

Title of Grant: Curriculum Development of User Support/Help Desk Program

S2008 – 186P –PF

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Abstract:

This professional development grant was designed to develop/revise new and existing curriculum for a User Support/Help Desk program preparing students for national industry certifications, pathways to an AAS degree in Information Technology (IT) and related career paths, and to enter the IT workforce with a good paying entry level position. Benefits for the college include increased enrollment, increased High School Dual Enrollment participation, increased graduation rates, and internships with our current business partners. These benefits are in line with both the needs of the college and “Dateline 2009”.

Actual Outcomes:

Inclusion of a new Career Studies Certificate, revising course materials for the help desk courses, and training/certification.

Rather than modify our existing Help Desk Technician Career Studies Certificate, it was removed from the college catalog and the Technical Support Specialist Career Studies Certificate was introduced. This resulted from several factors: feedback we received from several of local businesses, discussions amongst IT faculty, and the fact that “Help Desk” has a negative connotation. In an effort to attract more students to the program it was necessary to use terminology that will elicit a positive response.

Part of the process of introducing the Technical Support Specialist Career Studies Certificate included the addition of a new course and replacing a course. An important skill that support technicians must have is the ability to assess and repair computer equipment, therefore the class ETR 285 Fundamentals of Microcomputer Repair was added to the program. The keyboarding class was removed as it required a pre-requisite course that was not part of the existing program. This forced students to take an additional course that was not required to complete the Help Desk program, so that they could take the keyboarding class that was required for program completion. AST 114 Keyboarding for Information Processing does not require a pre-requisite; therefore it has been included in the new program.

Three training courses were successfully completed over the summer. Two of them were Microsoft courses that covered the material for two exams leading to Microsoft Certified Desktop Technician certification. The third course covered the material for the HDI Support Center Analyst certification; it also included the exam which I passed. The content covered in these training courses was instrumental in revising ITE 180 and ITE 180 (Help Desk courses). These courses will help to prepare students enrolled

in this program for the certification exams, which the IT department encourages them to take. Funding for the training courses was provided through a Perkins grant.

Other Colleges:

n/a

Discussion and Critique:

One goal of this project was to include a capstone project which would consist of procuring internships in the Help Desk departments of our local businesses. After further review, the IT department determined that it was more feasible to wait and see what the response is to the new program, before making it a required element to the curriculum. However, it will be strongly encouraged that students participate in an internship.

Evaluation:

The primary method of evaluating this project at this stage is as follows: introduction of the new Technical Support Technician Career Studies Certificate, training/certification, and the revision of the Help Desk courses.

The new program was passed by the curriculum committee and goes into effect in the 2009-2010 catalog. The three training classes that I completed, one of which led to my certification as a HDI Support Center Analyst, helped in the revision of the two Help Desk courses, ITE 180 and ITE 182. The training and revision was used to mold the program so that it includes skill sets that our business partners are seeking in help desk employees.

The results of the new program will be evaluated after the revised courses have been taught and again when students graduate from the program. Some of the methods that will be examined include the pass/fail rates of these courses, the percentage of students who take and pass the certification exams that these classes help prepare them for, graduation rates, and the percentage of students who get hired after completion of the program.

Dissemination:

Although the new program does not officially start until the next academic year, the revised courses will be taught this spring. The pass/fail rate of the students will be recorded and tracked. All the students that pass the classes will be encouraged to take the certification exams that these classes cover. The results of certification pass/fail rates will also be recorded and tracked.

Another aspect of the program that will be evaluated is recruiting, retention rates and job placement. Marketing and recruiting efforts will be initiated. Visitation with middle and high schools will be coordinated with our administration. Entrance and exit interviews/surveys will be given to students that enroll and complete the program. We will work closely with our Employment Assistance Officer to place graduates with good jobs.