Welcome to the latest in a series of periodic publications from the Office of Grants Development. The goal of this publication is to provide basic information to faculty and staff about the grants process at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and to disseminate announcements of grant funding. If you have any suggestions about topics to include or would like answers to specific questions, please contact Deborah Rosen, the director of grants and special projects, at drosen@nvcc.edu or 703-323-3440; Robert Henderson, college grants writer at rhenderson@nvcc.edu or 703-323-3493.

This article by Dr. Templin appeared in the Summer issue of the Dispatch, the online journal of the Council of Resource Development of the American Association of Community Colleges.

The Role of Development Resources in Meeting the Challenges of the “New Normal”

By Bob Templin, President
Northern Virginia Community College

The recession that has clobbered community colleges and so many other institutions is still exacting its toll. In times of economic uncertainty, colleges tend to freeze salaries, abolish vacant positions and make across-the-board budget cuts. Some are forced to make staff reductions. They instinctively hunker down to wait out the storm. But this time, when the storm eventually passes, things will not go back to “normal”. The fact is, declining public support has been a trend in American higher education for over a decade. If colleges do not begin to restructure and redesign their basic operations and business models now, their futures are likely to be very bumpy. How institutions invest in resource development at this moment can make a difference in how well and quickly they can build sustainable organizations for the “new normal” environment of permanently reduced public resource support. Unfortunately, too many colleges have diminished their institutional capacity in resource development just when they need to strengthen it.

Over the last seven years (with four years of successive budget cuts from the Commonwealth of Virginia) Northern Virginia Community College has focused on reengineering its business model and redesigning its basic operations to improve student outcomes at a decreasing cost per student. Simultaneously, we have created new revenue streams that are not dependent upon state funding, including revenues from grants, contracts and contributions from the private sector. While reducing expenses elsewhere, we invested in creating additional capacity in resource development not just to increase revenues, but wherever possible to support key initiatives and accelerate needed changes.

For example, we have used grants to jump start strategic initiatives, but only after we were able to design a sustainability plan around the grant. Recently the college received a $1 million grant to strengthen the teaching of STEM subjects between high schools and the college. Rather than start a program that operates off grant funds until they run out, we leveraged the funding to attract financial pledges from businesses to stretch the grant funds...
and allow us to operate the program for at least four years. Schools that would benefit from the program were told early on that they would not need to make any financial contribution until year three. Then they would be expected to make relatively small, gradual increases in their financial support on an annual basis until the program was at scale and sustainable. School systems that were facing their own budget reductions were willing to make a commitment that was three years out for the chance to get into a much needed program with no up-front costs. The college now has a critical initiative underway with a business plan that will allow it to operate many years into the future without becoming a financial drain on the college.

Another example is where we have used grants and contracts to provide “seed” funding for start-up activities that eventually become revenue generators. NOVA has always been an attractive college for international students. These students bring revenues that are substantially higher than the costs of educating them. But in the past the college was not recruiting students to grow those revenues. A $2 million grant from the State Department to bring students from underserved countries to the United States for one year of study provided some of the necessary infrastructure needed to ramp up the college’s international student recruiting efforts. Today, NOVA has more than 2,000 international students on F-1 visas, and they, in turn help support a vibrant and growing international education program while driving new revenues to the college.

Our Office of Grants Development plays an important role serving as a catalyst to accelerate change and move the college toward greater sustainability in a time of reduced tax-funded support. But in order for development resources to work, they must have the capacity needed to pursue funding opportunities. Having more of the right staff in the resource development function enables us to go after more opportunities that help position the college to thrive in the “new normal” environment.

Geospatial Technology Grantee Update

Geospatial Technology (GST), geographical information systems (GIS), global positioning systems (GPS), remote sensing (RS) and other emerging technologies assist the user in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of spatial data in industries as diverse as health, agriculture, construction technology, emergency services, environmental technology, government, information technology, manufacturing technology, marine science, marketing national security, resource management, and transportation. NOVA is expanding its training and education in this field, thanks to a grant from the Small Business Administration (SBA), to provide qualified future workers with conceptual and technical expertise for these user industries.

NOVA’s grant enables the College to focus on establishing the training for emerging workforce demand, as well as incorporating technology-based learning for increased training flexibility. The grant is a two-year award of $200,000 and the Project Director is Dr. Michael Krimmer (LO).

One year into the grant, the project reports being on track and on-budget. NOVA-GST students attended conferences and job fairs. Dual-enrolled high school students successfully competed in a state-wide GST competition while new GST high school students were selected to attend a summer workshop focusing on professional development and learning GIS skills. The partnership projects allowing students internship opportunities included mapping Colvin Run Mills and the integration of archeological survey data with geospatial data for public presentation. The results of the archeological project were so successful that Loudoun County expanded its scope to all of its 1500 archeological sites.

Another internship project included working with the Southern Governors Association to map innovation resources, such as academic research centers, capital resources and various industries. In Chantilly, the students will be mapping the “safest” routes to the school within a one mile radius. Expanded training at NOVA is well underway for future workers in the GST industry. For more information on this exciting project, please contact Dr. Krimmer at mkrimmer@nvcc.edu.

Explore the World of SPIN

The Grants Office invites NOVA faculty and staff to utilize the SPIN database when seeking potential funders for your projects. SPIN is a web-based search engine that allows users to query the database with either a basic keyword or advanced Boolean searches. A handy new feature is Quick Search which retrieves information – including
SPIN’s more advanced features allow for personalized search preferences such as eligibility, national and regional parameters, and types of projects (travel, scholarships, conferences, etc.). Reports of your findings can easily be exported and saved to MS Word for your files. The SPIN subscription, which is available on every computer at NOVA that is connected to the Internet, is made possible by the Office of Grants Development. It can be accessed at http://www.infoed.org/new_spin/spinmain.asp. Information is constantly updated.

Come and give it a try!

If you would like more personalized training or are having difficulty using the SPIN database, please call or e-mail the director of grants and special projects, Deborah Rosen, at drosen@nvcc.edu or 2-3154. When you have found your potential funder, and are ready to submit a request, our Grants Office will help you through the process.

For more information on any of the programs mentioned above please contact Deborah Rosen, Rob Henderson, Susi Mattheisen, or Sara Stoller in the Office of Grants Development.

Submit items of interest for publication in the Grants Newsletter via e-mail to drosen@nvcc.edu