

1. Project Title	Departmental Student Peer Support Pilot
2. Name	Kelly Love
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4. Department	Academic Foundations and Connections
5. Please briefly describe your idea	In a resource constrained environment and with numerous grant funded positions slated to end in the next two years, we need an additional element to our workforce to better support students. While the college has had an existing Peer Assistant program for many years, we are struggling to recruit and retain them. Research by Title III staff has revealed that many students need an hourly wage, not a tuition waiver. We would like an innovation grant to fund wages for approximately 8-10 students as Departmental Student Peer Support Specialists who will support multiple departments and student service areas on campus. This pilot will give us an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of hourly wage financial support to students rather than tuition waivers. These positions will enhance college-wide efforts to expand our capacity to support students in a financially sustainable way and provide much needed support to departments and student service areas. In addition, paying students to work on campus will increase enrollment and retention of the students in these positions and provide them with valuable on-campus professional development opportunities.
6. Indicate the strategic priority that this project supports.	Holistic Student Support Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Organizational Health
7. How does your idea support the College's strategic priorities?	Holistic Student Support - the pilot supports Holistic Student Support by both benefiting the students hired as Peer Support Specialists and the students who receive support from their peers. Those employed as Peer Support Specialists will benefit from working on campus, resulting in increased engagement and sense of belonging. The college will also be able to increase its ability to provide holistic support in an environment of limited resources. Students will also benefit from the effectiveness of peer to peer support. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Low-income and first generation students as well as students of color are disparately impacted by the financial challenges of attending college. Unfortunately, working off-campus has a negative effect on student success (Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pacarella, 1996). Unlike off-campus work, on-campus employment has been shown to increase both college access and college completion (Corrigan, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Organizational Health - The college is increasingly challenged to provide services in a resource constrained environment. Piloting this program will help the college determine if providing another type of employment opportunity for students can help provide equitable support services that are financially sustainable.
8. What contribution would this project make to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan? How does it contribute?	This project addresses Strategic Priority 2, Eliminate equity gaps for students. It provides more opportunities for on-campus employment and direct engagement with college resources, which will help improve a sense of belonging for our diverse student body (Goal 2.2) and reduce barriers for recruiting and onboarding underrepresented and underserved students (Goal 2.3). According to Tuttle et al. (2005), 40% of American college students in 1961 worked while attending college; by 2000, that number had doubled to 80%. In a 2015 study, the U.S Department of Education claimed that 41.3% of full-time students and 80.3% of part-time students worked while attending college (Barnhardt et al., 2019). Not only do more college students work today than in the past, but they also work for a more significant number of hours. Studies on student employment consistently claim that working more than 16-20 hours per week can be detrimental to academic achievement (Kulum & Cramer, 2006; Perna, 2010; Burnside et. al, 2019). However, Perna (2010) estimated that nearly one-fifth of all undergraduates work an average of 20–34 hours per week.

