
2016 Annual Performance Report

Submitted: __

VERNON COLLEGE

Grantee Name

4400 COLLEGE DR, VERNON, TX 76384

Grantee Address

P031A150109

PR Award Number

229504

Unit (NCES) ID

Project Director Information:

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Title III - Part A - Strengthening Institutions

Department of Education Grant Program

Title III Strengthening Institutions

Project Title

2-year Public

Type and Control of Institution

Year 1

Grant Year

Authorized Representative:

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Date 01/11/2017

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Section 1: Executive Summary

1. The impact of the grant on the institution's capacity to contribute to fulfilling the goals of the legislation.

Strategy 1: Provide students, faculty, staff and administration with the information they need to make data informed decisions.

After successful completion of the Request for Proposal(RFP)process for procuring the new Enterprise Resource Program/Student Information System (ERP/SIS)as detailed in the approved grant, the Student Information System Coordinator(SISC)worked closely with the Implementation Team on this strategy. She implemented a strong communication process. Banners are displayed in very prominent locations at both college campuses providing stakeholders continuous information on status of implementation.Departmental interviews were conducted in order to assess and review current workflow processes and areas of improvement. In addition to an organized review and assessment of current workflows, staff and faculty were empowered to focus on process improvements through a problem-finders process initiated by the SISC. Employees are encouraged to report issues found during the workflow process or during the day-to-day process. These are utilized to inform the improvement to be implemented in the new workflows. The ERP vendor/consultant is leveraging the workflows to ensure that implementation of the ERP system meets the needs of the college. The detailed workflows have already led to improvement of three processes: two in the Business Office Payroll area and one in the Human Resources area.

Strategy 2: Increase academic support through proactive and intrusive advising.

Vernon College hired the Student Success Pathway Coordinator (SSPC) and a Student Success Specialist (SSS) in Grant Year One. The College implemented an intrusive advising process with an initial cohort (n = 701) of at-risk students. As a result, the number of students impacted in the first year includes a percentage of the total student population. Vernon College understands that the lessons learned from this will have to inform the design for scaling intrusive advising. Student Success Pathway (SSP) personnel will continue to explore additional avenues to increase participation in student outreach workshops in Grant Year Two.

Exceeding year one requirements, 19 “mini-grant” projects were successfully completed. Faculty continue to institutionalize their findings to improve student outcomes. For example, one faculty member came to the conclusion that face-to-face courses were more appropriate for their students in Biology. As an additional example, two English faculty contextualized their writing assignments to include career exploration and found them to be effective. All three faculty members in the aforementioned examples are institutionalizing the strategies into their respective courses.

Student Peer Mentors were identified and trained. The strategy to identify students (mentees) in need of assistance, to partner with the Peer Mentors, is being reevaluated to increase the number of learners positively impacted. The College is planning focus groups to learn how to better recruit mentees, and to also learn more about the impact that peer mentoring can have on student engagement and retention.

2. How has the grant helped to carry out the mission of the institution?

Vernon College’s mission encompasses teaching, learning, and leading. The College’s outstanding faculty provide daily instruction to students. In addition to classroom teaching responsibilities, VC instructors have been trained in proactive, intrusive advisement, which they implement during face-to-face meetings with students. Moreover, select faculty have improved their teaching methods through the creation and implementation of best practices “mini-grants.” The mini-grant process for faculty is going well. Four faculty (2 English, 2 Biology) institutionalized their findings to improve student outcomes. One faculty member came to the conclusion that face-to-face courses were more appropriate for their students in Biology. The two English faculty contextualized their writing assignments to include career exploration and found them to be effective. Both are institutionalizing the strategies into their courses. With regard to learning, initial indicators support that numerous Year One “mini grants” have had a positive impact on student retention, academic progression, and course completion. Vernon College has demonstrated its commitment to proactive and intrusive advising by becoming the first institution in the State of Texas to contract with Unit 4 Solutions Management, a state-of-the-art ERP/SIS provider.

If your institution has experienced any unexpected outcomes as a result of this grant, that affect for better or worse its capacity to fulfill the goals of the legislation, tell us about them here.

