciding on majors and minors
- Registration tips
- Advising and studying abroad
- Ten housing commandments
- Planning ahead for Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years
- Getting off campus
- Where to go for eating out and living necessities (including parent-pleasing restaurants)
- Where and how to spend great free afternoons
- Academic advice on getting classes
- Finding interests
- Procrastination
- Testing out of language
- Junior year abroad
- Advising
- Studying but getting nowhere
- Personal & social advice on roommate troubles
- Drinking
- “Hooking up”
- Feeling alone and alienated
- Friends from home
- No money
- Off-campus boy/girlfriends
- No love-life
- Worries about friends

LADDERS Program Leads to Success for Students on Academic Probation

Terri M. Mathews, Assistant Dean, College of Sciences

Sandra M. Waters, Director, Undergraduate Services

Old Dominion University

First-year students on academic probation after their first semester at Old Dominion University receive an invitation to attend the “Let Academic Difficulty Disappear to Energize and Retain Students” (LADDERS) program. LADDERS consists of first-year students who have all struggled through the first semester in college.

LADDERS differs from other probation and success programs in that it stresses peer support and teaches students how to identify and use individual learning strengths to their advantage. The cornerstone of the LADDERS program is empowering students in their own learning through the Cognitive Profile Inventory, a learning styles assessment tool (Krause, 2002). Identifying personal learning styles enables students to modify study, note taking, and reading strategies to become more successful. In the process, students strengthen their academic skills. Students divide into small discussion groups by learning style, led by facilitators who have the same learning style. Students within the small groups support each other and help resolve issues.

LADDERS facilitators include faculty, graduate students, academic advisors, and university administrators who volunteer their lunch hour once a week to meet with the LADDERS students. The combined expertise of these facilitators enables them to assist students with the wide range of problems and issues that this group of students face.

A typical LADDERS meeting opens with participants sharing an accomplishment from the previous week. Accomplishments may be small: “I studied an extra three hours

this week,” or large: “I got an A on my test,” but all are met with applause and cheers. After this high-energy opening, the meeting continues with a short introduction of the designated week’s topic while students enjoy a slice or two of pizza. Each hour-long weekly meeting features a topic of discussion aimed at helping students become more successful. The topics includes managing time, coping with test anxiety, sharing exam strategies, calculating a grade point average, applying the honor code, communicating with faculty, exploring majors and minors, examining University policies, discovering available services, including free tutoring, and goal setting. After the formal program, students break into small groups to discuss how they can incorporate and benefit from the topic presented that week. In the small group, facilitators and students identify the strategies and approaches that match their learning style. For example, exam preparation might include group study for some students but solitary study for others.

Students who attend the LADDERS program earn a higher average GPA and are retained at a higher rate. These students also show a larger increase in GPA between their first and second semesters than students on academic probation not in the program. Tables 1 and 2 show the average GPA for students who attended the LADDERS program regularly and those who did not in both the spring 2003 and spring 2004 semesters. For both groups of students, the average semester GPA is higher for students who attended LADDERS regularly (i.e., more than three times during the semester).



Table 1
Mean Semester GPA for Students Invited to LADDERS in Spring 2003

	Fall 2002 GPA	Spring 2003 GPA
Attended LADDERS regularly (<i>N</i> = 40)	1.13	2.3
Did not attend LADDERS regularly (<i>N</i> = 119)	1.35	1.51

p < .001

Note. Regular attendance is defined as attending three or more sessions during the semester.

Table 2
Mean Semester GPA for Students Invited to LADDERS in Spring 2004

	Fall 2003 GPA	Spring 2004 GPA
Attended LADDERS regularly (<i>N</i> = 49)	1.56	2.18
Did not attend LADDERS regularly (<i>N</i> = 69)	1.45	1.72

p = .018

Note. Regular attendance is defined as attending three or more sessions during the semester.

Table 3
Retention Data for Students Invited to LADDERS in Spring 2003

	Attended LADDERS regularly (<i>n</i> = 40)		Did not attend LADDERS regularly (<i>n</i> = 119)	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Students retained	24	60	45	37
Students left the university	16	40	76	63
Cumulative GPA after fall 2004	2.43		2.05	

p = .020

Note. Regular attendance is defined as attending three or more sessions during the semester.