	<p>Differences in hours worked vary by students' background characteristics, such as race/ethnicity, family background, and residence (Barnhardt et al., 2019; Choi, 2018; Stuber, 2009; Tuttle et al., 2005). Stuber (2009) claimed that students from working-class backgrounds work twice as much as their upper-middle-class counterparts, averaging between 10-35 hours a week. Additionally, Tuttle et al.'s (2005) research highlighted that students of color worked more hours than their white counterparts. Therefore, the need and average hours per week for student labor are not equal across student demographics.</p> <p>The Departmental Student Peer Support Pilot seeks to address the equity wage gap for student workers by providing students competitive hourly wages on-campus to meet educational expenses. Unlike off-campus employment, on-campus work can increase both college access and college completion (Corrigan, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Furthermore, by compensating students above minimum wage, the pilot seeks to gather data to support our theory that when compensated as such, on-campus student employees are then able to work less hours outside of their on-campus roles, advance their knowledge of on-campus resources, and ultimately prioritize a focus on academics, which will increase retention and degree completion.</p>
<p>9. What problem, need or gap in service will be addressed? What evidence is readily available to illustrate the need or support the goal(s) of the project? Please include links to data sources if known.</p>	<p>Since the beginning of the pandemic, FTE related enrollment at CCC has dropped 26%, creating challenging budget conditions. The college is presented with the challenge of providing holistic and effective support to students with limited resources. Fortunately, increases in federal funding throughout the pandemic have helped cover the gaps in FTE related enrollment funds. However, the college cannot rely on these funds for future budgeting. As a proactive measure, the pilot program serves as an opportunity to demonstrate whether paying an hourly wage to student workers can recruit and retain qualified student candidates to fill in gaps in staff capacity. Unfortunately, the college has experienced increasing challenges with recruiting students supported by tuition waivers. Applications and participation in both ASG and the Peer Assistant program have dropped in recent years. Several years ago, ASG membership averaged 16-20 students, and the Peer Assistant program was about the same - and there were typically more applicants than positions available. Currently, the numbers for each group are at about half of average, and departments with Peer Assistants are struggling to find applicants and fill roles. Research has shown that the rising cost of tuition is a major contributing factor to the increased demand and hours for student employment (Herder 2021; Pusser, 2010). Even with financial aid, grants, and scholarships, students are looking for on and off-campus employment to fill the gaps in the cost of attendance (Herder 2021; Pusser, 2010). However, on-campus student employment is generally limited to federal work-study funds, tuition waivers or stipends that equate to well below minimum wage. Burnside et, al. research (2019) highlighted that one of the main factors impacting student employment is competitive wages off-campus. Therefore, in order for on-campus student employment to recruit and retain qualified candidates, institutions must reckon and adjust their compensation to a competitive or living wage (Herder, 2021; Smith 2019). Students who qualify for work-study could apply for work-study positions as a way to offset college costs and assist departmental staffing needs. However, the college receives a limited amount of work-study funding, leading to a limited number of positions available to students. Additionally, when the funding is spread over the entire year, the student is likely to be in a position where they work fewer numbers of hours per week than the department needs, or the work-study funds get used up by that student before the academic year is over - and the staffing need by the department still remains. Moreover, not all students qualify for work-study. When calculating the tuition waiver and work hours conversion, Peer Assistants make an average of only \$10.10</p>

	<p>an hour. The Title III Peer Assistant Coordinator has conducted an evaluation and assessment of the Peer Assistant program. When asked “If you were to participate in the Peer Assistant Program, how would you like to be compensated?”, (50%) of respondents stated they’d prefer an hourly-wage and (37%) stated they’d prefer a tuition waiver. Additionally (85%) of respondents indicated they would prefer to work either 1-5 hours a week or 6-9 hours per week rather than 10-15 hours a week. Through the pilot we seek to offer 8-10 hour a week positions at \$15 an hour in order to gather data to inform our hypothesis that offering competitive wages would increase student desire to work on campus. Little to no research exists on compensation models impact on recruitment and retention for on-campus student employment and this pilot has the opportunity to inform both the college and increase knowledge of best practices in the field.</p>
<p>10. What is the benefit of this project (e.g. revenue potential, impact on student enrollment, retention, completion, etc.)?</p>	<p>We expect the project to create three significant areas of benefit to the college: 1) Those employed as Peer Support Specialists will benefit from working on campus, resulting in increased engagement and sense of belonging as well as an increased ability to focus on their studies. We expect increased retention and completion for students employed in these positions. According to Kulum and Cramer (2006) and Pike et al. (2008), students who hold on-campus jobs tend to have deeper connections to the campus community and higher academic success and persistence rates. Specifically, opportunities for students to work amongst peers and other professionals who directly support their development can help build a students’ sense of belonging, connection, and value to the campus community (McCormick et al., 2010). Considering the competing priorities of community college students, on-campus employment is convenient, accessible, and creates stronger connections to students between their academic resources, and cocurricular activities (Cheng & Alcantara, 2004). 2) The college will also be able to increase its ability to provide holistic support in an environment of limited resources. Compared to hiring full-time staff, hiring students to fill part-time positions is relatively inexpensive. Having areas that provide student support more fully staffed will help increase enrollment and retention. 3) Students served by the Peer Support Specialists will also benefit from the effectiveness of peer to peer support. Research has found that peer to peer services can be an effective way to support students (Suresh et al, 2021). Waite (2021) argues that colleges can support more students and respond to increasing support needs by scaling peer-to-peer models of support.</p>
<p>11. What activities will be proposed in the project?</p>	<p>1) An application process will be developed similar to the current work-study system. 2) Departments or student services areas needing student staffing assistance will have a method to create position descriptions and post openings. 3) An onboarding program will be implemented using best practices and the research conducted by the Peer Assistant Coordinator. 4) Students will receive regular evaluations from their supervisor. 5) An assessment of the overall program (including the effectiveness of hourly wages) will be conducted annually to focus on retention, student and departmental satisfaction, and other factors.</p>
<p>12. Identify stakeholders who will likely be involved in the project planning or delivery.</p>	<p>John Ginsburg, Kelly Love, Briana Villalobos, and Tara Sprehe, with the support of Melissa Richardson and Vicki Hedges, are the key stakeholders in this conversation. Additionally, through the work of Briana (Title III funded Peer Assistant Coordinator), we have interviewed and surveyed with many former and current Peer Assistants as well as Peer Assistant site supervisors including John Ginsburg, Ariane Rakich, Annissa Rhydners, Kara Leonard, Felicia Arce, Esther Sexton, Beth Wicklund, Ray Atkinson, and Robin Dryden. Moving forward, we plan to work with Terrie Sanne to ensure work-study roles and these new positions can work in conjunction with one another and to address issues such as whether we offer comparable wages.</p>
<p>13. What qualitative or quantitative measures would be meaningful in</p>	<p>We will use both qualitative and quantitative measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot. Surveys of student and supervisor feedback will be used to provide formative information on program implementation and identify areas for</p>