Over the course of Grant Year One, Vernon College has experienced four unexpected outcomes as follows: (1) The SSPC, the SSS, and the Project Director have all experienced challenges with regard to crucial outreach services to students and their subsequent consistent follow-ups with the highly valuable and intrusive retention programs and services; (2) Although the Student Success Specialist had no trouble recruiting, training, and deploying peer mentors, the challenge continues to lie in the ability to seek mentees who are willing to participate in crucial peer mentoring outreach services; (3) Education, advertising, recruitment, submission, review, and implementation of the 19 “mini-grant” projects exceeded the required

number of 15, as specified in the Year One grant requirement. Additionally, the Title III staff were pleasantly surprised by the number of faculty members who enthusiastically participated in the mini-grant process; and (4) The opportunity to generate data to meet the goals of advising, retention and completion provided by the projected capacity of the selected ERP/SIS exceeded the outcome initially anticipated in the grant.

Tell us about any challenges that you have had during the reporting period or that you anticipate in the coming year which may affect your ability to meet the goals of your grant. Include, if applicable, your institution's plans to meet these challenges.

For Strategy 1, Vernon College has made substantial progress towards meeting the grant objectives for Strategy 1 in Grant Year One. As a result of the Three Rivers Systems(CAMS)/Unit 4 Solutions Management merger into one company and Texas State Law requiring that public colleges and universities participate in the RFP for major purchases, the search for the new ERP/SIS began November 2015. Vernon College administration created an ERP/SIS Task Force to oversee the vetting period. Three vendors responded to the RFP process. Each vendor performed initial discovery of needs, site visit demonstration, and final bid submissions.

The Three Rivers Systems (CAMS)/Unit 4 Solutions Management (U4SM) was selected as the new ERP/SIS system for Vernon College. This system was selected because the research indicated that it was the best database tool to employ based on the college's Strengthening Institution's focus, as well as the daily needs of faculty, staff, and students. The contract was secured April 1, 2016.

The ERP/SIS system that U4SM presented was based off of current and new technology that utilized the cloud-based structure and remote, offsite servers. While the technology to support such a system is currently available, the software to support an ERP/SIS did need to be built. U4SM began initial installation of the system onto the dedicated Vernon College servers in June of 2016. In the initial grant proposal, the timeline outlined that the completed ERP/SIS system was to be installed and fully functional by December 2016 in Grant Year Two.

Due to the nature of technology advancement and U4SM's inclusion of this technology, the timeline for full installation and deployment of U4SM will be extended by an additional 16 months and completely functional and in use by October 2018. Vernon College has developed a comprehensive plan to meet these new timeline changes. Vernon College has continued to proceed with plans for process improvement, workflow development and refinement, and system restructuring. Those results are indicated in the progress report.

For Strategy 2, Vernon College recognizes the challenge to market and advertise programs to improve student participation in the SSP outreach opportunities. For Grant Year One, the SSP team planned and delivered the following programs and/or services: (1) The Fall Student Success Series - a weekly sequence of study skills workshops for students during the first six weeks of the fall 2016 semester (63 students); (2) Academic Coaching – one-on-one, face-to-face intervention with students who are having difficulties with their academic coursework (198 students); (3) Chaps Express – extended orientation opportunity which focuses on preparing students for making adjustments to college life (197 students); and (4) Peer Mentoring – the matching of carefully selected and trained peer mentors with students (mentees) in need of guidance pertaining to successfully navigating college life (12 mentors).

For Grant Year Two, the SSP team will continue to create and implement innovative approaches toward the marketing, recruitment, and delivery of valuable outreach initiatives. These initiatives assist students in making academic progression toward meeting the grant-related strategies of improved retention and academic program completion.

Section 2: Accreditation

Institution's primary accrediting agency.

 X Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Section 3: Activities, Focus Areas, and Outcomes

Total Expenditures during the Reporting Period

Total federal dollars spent on your Title III/V grant: \$444,090.00

Total federal dollars spent on Title III/V project management and evaluation: \$5,000.00

Total remaining federal dollars spent on your Title III/V activities (Line 1 - Line 2): \$439,090.00

Total number of activities: 2

Grant Activities and Outcomes

Grant activity:

Provide students, faculty, staff, and administration with the information they need to make data informed decisions through the purchase and implementation of a new ERP/SIS.

