Funding Request for Basic Skills Initiative

Winter 2008 Counseling Hours for the African American Collegian Center
I am requesting funding to cover a portion of my 180 counseling hours for the Winter 2008 session. The Counseling Department allows 90 of my counseling hours to be devoted to the coordination and counseling of the students participating in the Black Collegians Program and students using the services of the African American Collegian Center. The remaining 90 hours must be used for counseling students in the General Counseling and Transfer Services Center (GCTSC). I would like to request that the majority of the 90 hours that I typically work for the General Counseling and Transfer Services Center be paid for by the Basic Skills Initiative so that I may have the majority of the 180 hours devoted to the African American Collegian Center.

During the winter session, I am coordinating the enrollment and recruitment of new students entering the Black Collegians program for the spring semester. We offer several information sessions for students joining the program and we require students to meet with a Black Collegians counselor during the winter session before they are officially a member of our program. Unfortunately, during each winter and summer session, all of the part-time counselors that work for the program are required to work all of their hours for the General Counseling and Transfer Services Center which leaves me as the only counselor working strictly for our center for a portion of the short sessions. It is extremely important that our new first-time freshmen (who are typically at the lowest levels of math and English) joining the program during the winter and our continuing Black Collegians students be given as much access to counseling and support services as possible.

In addition to coordinating the program and counseling program students, I am also involved in coordinating the Black Student Conference. The Black Student Conference was developed by the SMC Pan-African Support Group (an advocacy group committed to mentoring African descent students and advancing educational awareness of these students) and the Black Collegians Program. The conference is designed to address the challenges that our college has had serving its African-American population, particularly in the areas of retention, graduation and university transfer rates. We provide workshops and activities during the conference to empower students to reach their academic and personal life goals by providing them access to African American professionals who are experts in their fields. We try to address the variety of needs that our students have and feel that it is important to impact not only their academic development but their social development, including the development of positive self-efficacy. In our previous two conferences, we have addressed issues such as career selection, money management, creative writing through Afrocentric poetry (with a session that was led by actresss CCH Pounder and our SMC English Professor Wil Doucet), to name a few.
We are particularly interested in working with students who have not yet exhibited the college-level skills that are necessary to be successful at the transfer level. The skill level of many of the African-American students coming to Santa Monica College has overwhelmingly been at the basic skill level and the majority of the students who enter the Black Collegians Program reflect that same skill level. We are hoping that by exposing these students to informative workshops and to our supportive group of classified staff, student services and instructional faculty and administrators that the students will be even more motivated to work towards the goal of gaining the skills necessary to be competitive in college and beyond.

The demand of coordinating the recruitment and enrollment of students in the program, planning Black Collegians Program activities for spring, counseling Black Collegians students and planning for the Black Student Conference is quite high and requires more than the 90 hours that I am currently allotted. As you know, the student population that is being served by both the program and the conference need a substantial amount of guidance getting through the college process.

My original request was for $6,000 which would have covered the entire 90 hours. However, due to the urgency of this request, I have reduced the amount so that a decision may possibly be made sooner. If this request is granted, I would at least have more time than I am currently allotted to accomplish more of the tasks for which I am responsible.

**Funding request for this item: $5,000**