Retention for students who attended LADDERS is higher than for students who did not. Table 3 shows the students retained from spring 2003 and their average cumulative GPA as of fall 2004.

The LADDERS program provides students with the knowledge and tools to become successful and promotes a peer-support system where students encourage one another. Too often, probation programs place the advisor and student on opposite sides of the desk in one-on-one counseling. In the LADDERS program, a student works with other students and gains personal insight into his or her own academic strengths, which results in a higher GPA and increased likelihood of retention.

References

Krause, L. B. (2002). *How we learn and why we don't* (3rd ed.). Mason, OH: Thomson Custom Publishing.

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Using Story Cycles to Study Peer Mentor's Learning

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J. Gary Daynes, & Patricia Esplin

Freshman Academy

Brigham Young University

Few scholars have studied how mentoring improves mentors' learning in college. We used storytelling cycles to examine the learning of peer mentors working with a first-year learning communities program (Dye, Pinnegar, & Robinson, 2005). Eighteen peer mentors were organized into groups of three to form storytelling groups. Each group participated in three phases of a storytelling cycle. In the first phase, participants wrote a story about a mentoring experience following these guidelines:

Please write a descriptive story about your experience as a peer mentor where you gained a new insight. Please provide enough detail that another person could retell the anecdote as well as capture your learning. In writing your story/response, keep in mind that the entry does not have to be very lengthy, just well detailed. However, if you feel like you have a lot of interesting things to say, feel free to write them.

In the second phase, members of each storytelling group read each other's stories and wrote a reflection based on this direction:

After reading the stories of your peers, please identify and articulate the commonalities and unique themes among these stories and your own using details from your story and theirs to clarify your ideas. You can also add additional personal incidents to support your writings. In writing your story/response, keep in mind that the entry does not have to be very lengthy, just well detailed. However, if you feel like you have a lot of interesting things to say, feel free to write them.

In the third phase, participants attempted to make sense not just of others' stories but of the multiplicity of interpretations provided at phase two (i.e., they reacted to the responses

they produced at the second phase). As the example in the side bar demonstrated, the other group members raised new perspectives on the interpretations provided in the second phase. From that, the responder generated new and deeper insights of his or her own.

Initially, the participants fumbled with the story cycle form. However, once participants completed a cycle, they began to see that they were deepening their learning in this process and that it was worthwhile. They came to enjoy this research method.

One drawback of this method is that a single person can slow the progress of the group. Often, even if participants are completely committed to the process, they may put off completing the story cycle. Thus, shepherding the cycle and encouraging participation is a central role for the facilitator in this method.

This research approach is helpful for studying first-year experiences from a number of perspectives. Story cycles could be used to understand some of the more complex issues in the first year, e.g., the role of parents, student perceptions of learning, intellectual development in the first year, and the meanings of faculty/student interaction. Our own research suggests that story cycles are a powerful method of understanding the process of learning.

References

Dye, B. R., Pinnegar, S., & Robinson, K. (2005). *Peer mentors tell their stories of learning: A narrative study*. Manuscript submitted for publication. (Available at <http://fa.byu.edu/academy/pdf/PMstoriesfinal.pdf>).

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Sample Storytelling Cycle

We will share passages written by one of the mentors, whom we will call Mary, from one story cycle to illustrate the kinds of learning that emerged:

This past semester, I had a student who graduated at the top of his high school and was ready to dive into college. He had 18 credit hours, a part-time job and still came to me kicking himself for not signing up for Honors 200 instead of English 115. He said that he didn't care about graduating with honors, but that he felt like he was slacking off taking the 115 class. We reviewed his schedule and when I saw how busy he was already with his large load and demanding classes, I was able to convince him to stay in that class instead of changing, which would increase the load and cause him to rework his schedule. Eventually he quit working in order to keep up with what he had. As I got to know this student better, I could see he had very high expectations for himself and had maladaptive perfectionist tendencies which led to dissatisfaction toward his social life, feeling down on himself to the point of depression, having stomach pains, which fortunately weren't ulcers, and occasionally mild outbursts to relieve the built-up stress. We had many conversations about his tendency to demand so much from himself, and on occasion I could tell he was beginning to soften up. However, as it came time to register for classes, he informed me he thought he'd take 18 credits again. We kept talking, working through the problem and I even brought up seeing a counselor about the problem. Finally, he came up with the real source of the problem on his own: he simply had too much to do and not enough time to satisfactorily get it done, which caused him to be very unbalanced and unhappy. I don't know exactly what it was that changed