Total Spent: \$376,408.00

Focus Area: Institutional Management

Legislative Allowable Activities	Dollars Spent	% of Dollars
Funds management, administrative management, and acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening funds management.	\$376,408.00	100

Process Measures

LAA Category: *Funds management, administrative management, and acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening funds management.*

Did the number of FTEs hired for improvement of administrative management systems increase?	Yes
<i>If yes:</i> Start FTE <u>0</u> End FTE <u>1</u> Application Objective <u>1</u>	
Were relevant staff trained in how to use new administrative management systems?	Yes
<i>If yes:</i> Start # trained staff <u>0</u> End # trained staff <u>11</u> Application Objective 1 <u>11</u>	
Did you establish or enhance a funds management quality control system?	Yes
Did you establish or enhance a purchasing and inventory management system?	Yes
Did you establish or enhance a course scheduling system?	Yes
Did you establish or enhance a student financial aid system?	Yes
Did you establish or enhance an institutional research system?	Yes
Did you establish or enhance an admissions or registration system?	Yes
Did you establish or enhance a student tracking system?	Yes

Grant activity:
 Increase academic support through proactive and intrusive advising.

Total Spent: \$62,682.00

Focus Area: Student Services and Outcomes

Legislative Allowable Activities	Dollars Spent	% of Dollars
Support of faculty exchanges, faculty development, and faculty fellowships to assist in attaining advanced degrees in the field of instruction of the faculty.	\$2,600.00	4
Tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success.	\$60,082.00	96

Process Measures

LAA Category: *Support of faculty exchanges, faculty development, and faculty fellowships to assist in attaining advanced degrees in the field of instruction of the faculty.*

Did the number of faculty participating in developmental activities (seminars, workshops, etc.) increase?	Yes
<i>If yes:</i> Start # of faculty <u>0</u> End # of faculty <u>42</u> Application Objective 2 42	
Other Did the number of staff participating in developmental activities increase?	Yes
<i>If yes:</i> Start # <u>0</u> End # <u>30</u> Application Objective 2 29	

LAA Category: *Tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success.*

Did access to tutors increase?	Yes
Did the number of counselors increase?	Yes
<i>If yes:</i> Start # <u>3</u> End # <u>5</u> Application Objective 2 5	
Did the number of students using counseling services increase?	Yes
<i>If yes:</i> Start # <u>0</u> End # <u>470</u> Application Objective 2 420	
Did the number of students satisfied with counseling services increase?	Yes
<i>If yes:</i> Start # <u>0</u> End # <u>467</u> Application Objective 2 376	

Other Did the number of students using student services' programs (Student Success Pathway Coordinator, Student Success Specialist)	Yes
<i>If yes:</i> Start # <u>0</u> End # <u>701</u> Application Objective 2 560	

Focus Area: Student Support Services Outcomes

This section depicts institutional outcomes that can be categorized in this focus area. Information is provided on the measures that the grantee felt were *most reflective of their activities supported by Title III/V funds* for the current reporting period. Grantees were required to answer at least two of the measures questions.

Has the institution's retention rate improved?	Will report next year
<i>If yes:</i> Initial rate __ Final rate __ Goal __	*Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting.
Has the average number of credits completed by students increased?	Will report next year
<i>If yes:</i> Initial # __ Final # __ Goal __	*Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting.
Has the average GPA of students increased?	Will report next year
<i>If yes:</i> Initial GPA __ Final GPA __ Goal __	*Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting.
Has the number of students continuing to further postsecondary education increased?	Will report next year
<i>If yes:</i> Initial # __ Final # __ Goal __	*Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting.
Has the retention rate of students who received academic counseling increased?	Will report next year
<i>If yes:</i> Initial rate __ Final rate __ Goal __	*Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting.
Has the retention rate of students who received tutoring services increased?	Will report next year

