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To: CSU Provosts / Vice Presidents, Academic Affairs

From: Gary W. Reichard 
Executive Vice Chancellor / Chief Academic Officer

Re: Chancellor's Office Support for Educational Innovations:
Transforming Course Design

This is to request your help in nominating on each of your campuses four or fewer courses that are strong candidates for *transformative redesign*. As described below, we seek high-impact courses, the transformation of which may have positive benefits for many, most or all CSU campuses. Chosen courses will be redesigned by CSU faculty who participate in core redesign team activities as described below.

Please submit your nominated courses:

TO: Yvonne Benavides <mailto:ybenavides@calstate.edu>

DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Friday, November 30, 2007

Detailed submission information follows in Appendix B.

I. General Background

The CSU's mission is supported through campus and system-wide programs for improving educational outcomes, often through instructional innovations in the design and delivery of courses, credentials, and degrees. These innovations focus on one or more strategic goals, such as

- Facilitating graduation, by reducing the percentages of unsatisfactory student performance (e.g. D, F, W's)

- Improving student performance in gateway courses for academic majors where the CSU is trying to grow enrollment in order to serve the needs of California
- Improving students' information, communication, and technology (ICT) literacy skills.

System Support for Educational Innovations. Within the CSU, there are areas where collaboration can produce effective solutions to address common needs. These are always, explicitly, additional to the important work done independently by each campus.

Table 1 on page 5 below lists examples of Chancellor's Office projects that support campus educational innovations. This framework is suggestive rather than complete: we hope it lends perspective for the scope and focus typical of system programs.

Please note as an aside: there is planned a CSU Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) program, to be announced later this fall, that will constitute an additional focus on student learning outcomes. The projected ITL program will not be limited to high enrollment courses as is the Transforming Course Design Project outlined below.

II. Transforming Course Design Project

- The Transforming Course Design (TCD) project is designed to **improve** student learning (as reflected by objective measures such as a reduced number of grades of D, F, and W in a course) through **effective pedagogy** supported by the **cost-effective use of technology**.

The TCD aligns fully with the Trustees' Facilitating Graduation initiative. Moreover, expected by-products of the TCD project include **reducing the "total cost of education"** for students while achieving **long-term savings** for institutions, as they improve learning and provide access for increasing numbers of students.

Reductions of the total cost of education for a student can include:

- Reducing the number of courses taken on the road to a degree: student records should show fewer repeat / withdrawal courses.
- Among students who take a smaller total number of courses, costs such as number of trips to campus may be reduced.

Long-term savings for the institution resulting from Transforming Course Design projects can include:

- Instructional savings, by reducing the number of sections required to serve students who have to repeat a course.
- Reducing faculty workload, through the sharing and reuse of high quality instructional practices.
- Reducing facilities costs per class through hybrid (partly on-line) courses.
- Reducing laboratory, equipment, and support staff costs by complementing "wet labs" with virtual laboratories.

III. Further Background:

Transforming Course Design *Projects Now Underway*

Campus-Centered Projects: In spring 2007, the Chancellor's Office initiated the Transforming Course Design project, with a May 2007 distribution of twenty awards to help campuses to initiate or accelerate their course redesign processes (see http://www.calstate.edu/ats/transforming_course_design/documents/RFP-Awards_May07.pdf for a summary: total funds exceeded \$200,000). The efforts of these campus-centered projects will continue through 2008.

Provosts at the campuses not yet supported for a campus-based Transforming Course Design project will be invited – in a separate solicitation to follow - to submit a proposal to launch a local initiative. The goal is that by the end of the current academic year, every CSU campus will have received support to make a campus-centered effort to redesign one or more courses in order to achieve improved student learning while producing student and/or institutional savings. While funding of these initial projects will necessarily be limited in 2007-08, we wish to position every campus to participate in the larger initiative expected in 2008-09.

