

Office of Senator Barbara Boxer
Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations Request Form
Deadline: February 23, 9:00 PM EST/6:00 PM PST

Requesting Entity: Digital Teaching and Learning Consortium

Requesting Individual(s): Dr. Jeremy C. Ball, Academic Senate President, College of San Mateo

Priority: 1 of 1 requests

Project Name: Digital Teaching and Learning Consortium: Electronic Portfolio Project

Amount Requested: \$1,500,000

Bill:

Agency:

Account:

Project Description (150 word limit):

To effect positive change in our California colleges and universities, we must create techniques to assess student learning that provide rich and meaningful feedback to institutions, instructors, and students. Student electronic portfolios, a popular and respected response to this need, serve as a dynamic academic “space” for students to 1) archive work that demonstrates learning, 2) express an online identity 3), publicly commit to their educational goals, 4) reflect upon their learning, thus gaining a deeper understanding of their progress, and 5) demonstrate competence for potential employers. While many institutions have begun using this tool, a problem is already evident: electronic portfolio systems are campus-based and are not portable to, or assessable by, other institutions.

The goal of this group of California Community Colleges and California State Universities is to develop an electronic portfolio system that allows for “seamless portability” of student work between institutions and systems.

Project Justification (500 limit):

To effect positive change in our California colleges and universities, we must create techniques to assess student learning that provide rich and meaningful feedback to institutions, instructors, and students. Institutions of higher education across the country understand this need and are implementing a variety of methods to do so, tracking student learning over the four years of a college education. However, the traditional pattern of students starting at one institution and finishing four years later with a bachelor’s degree no longer represents the educational pathways of the majority of California learners. Students frequently transfer among multiple institutions and systems—often in very diverse patterns. In a common pattern, about 60% of the students who attend the CSU system transfer from a California community college campus. But even this

statistic oversimplifies the attendance patterns of many students and provides no information about their evolving educational goals.

Thus, if we are going to take seriously the challenge of assessing student learning in this migratory educational environment, we must develop tools that allow us to examine student work, not just in one institution or another, but over time, across the multiple institutions and systems that California learners travel. Without such knowledge, policy makers will find it difficult to steer California Higher Education in ways that meet the changing social and economic needs of the state's residents.

The goal of this group is to address the problem through the development of an electronic portfolio system that allows for "seamless portability" of student work from one institution to another and from one system to another. Three inter-related tasks are required:

- Solving a significant set of technological problems
- Engaging in a long overdue dialogue about student learning outcomes and accountability across institutional boundaries
- Discussing, developing, and deploying mechanisms for data mining and evaluation from large numbers of student portfolios while protecting and respecting student privacy.

We are starting with a group of California Community Colleges and California State University Campuses in the Bay Area: CSU Monterey Bay, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, College of San Mateo, City College of San Francisco, Skyline College, and Canada College, among others. Our group comprises primarily faculty, with some administrators, although all our campuses have administrative support for the project. We propose a three-year project, during which we will identify 10 to 15 specific electronic portfolio projects that would involve two or more campuses. These specific projects would develop the structures and tools to follow and assess student learning in specific programs, across institutional boundaries, and would involve the institutions in larger conversations to consider the implications of the assessment. We plan to distribute funds to the participating institutions to pay for pedagogical and technological support and for reassigned time to focus on the project. Twice a year, we will have a multi-day workshop/conference in which all participants of the specific projects will share ideas and progress reports and work toward solving the larger issues of implementing portable electronic portfolios.

Budget Breakdown and Total Cost:

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