If yes: *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial rate __ Final rate __ Goal __	
Has the retention rate of students who participated in other student services programs increased?	Will report next year
If yes: *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial rate __ Final rate __ Goal __	
Has the average number of credits completed by students who received academic counseling increased?	Will report next year
If yes: *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial # __ Final # __ Goal __	
Has the average number of credits completed by students who received tutoring services increased?	Will report next year
If yes: *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial # __ Final # __ Goal __	
Has the average number of credits completed by students who participated in other student services programs increased?	Will report next year
If yes: *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial # __ Final # __ Goal __	
Has the average GPA of students who received academic counseling increased?	Will report next year
If yes: *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial GPA __ Final GPA __ Goal __	
Has the average GPA of students who received tutoring services increased?	Will report next year

<i>If yes:</i> *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial GPA __ Final GPA __ Goal __	
Has the GPA of students who participated in other student services programs increased?	Will report next year
<i>If yes:</i> *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial GPA __ Final GPA __ Goal __	
Has the number of students continuing to further postsecondary education who received academic counseling increased?	Will report next year
<i>If yes:</i> *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial # __ Final # __ Goal __	
Has the number of students continuing to further postsecondary education who received tutoring services increased?	Will report next year
<i>If yes:</i> *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial # __ Final # __ Goal __	
Has the number of students continuing to further postsecondary education who participated in other student services programs increased?	Will report next year
<i>If yes:</i> *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting. Initial # __ Final # __ Goal __	

Focus Area: Institutional Management Outcomes

This section depicts institutional outcomes that can be categorized in this focus area. Information is provided on the measures that the grantee felt were *most reflective of their activities supported by Title III/V funds* for the current reporting period. Grantees were required to answer at least two of the measures questions.

Has the institution's information management infrastructure improved?	Will report next year
<p><i>If yes:</i> *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting.</p> <p>Initial \$ of infrastructure __ Final \$ of infrastructure __ Goal __</p>	
Has the institution's information management capabilities improved?	Will report next year
<p><i>If yes:</i> *Information will be available for grant year 2 reporting.</p> <p>Initial __ Final __ Goal __</p>	

Section 4: Project Status [See attachment](#)

Below is a list of objectives for each activity carried out over the current reporting period.

Activity: Provide students, faculty, staff, and administration with the information they need to make data informed decisions through the purchase and implementation of a new ERP/SIS.

On-Schedule Activity Objectives

The objective was to identify appropriate ERP/SIS system, and select the system for installation.

Activity: Increase academic support through proactive and intrusive advising.

On-Schedule Activity Objectives

Develop and implement programs to increase student retention, completion, and/or successful transfer.

Section 4: Budget Summary

Category	Carryover Balance from Previous FY	Actual Budget	Expenditures	Non-Federal Expenditures	Carryover Balance	Next Year's Actual Budget	Changes (Y/N)
Personnel	\$0.00	\$87,383.00	\$87,383.00	\$134,075.42	\$0.00	\$138,310.00	No
Fringe Benefits	\$0.00	\$27,323.00	\$27,323.00	\$35,949.61	\$0.00	\$44,259.00	No
Travel	\$0.00	\$3,043.00	\$3,043.00	\$13,689.74	\$0.00	\$6,000.00	No
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	No
Supplies	\$0.00	\$297,844.00	\$297,844.00	\$2,295.61	\$0.00	\$200,641.00	No
Contractual	\$0.00	\$28,497.00	\$28,497.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$58,200.00	No
Construction	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	No
Endowment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	No
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	No
Total	\$0.00	\$444,090.00	\$444,090.00	\$186,010.38	\$0.00	\$447,410.00	

Budget Narrative

On September 30, 2016 Vernon College requested permission to reallocate funds within the approved line items of Grant Year 1. Approval was received on October 6, 2016 and the information presented on Section 4: Budget Spreadsheet and in this Narrative reflects the reallocation.

Personnel – 87,383.00 (November 2015 – September 2016)

Student Success Specialist (\$34,833) -- As stated in the Grant Budget, the first Student Success Specialist was hired on November 1, 2015 with salary prorated for the 11 month period through September 30, 2016.