IV. To Complement Campus Work:

System-Centered Transforming Course Design Projects

System-Centered Projects: In July 2007, the Executive Council recognized the need and opportunity to focus on course redesign projects where targeted collaboration across campuses can benefit similar or identical courses on many, most or all campuses through the shared use, development, and assessment of course resources. After consultation with the systemwide Academic Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC), the Provosts' Technology Steering Committee (PTSC), and the CSU presidents' Technology Steering Committee (TSC), it has been decided that the Transforming Course Design Project will, in 2007-08, have a special focus on system-centered projects that seek the redesign of courses that have all three of the following features:

1. ***High enrollment:*** this could be, for example, courses that are in the top 10% in enrollment on your campus; or identified courses could simply be large lecture or multiple section courses deemed ready for Transforming Course Design work.
2. ***Unsatisfactory student rates of success:*** courses may enter this category by featuring a high proportion of D, F, and W grades.
3. ***Faculty committed*** to participate in and implement the redesign of the course selected

➤ Courses with these three characteristics are referenced in Appendix B as ***high impact courses that have faculty committed to redesign.***

Next Steps, Expectations, and Timeline

The expected process and timeline for the multi-campus collaboration on redesigning high impact courses are outlined below.

1. Provosts will submit their campus candidate courses to Academic Affairs in the Chancellor's Office by **NOVEMBER 30, 2007**. (See **Appendix B** for details for submitting candidate courses.) Reminder: <mailto:ybenavides@calstate.edu>
2. Analysis of the courses submitted will identify best candidates for multi-campus collaboration for course redesign. Note that sustained faculty leadership in implementation of redesign practices is an essential criterion (**DECEMBER 12, 2007**).
3. Faculty identified and interested in participating in the redesign process will be selected to be part of either *the core redesign team* or *the peer review team* for the redesign project. (**DECEMBER 18, 2007**)
4. The faculty on the *core redesign team* will be joined by pedagogy experts, instructional design experts, assessment experts, and other technology support staff.
5. The core redesign team will begin by identifying and evaluating the curricular areas in which students perform poorly. Faculty team members will:
 - conduct an environmental scan of pedagogical and technology strategies that are currently in use across the world that could be effectively adopted (with appropriate adaptations as warranted) for use by CSU faculty and students.
 - develop strategies to support faculty over both the near and the long term.
 - review departmental policies and practices in order to sustain the implementation and continuous improvement of strong pedagogical practices
 - identify “gaps” in both resources available and pedagogical practices that might lead the CSU to develop new resources and pedagogies.
 - Identify savings for both students and institution that could result from the redesign process.
6. The *peer review team* will periodically review the work of the core team and provide feedback to the core team to ensure applicability, acceptance, and effectiveness for CSU faculty and students.
7. By **May 30, 2008**, we expect to have at least 2 multi-campus course redesign project plans for high impact courses ready for implementation in AY 2008-2009.

System Support for Multi-campus Redesign of High-Impact Courses

The Chancellor's Office will be supporting the redesign of high-impact courses with funds for assigned time and travel for faculty selected to participate on the core redesign team. **Faculty selected for the core redesign team are expected to continue their leadership activities on the core team through 2008-2009.** We will seek volunteers to participate on the peer review team.

Please note the following:

1. The funding for the *planning* phase of this project is necessarily modest and relative to the 2007-2008 campus-centered projects.
2. In 2008-2009, we anticipate that the Compact funds for academic technology will be available for continued funding of both campus-centered and system-centered transforming course design projects at modest levels.
3. As has been explained to ATAC and to provosts, campus-centered projects will continue to be featured in planning and funding across the foreseeable future, while this useful system-level effort will provide evidence of success and will foster direct multi-campus improvements in learning and cost-reduction.

<p>Table 1. Framework for Chancellor’s Office Programs to Support Educational Innovations in the CSU</p>

Legend: *TCD*: Transforming Course Design
 ITL: Institute for Teaching and Learning
 ICT: Information and Communication Technology

<i>GOALS</i>	Features of Campus Courses		
	High Enrollment	(E.g.) Under Enrolled	Gateway
Facilitate Graduation by reducing D, W, F grades			
System-Centered Programs	January 2008 TCD awards		
Campus-Centered Programs	May 2007 TCD awards December 2007 TCD Awards		
Improve student learning outcomes			
Discipline-Centered (multi-campus) Programs		ITL program 2007-2008	ITL program 2007-2008
ICT Literacy Skills			
System-Centered Programs			
Campus-Centered Programs	“I-Skills” Library Grants	“I-Skills” Library Grants	“I-Skills” Library Grants