Continued on page 7



Sample storytelling cycle continued

his mind, maybe he finally saw that he was the source of his own problem and the only one with the power to change that, but this student is only taking 15 credits this semester and has a much more manageable load. Although this student did very well academically last semester, many other important areas were sacrificed for that end (Mary 2a, Dec. 2004).

At the next phase Mary considered her story along with the stories two other mentors told. In looking for themes across the stories, this is Mary's response:

It seems like with each student, they needed to have their eyes opened in order to make the change they did. Often times, their bad decisions or reactions were a result of inexperience. They had never been in First-year Academy before [and had] never experienced the rigors of college life, whether academic or social. It took some interaction with peer mentors or other students to identify the changes that needed to be made. It also seems like each of these students changed as a result of their personal desire. They needed to make a personal decision to change, thereby internalizing whatever it is that needed to change. It was something that they realized through the help of others, but didn't occur until they personally made the effort. Attitude or perspective problems were a part of the problem of all three. [Ken's] student had a bad attitude from the beginning, which prompted the negative response she had. My student's perspective was skewed to bear down on himself for anything he did. [Jane's] student looked to others as the source of his problems and didn't realize that he had to take the initiative and had the power to change it (Mary 2b, Jan. 2005).

At the third phase, Mary considers the interpretations all three members of her group provided to the stories in her deepening response. She may also re-consider the original stories:

In all three responses, it was noted that the students had to come to the point where they realized they needed to make changes and solidify the decision to make choices themselves. It seemed that the greatest amount of impact for change came from the students themselves rather than from a peer mentor, teacher, or fellow student. We each recognized that we were less effective when we were pushing for a change, but if we let the student lead out while acting as a means for the change to occur, successful changes were undertaken. It is more our role to be a supporter and encourager while helping the student to evaluate correctly and progress in the right direction. As [Ken] pointed out, none of these changes were made overnight but required a long process. Perhaps the full implications of the changes are still underway, as I'm sure that my student will struggle with the strong foundation he's built for his perfectionist tendencies and [Jane's] student will have to make the decision about how to spend his time again and again. I think that because it takes so long to change into a more desirable person, the most important part of it is just to get the thoughts going which will set the wheels in motion. Because the thoughts are there, the desire to get over that challenge and improve will develop naturally followed by the dedication to struggle through the implications of making a change (Mary 2c, Jan. 2005).

Recent Grant Funding

Mary Wagner, Graduate Assistant
National Resource Center for The First-Year
Experience and Students in Transition
University of South Carolina

Recent Grants to Colleges and Individuals Spencer Foundation

(<http://www.spencer.org>)
875 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 3930
Chicago, Illinois 60611-1803

Synopsis: The Spencer Foundation was established in 1962 by Lyle M. Spencer. The Foundation received its major endowment upon Spencer's death in 1968 and began formal grant making in 1971. The Foundation is intended, by Spencer's direction, to investigate ways in which education, broadly conceived, can be improved around the world. Major and small research grants are available, as well as pre-dissertation and dissertation fellowships. Full proposals for major research grant proposals are by invitation only and are considered four times a year. Applications for small research grants are accepted on a rolling basis.

Funded projects: \$31,000 to Claremont Graduate University/Graduate School of Management for a pilot study of academic and social integration and college student persistence and achievement. Pre-dissertation fellowship to Janice Bloom, Department of Urban Education/City University of New York: *Bridges to the Future: Young People and Transitions to Higher Education in the 21st Century*.