Student Information Software Coordinator (\$43,050) – Although this hire was projected in the Grant Budget to be accomplished by November 1, 2015. The position was filled on December 15, 2015 and the Coordinator began work on January 4, 2016. To be able to employ the best qualified individual to carry out the work described in Strategy 1 of this grant, the actual salary for this employee was higher than the budget expenditure in the grant. For smoother budgeting purposes, Vernon College assumed the additional expense from institutional funds beginning January 4, 2016 through the end of the grant period.

Mini-grants for Faculty Course Schedule Advisors (\$9,500) – 19 excellent mini-grants were submitted and approved.

Fringe Benefits – \$27,323 (November 2015 – September 2016)

As noted above the Student Success Specialist began work on November 1, 2015 with fringe benefits prorated for 11 months through September 30, 2016. The Student Information Software Coordinator began work January 4, 2016 at higher than budgeted fringe benefits. For smoother budgeting purposes, Vernon College assumed the additional expense from institutional funds beginning January 4, 2016 through the end of the grant period.

Travel – Faculty and Staff – \$2,043

Strategy 2 of the grant pertains to increasing academic support through proactive and intrusive advising including creating a student success pathway designed to maximize students' progress at each point of the community college experience. During the first year of this grant, the Program Officer approved conference attendance for the Student Success Pathway Coordinator and the Student Success Specialist for the following conferences:

- The Student Success Pathway Coordinator and the Student Success Specialist attended the 2016 Spring Leadership Conference – North Texas Community College Consortium (NTCC), January 22, 2016. Grant-related Single Function/Goal/Priority Strategy: Faculty/staff attendance at conferences and/or workshops.

The Spring Leadership Conference included sessions on developing educational pathways and redesigning/re-imagining the community college. The outcome of attendance was to acquire ideas and best practices for the development of the Vernon College student success pathway and to implement those changes.

- The Student Success Pathway Coordinator attended the Texas Academic Advising Network Annual Conference (TEXAAN), February 17– 19, 2016. Grant-related Single Function/Goal/Priority Strategy: Faculty/staff attendance at conferences and/or workshops.

This conference focused on advanced approaches to academic advising. The outcome of the travel was to acquire ideas and best practices to infuse throughout Vernon College in line with Strategy 2 of the grant.

- The Student Success Specialist attended the 2016 National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Region 7 Conference, February 29 –March 2, 2016. Grant-related Single Function/Goal/Priority Strategy: Intrusive Advising Best Practices.

The result of attending this conference was to research best practices in intrusive advising and to network with other academic advising professionals for potential speakers pertaining to the professional development requirements of the grant.

The Programs Officer also approved conference attendance for two of the College's counselors to attend the 2016 UNT (University of North Texas) Transfer Spotlight.

The conference provided the tools required to assist students in the transfer process, encourage transfers to four-year institutions and relay relevant information needed to assist with transfers.

Travel – Consultants -- \$1,000

Under Strategy 2 of this grant, two consultants were brought to Vernon College to conduct a Proactive Advising workshop open to all College faculty and staff. A total of 72 members of the College's faculty and staff participated in the training.

Supplies – \$297,844

- As noted in the grant budget in Year One, two computer workstations for the Student Success Specialists and the Student Information Software Coordinator were purchased.
- ERP/SIS – the Unit 4 Enterprise Resource Planning Student Information System and Dynamics GP fiscal resource management software were selected at the end of February, 2016. The contract was approved by the Vernon College Board of Trustees at the March 9, 2016 meeting. The contract was signed by the College President after that meeting and the first payment for this system was made in March 2016.

Contractual – \$28,497

Unit 4 ERP/SIS (\$21,897)

Year one payments for the Unit 4 ERP/SIS and Dynamics GP fiscal resource management software training and data migration. The software was not purchased until early 2016. Most of the training will take place in Year 2.

External Consultants (\$1,600)

As part of Strategy 2, two consultants were brought to the College to contact a Proactive Advising workshop open to all College faculty and staff. A total of 72 faculty and staff participated in this workshop.

External Evaluator (\$5,000)

As stated in the grant proposal, during year 1, the external evaluator focused on Strategy 2 and consulted with the Project Director and Student Success Pathways staff to ensure effective assessment instruments and procedures. Due to scheduling conflicts the evaluator will be on campus shortly after the beginning of year 2 to conduct a formal review of the entire Vernon College Title III program.