Appendix A:

Success for transforming course design projects

Experience from the [NCAT case studies](#) suggests that projects in transforming course design have a higher likelihood of success when the following conditions are met:

1. Strong leadership and strong commitment on the part of the department or program to do the project, to ensure sustainability. It cannot be the domain or idea of a single faculty member or group of faculty members.
2. Buy-in to the project from all the major contributors to the project, e.g., Library, Assessment, Faculty Development, Information Technology.
3. An institutionalized mechanism within the program or course to seek and measure student and faculty feedback. There also needs to be flexibility in the plan to be able to make changes to the redesign and course materials where appropriate.
4. A good model and good method of assessing outcomes. This should not rely too much on "horse-race" like comparisons between a treatment course and a control course, as these methods are not always feasible or reliable. Departments and institutions need to develop a range of effective and efficient assessment models.
5. Technical infrastructure in place to support any provision of online materials. For example, many Academic Transformation projects in transforming course design make heavy use of a Learning Management System, and where this is not sufficiently robust, projects can run into problems.
6. Similarly, technical and faculty development support is crucial. We cannot assume that faculty have the experience necessary to implement the changes required, and they need support in order to be able to make these changes. Faculty development support is needed as faculty develop new pedagogical strategies to improve learning and student success.

Experience with blended courses from the Sloan Consortium suggests the following [Principles](#) (PDF) be followed when online technologies are used in transforming course designs:

1. Begin with a shared vision for improving learning and teaching.
2. Base the course development model on desired learning outcomes.
3. Incorporate a range of expertise on the design team, including teaching support, academic technology, librarians and other academic support professionals.
4. Identify ways to meet the needs of individual learners.
5. Ensure that new designs for learning appropriate integrate face-to-face teaching with other course elements, especially online resources and activities.
6. Promote reflection on the cognitive processes of learning.
7. Provide timely feedback and clear expectations for response times

8. Provide continuous support for students to adjust to new roles.
9. Develop efficiencies in cost, scalability and reuse.
10. Provide active institutional support and recognition for faculty.

Appendix B

Profile of Candidate Courses for Transforming Course Design Project
Multi-campus, high-impact courses that have faculty committed to redesign.

1. Provosts are to provide EVC / CAO Gary Reichard (via Ms. Benavides: <mailto:ybenavides@calstate.edu>) their candidate courses for multi-campus, high impact courses to redesign. We prefer four (4) candidate courses per campus, but campuses should not submit candidates that do not fully meet the Appendix A criteria. **The information below must be completed for each course submitted by the Provost.**
2. In developing lists of candidate courses, provosts are strongly encouraged to consult, in a robust fashion that honors local customs, with their academic senate executive committees, deans, department chairs, faculty development coordinators, institutional research directors, and department faculty. **Department chairs and the faculty interested in participating in the TCD project will need to “sign off” on their commitment to participate.**
 1. Campus Name
 2. Provost Name
 3. Course Name
 4. Course Number
 5. Course Brief Description (catalog description)
 6. List of typical curriculum topics (Key words)
 7. Description of Learning Outcomes
 8. Describe in not more than about one page why this course is a good candidate for the multi-campus, high-impact project.
 9. Show percentage of D, F, W's of total enrollment over last 3 semesters/quarters
 - a. Semester/quarter 1
 - b. Semester/quarter 2
 - c. Semester/quarter 3
 10. Number of students enrolled in course over last 3 semesters/quarters
 - a. Semester/quarter 1
 - b. Semester/quarter 2
 - c. Semester/quarter 3
 11. Faculty committed to participate and implement redesign (2 or more faculty)
 - a. Name
 - b. Dept

Your comment concerning the faculty members' history of teaching the candidate course(s) is welcome. Please know also that those faculty who are selected for core team work will be asked to accept 3 WTU assigned time during the spring 2008 term, and that there is an expectation that the faculty members be willing to continue participation, with assigned time, in 2008-09.

Questions may be directed to:
Keith Boyum, Associate Vice Chancellor: kboyum@calstate.edu