Lumina Foundation

(www.luminafoundation.org)
Lumina Foundation for Education
30 South Meridian Street, Suite 700
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Synopsis: The Lumina Foundation for Education focuses on expanding access and success in postsecondary education. From time to time, Lumina Foundation identifies a special initiative that has the potential to improve postsecondary access and success. The Foundation initiates grant programs



and solicits proposals for them but will also consider unsolicited grant inquiries that are consistent with its mission.

Funded projects: \$100,000 each to University of Southern Indiana (Evansville, IN) and Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne (Lafayette, IN)—to increase academic success for underrepresented students. \$155,625 to Rhodes College (Memphis, TN)—to redesign the student work program to reduce costs and improve retention.

Teagle Foundation

(www.teaglefoundation.org)
10 Rockerfeller Plaza, Room 920
New York, New York 10020
(212) 373-1970

Synopsis: The Teagle Foundation currently makes grants in higher education, soliciting proposals in areas of interest from time to time. Currently, the two main areas of focus include (1) researching the goals of liberal arts education, and (2) supporting and advancing value added assessment of liberal arts education. At present the organization is not accepting proposals in other areas. In line with the sharpened focus on higher education, community service grants are currently directed to organizations and programs that help disadvantaged young people (especially New York City youth) prepare for, gain admission to, and succeed in college.

Funded projects: \$99,978 to Cornell University (Ithaca, NY), Colgate University (Hamilton, New York), Hamilton College (Clinton, New York), Hobart and William Smith Colleges (Geneva, New York), and Wells College (Aurora, New York)—for a working group which explores and evaluates programs designed to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in college completion and achievement. \$149,650 to the Appalachian College Association—to assess academic gains of students at 21 of the 35 ACA colleges.

Bush Foundation

(<http://www.bushfoundation.org>)
332 Minnesota Street, East 900
St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 227-0891

Synopsis: The Bush Foundation is a private philanthropic foundation based in St. Paul, Minnesota and is committed to enhancing the quality of life in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota by making grants to nonprofit organizations and providing fellowships to individuals in those states. The foundation also supports out-of-region projects with historically black private colleges and full accredited tribally controlled colleges. The primary areas for funding consideration include education, human services and health, and arts and humanities.

Funded projects: \$296,075 to Concordia University-Saint Paul (Saint Paul, Minnesota) to increase student learning with guided research, service-learning, and faculty mentoring.

Open Calls for Proposals

Lydia Donaldson Tutt-Jones Memorial

Research Grant (<http://blacksuccessfoundation.org/lcdtj%20research%20grant.htm>)
African American Success Foundation, Incorporated
4330 West Broward Boulevard, Suite H
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33317-3753
(954) 792-1117

Synopsis: To support research that identifies attitudinal and behavioral contributors to African American academic success. The interest is to increase the body of knowledge about African American students who are excelling in school to aid in the replication of that success for others. Focus may be upon student or parental variables, or both. Graduate students and professionals are eligible for this research grant.

Amount : \$2,000.00

Deadline: Friday, June 10, 2005.

National Endowment for the Humanities

Office of Public Affairs
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20506
Grants for Teaching and Learning Resources and Curriculum Development
Division of Education Programs
202-606-8380
education@neh.gov
(<http://neh.gov/grants/guidelines/teachinglearning.html>)

Synopsis: Grants for Teaching and Learning Resources and Curriculum Development support projects to improve specific areas of humanities education and are intended to serve as national models of excellence. They must draw upon scholarship in the humanities and use scholars and teachers as advisers. NEH is especially interested in projects that offer solutions to problems frequently encountered by teachers, such as programs which help schools, colleges, and universities develop (or revise) and implement significant humanities programs, curricula, courses, and materials for teaching and learning.

Amount: Curriculum Development Project grants provide up to \$100,000 in outright funds, matching funds, or a combination of the two, depending on the applicant's preference and the availability of NEH funds. Materials Development Project grants provide up to \$200,000 in outright funds, matching funds, or a combination of the two, depending on the applicant's preference and the availability of NEH funds.

Deadline: October 3, 2005

The Research Experiences (REU) for Undergraduates Program Grants

The National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230
(703) 292-5111
<http://www.nsf.gov/home/crssprgm/reu/contacts.htm>

Synopsis: The Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program supports active research participation by undergraduate students in any of the areas of research funded by the National Science Foundation. REU Sites are based on independent proposals to initiate and conduct undergraduate research participation projects for a number of students. This program provides indirect funding for students engaged in undergraduate research and may focus on curricula development, training or retention.