<p>evaluating the success of this project?</p>	<p>improvement as well as satisfaction with the compensation model. Student retention and GPA will be used to assess the impact on the students hired for this position. Additionally, we will compare the number of students recruited in the pilot to previous recruitment using tuition waivers. Finally, a cost benefit analysis can provide information on whether employing students with an hourly wage is an effective use of limited funds.</p>
<p>14. Describe the investment (time, funds, etc.) that would probably be needed to get this project off the ground.</p>	<p>The costs and labor time of designing the positions, implementing the pilot project, and developing evaluation measures will predominantly be covered by staff funded by the Title III grant. We are requesting funds from the Innovation Grant to support the cost of wages for the positions. Further calculations and analysis need to be concluded within CCC's Human Resources department to finalize the hourly wage. However, we are suggesting hiring 8-10 students to work approximately 8-10 hours per week at around \$15 per hour, in order to be competitive with wages in the Portland Metro region. We will finalize the hourly wage in conjunction with conversations with Melissa and Vicki as well as with Terrie Sannie to ensure we are offering a competitive wage that does not negatively impact the ability of work study to recruit students. 8 students for 10 hours per week at \$15 an hour over three academic terms of 11 weeks ($8 * 10 * \\$15 * 11 * 3$) = \$39,600 10 students for 10 hours a week at \$15 an hour over three academic terms of 11 weeks ($10 * 10 * \\$15 * 11 * 3$) = \$49,500</p>
<p>15. Have you identified a grant or other funding source to help cover related expenses?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>16. If yes to 15, please provide more information about the grant or other funding source.</p>	<p>We will utilize the Title III grant funding to fund the staff time associated with the developing these new positions, writing job descriptions, and designing training and support practices. We are seeking Innovation Funds to pay for student wages in the pilot.</p>
<p>17. Beyond the start-up costs, is additional or ongoing funding required to maintain this project in the future? If so, please describe the costs (amounts, frequency, etc.) as well as if you have identified sources for ongoing funding.</p>	<p>This project is designed as proof of concept to determine if paying students in these positions is a financially sustainable way to provide equitable support to students while also increasing student retention and success. If the decision was made to continue the program past the pilot, ongoing costs would need to be explored by the institution.</p>
<p>18. What level of urgency best fits your idea?</p>	<p>Short-term, needs to be explored within next 4-12 months</p>
<p>19. If you answered "other" in question 18, please describe.</p>	
<p>20. Please include additional information you would like to share:</p>	

Survey to share feedback on this Innovation Fund proposal: <https://forms.gle/J4vQtucRsKMfsVYR8>