

**Improving student learning and student retention at the undergraduate level
Application Cover Sheet**

Maximum funding for any single grant: \$50,000.

Proposal must be limited to two pages plus a budget page, in addition to the cover sheet.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Complete cover sheet
2. Attach 2 page proposal summary
3. Attach 1 page budget
4. For projects requesting continuing funding attach a brief interim progress-toward-goals report
5. Submit your proposal electronically to your college office for approval. College offices will submit recommended college proposals to the Provost office **no later than March 16, 2007 for FY'08 funding.**

Name Lynda Goodfellow Date 15 March 2007

Department and College Affiliation School of Health Professions, College of Health and Human Sciences

Phone 1-1498 Email ltgoodfellow@gsu.edu

Collaborators (other departments, if any):

Divisions of Nutrition, Physical Therapy and Respiratory Therapy

Title of Your Proposal Sophomore Connection for Careers in Health Professions

Theme of Your Proposal (Support for students; Fostering connections; Enhancing advisement; Other innovations for engaging students in learning): Student advisement and mentoring, retention

College rating (approved; not approved) _____

**Sophomore Connection for Careers in Health Professions
Reviewer Feedback**

Applicant/Proposal Title/Theme: Lynda Goodfellow, School of Health Professions, College of Health and Human Sciences. Title: Sophomore Connection for Careers in Health Professions

Directions: After reviewing the proposal, answer the questions below by placing a checkmark on the continuum. Please add any comments you wish to make in the comments section or on back. Keep in mind that we are interested in broad impact, strong assessment, faculty involvement, and engaging pedagogy when appropriate.

1. The purpose of the project is consistent with the stated goal of RPG, including broad impact	1 Disagree	2	3	4	5 Agree
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Comments:

2. The proposed goals are significant, challenging, achievable, and relate to the RPG goal.	1 Disagree	2	3	4	5 Agree
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Comments:

3. The activities are innovative and should lead to the successful implementation of the project.	1 Disagree	2	3	4	5 Agree
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Comments:

4. Evaluation procedures are well-designed and linked to project activities, including assessment in terms of RPG goals	1 Disagree	2	3	4	5 Agree
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Comments:

5. Budget expenditures are reasonable, justified, and directly linked to the project goals and activities.	1 Disagree	2	3	4	5 Agree
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Comments:

TOTAL SCORE _____

Other Comments:

Sophomore Connection for Careers in Health Professions

Most professional programs in the College of Health and Human Sciences admit students in their junior year of study. For example, undergraduate students apply for admission into the Division of Nutrition and Division of Respiratory Therapy after completing 60 hours of prerequisite academic work. With this process we have learned that there is a need to foster, nurture and advise students who declare a “pre-major” (pre-RT, pre-nursing, pre-nutrition, pre-PT) through a connection between these students and the major department. This is currently being done through open houses or other recruitment avenues. We propose the formation of a Sophomore Connections class for students who desire a career in a health profession wherein peer leaders would advise and instruct students through both informative lectures and interactive small group settings. Advising and mentoring students appropriately at this stage of their academic career can help them make the most appropriate career decision.

To generate interest in and to make the Sophomore Connections class successful, the teaching and learning activities will be based on the Peer Led Team Learning (PLTL) method. A search of the PLTL literature reveals several successful models whereby student-leaders (peers) guide the activities of a small group of students in weekly meetings. In PLTL, students work together to solve problems that can be encountered in the classroom and clinical environments. The peer leaders are trained to ensure that the students are actively and productively engaged with the material and with each other. Results indicated that this supportive format encourages questions and discussions that lead students to a more complete understanding of the issues, enhanced learning through teamwork, and to communicate more effectively. Peer leaders learn and gain valuable teaching and group management skills.

Approximately 1,000 undergraduate students enrolled at Georgia State University indicate they are interested in health careers. In addition, there are a great number of freshmen who enroll and list their major as pre-nursing. In an attempt to retain those students who have identified a health profession as a major and to capture those students who declare pre-nursing, but who will not be admitted to nursing due to the limited number of slots in the nursing program, we propose a Sophomore Connections class. The proposed class will create an environment where students can explore health professions and can weigh their options with the support of their peers and mentors.

Course topics and activities include:

- The health professions programs offered at Georgia State University
- The requirements to enter the various health professions and programs
- The career opportunities and demand for graduates in these fields
- Identifying the support that is available at Georgia State University to pre-majors of health profession programs (i.e., advisement, student clubs)
- Field trips to Grady Memorial Hospital, Fulton Co. Health Department and other health care facilities to shadow a health professional (preferably a Georgia State Alumnus)

- Holding a small group discussion with the sports medicine team of the Georgia State University men's and women's athletic teams (physician, sports dietitian, athletic trainer)

The main goal of the Sophomore Connections class will be to build a community of sophomore students who have like-minded interests: primarily the pursuit of a career in a health profession. The number of sophomores targeted for this connections course is 25 per section. A full-time faculty member will have responsibility for the course along with two graduate students who will be trained in PLTL by the faculty member. The graduate assistants will lead the class discussion on a weekly basis and will meet in small groups with students identified by pre-major to reinforce the lecture material and provide further guidance as needed. Ideally, sophomore students who do well in the course and go on to succeed as graduate students can return to the course as teachers and mentors to future sophomore students.

This class offers a number of educational opportunities: a supportive environment that helps each student build an understanding of health related disciplines; the promotion and optimization of learning shaped by the less formal class structure that encourages discussion and conceptual understanding; and increased communication and confidence of pre-major students as they seek the professional program of their choice.

This course is projected to be offered for the first time in the spring semester 2008. The time line includes the development of the course in fall 2007 as well as the recruitment of two graduate teaching assistants. After identifying the graduate assistants, we will train them in peer-led activities. After the course is offered, an evaluation will be performed through student evaluations (both the formal university evaluation as well as a form designed to capture more qualitative data) and by tracking the students to determine the success rate in admittance to health profession programs at Georgia State University and the graduation rates over time. If the course attracts sufficient numbers of sophomores during registration it will be offered in both fall and spring semesters. The experience of being with faculty and graduate students who have "gone down the road" in a health career can have a profound effect on students during their time at Georgia State University and in their professional growth.

Budget

1. Hiring a PTI to release a faculty member to recruit and supervise graduate students and to develop peer training activities, course syllabus, and coordination of field trips
\$3,500
2. Hire 2 GTA-As for fall and spring semesters
\$8,000
3. Travel to reimburse graduate students for hospital and clinic fieldtrips
100 miles x .445 \$44.50

TOTAL \$ 11,545