Amount: Varies

Deadline: Varies according to project topic



National Resource Center Announces Competition for \$5,000 Paul P. Fidler Research Grant

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition invites applications for the newly established Paul P. Fidler Research Grant. With a comprehensive award package that includes a \$5,000 stipend, travel to two national conferences, and a potential publication, the Paul P. Fidler Research Grant will promote the development and dissemination of original research with the potential to have a national impact on college student success. The Center invites applicants to submit proposals addressing a variety of topics, including students of color, community colleges, advising, transfer and articulation, administrative policies, and other issues related to college student transitions.

The grant is the Center's latest project designed to encourage and support significant research on college student transitions. The grant will complement the Center's annual conferences and institutes, web resources, and publications, including the monograph series and the *Journal of The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition*.

"The establishment of this grant," explains Mary Stuart Hunter, the Center's director, "will allow the National Resource Center to encourage scholars, in a very concrete and significant way, to develop research agendas focusing on students in transition. Such research will undoubtedly contribute to advancing the scholarship on transition issues in undergraduate education."

To be awarded in November 2005 at the 12th National Conference on Students in Transition in Costa Mesa, CA, the Paul P. Fidler Research Grant package includes:

- Stipend of \$5,000
- Travel to the 12th National Conference on Students in Transition, November 2005, in Costa Mesa, CA

- Special recognition at 2005 Students in Transition conference luncheon
- Travel to the 13th National Conference on Students in Transition, November 2006, in St. Louis, MO
- Presentation of findings at a highlighted 2006 Students in Transition conference session
- Announcement on National Resource Center web page, listservs, and print publications
- Priority consideration for publication by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

Applicants must submit completed proposals by August 1, 2005. The application and proposal form may be downloaded at www.sc.edu/fye/research/grant and must be submitted electronically to NRCresearch@gwm.sc.edu by August 1, 2005.

The grant competition is open to faculty, staff, and graduate students who plan to conduct research on issues of college student transitions. Cross-institutional research teams are especially encouraged to apply for the Paul P. Fidler Research Grant.

More information, including application procedures, is available at www.sc.edu/fye/research/grant

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What's Happening

Research and Resources

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition would like to announce two new resources now available on the Center's web site.

Searchable Database of FY Assessment Instruments:

<http://nrc.fye.sc.edu/resources/survey/search/index.php>

The FY Assessment Database contains information about dozens of assessment instruments related to the first year of college. For each instrument, our database includes a summary (what the instrument does), pricing information, and contact information for the relevant company representatives. Using our database, you'll be able to find instruments that meet the specific needs of your institution.

Searchable Database of FY Seminar Syllabi:

<http://nrc.fye.sc.edu/resources/syllabi/index.php>

The FY Seminar Syllabi Database contains syllabi for nearly 100 first-year seminars from over 60 institutions. Each file is formatted for Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) and is accompanied by contact information for relevant personnel at each school. The syllabi come from all types of seminars (e.g., extended orientation, academic with uniform content, academic with variable content) and all types of schools (two-year & four-year, public & private). Use the FY Seminar Syllabi Database to explore how other institutions are addressing important issues in their first-year seminars.

You can also reach these new resources by clicking your way through our resources web page: <http://www.sc.edu/fye/resources/index.html>

Teleconference

First Encounters: Creating Purposeful Strategies to Engage New Students. April 21, 2005 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm EDST

Conferences

18th International Conference on The First-Year Experience. 11-14 July, Southampton, England.

Summer Institute on First-Year Assessment. 24-26 July, 2005, Asheville, North Carolina.

Monographs

Monograph 43

Facilitating the Career Development of Students in Transition

Paul A. Gore, Jr., Editor

As a recent *Time* cover story attests, college graduates are having a harder time making their way in the world, often leaving college with little sense of what kind of career might interest them. Monograph 43 stresses the importance of career exploration throughout college, not just in the senior year, and offers practical strategies for working with a wide range of student populations.

