FY 2017
*Strengthening Institutions (SIP) 84.031F*

**Abstracts**

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# P031F170012 - Lake Michigan College, MI

Lake Michigan College (LMC) is a 2-year community college serving 6,000 credit and non-credit students annually. With its main campus in Benton Harbor, the College's district includes Berrien County plus part of Van Buren County in southwest Michigan.

The Strengthening Pathways project expands and accelerates LMC’s current changeover to Guided Pathways to increase student retention rate from 50 percent to 63 percent by:

Transforming the sequencing and grouping of courses into Guided Pathways, helping students see more clearly how each course and credential they earn moves them closer to their educational goals and success in a chosen career.

Adding technology to track student progress and trigger coaching, mentoring and other support services for student success, as well as build a database and greater data analysis capacity for the college.

LMC is applying to the U.S. Department of Education for a grant of $3,000,000 for this five-year project to start October 1, 2017. A portion of the grant will be used to provide professional development workshops and technical assistance for faculty and staff to prepare them to execute the many tasks involved. These workshops are organized by the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement and by the Guided Pathways Institute of the Michigan Community Colleges Association.

The design and use of Guided Pathways to completion for mapping, tracking and supporting student success meets the Competitive Preference Priority by achieving the following objectives for under-prepared students:

* Using multiple measures of assessment to require such students to take just the essential remedial courses and pair those courses, where possible, with simultaneous placement in mainstream courses
* Adding new Introductory courses that both familiarize students with their chosen meta-major and provide them with tools for college success
* Adding new ESL courses for speakers of other languages
* Expanding coaching and tutoring for additional students
* Introducing faculty as additional advisers

The Absolute Priority requirement is met by using the evidence that tracking and triggering broad coaching/mentoring/advising services can significantly increase student retention as reported by Eric P. Bettinger and Rachel Baker, 2011, *“The Effects of Student Coaching in College: An Evaluation of a Randomized Experiment in Student Mentoring”* (NBER Working Paper No. 16881). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

# P031F170013 - University of Mount Olive Incorporated, NC

Located in Mount Olive, NC, the University of Mount Olive (UMO) is an independent, not-for- profit university sponsored by the Convention of Original Free Will Baptists, whose hallmark is educating students of all backgrounds to become broadly-educated professionals. Through comprehensive systemic reform, this proposed Title III project will (1) increase student retention, persistence, and graduation rates, and (2) evaluate rigorously and demonstrate the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of the UMO model. The UMO systemic reform model consists of a Case Management System, a redesigned Developmental Education program, upgraded software systems, a Learning Commons, and a Teaching Excellence Center.

Specifically, the proposed Title III project has the following four objectives:

* **Objective 1.0:** Increase new student enrollment by expanding an existing academic program**.**
* **Objective 2.0:** Increase retention, persistence, and graduation rates by strengthening Academic and Student Services, and building effective institutional learning communities.
* **Objective 3.0:** Strengthen student learning, student support services, and institutional effectiveness by investing in improved technology infrastructure, systems and tools.
* **Objective 4.0:** Strengthen Professional Development for Faculty.

The primary strategies for achieving the four project objectives include:

(1) Increase enrollment in agriculture by developing new Environmental and Natural Resource option; (2) Establish a Learning Commons to centralize/coordinate all academic and career support services; (3) Form effective student learning communities; (4) Implement a case management approach to track student achievement and challenges; (5) Embed financial literacy modules; (6) Create a first year, second semester transitional experience; (7) Create an enhanced orientation program for students and parents to better prepare them for college expectations; (8) Renovate instructional support facilities; (9) Upgrade the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Software and add Early Alert/Case Management/Success Plan software; (10) Acquire and deploy supporting software and technology tools for the Learning Commons; and (11) Staff and implement a Teaching Excellence Center to provide faculty with ongoing professional development in pedagogy and instructional and student support technology.

Key project results will include: Full-time traditional student enrollment increases from 979 to 1,153 (GPRA); Fall-fall retention increases from 64 percent to 80 percent (GPRA); Fall-spring retention increases from 87 percent to 90 percent; Spring-fall retention increases from 78 percent to 85 percent; 4-year graduation rate increases from 39 percent to 50 percent; 6-year graduation rate increases from 51 percent to 70 percent (GPRA); Developmental English pass rate increases from 69 percent to 75 percent; Developmental Math pass rate increases from 65.5 percent to 70 percent; First college-level English pass rate increases from 75.6 percent to 80 percent; First college-level Math pass rate increases from 68.3 percent to 73 percent; Number of learning communities increases from 0 to10; Percentage of students in the first year, second semester freshman transitional experience program increases from zero percent to 90 percent; Number of times a student meets with advisors and counselors increases from 2 to 4 per year; Percentage of students in the enhanced orientation program increases from zero percent to 90 percent; Percentage of students served by the Early Alert System increases from zero percent to 100 percent; Percentage of students completing one financial education module increases from zero percent to 80 percent; and institutional “viability ratio” increases from 0.40 toward the 1.92 average for comparable institutions.

The proposal also addresses the CFDA 84.031 F Absolute Priority (AP) requirement with two studies that meet the What Works Clearinghouse criteria for moderate evidence of effectiveness, as well as the Competitive Preference Priority (CPP) requirement.

# P031F170016 - Franklin University, OH

Franklin University is a nonprofit, independent institution of higher education focused on helping adult learners achieve professional qualifications. The institution is one of the largest private universities in the state of Ohio and serves more than 12,000 students globally. In 2015- 2016, Franklin University had 5,631 undergraduate students. Of these, 68 percent were awarded financial assistance and 34percent were ethnic minorities. Many of Franklin’s students are continuing education processes started elsewhere as 92 percent of new UG students transferred credit from other institutions. With such a large percentage of students transferring in credits, it is not a surprise that the average age of UG students is 34 years and 69 percent of students take classes online.

As an extension of institutional strategic planning, four critical concerns to be addressed by a Title III project were identified. These are: 1) developmental education (DE) patterns that are blocking student advancement, 2) gateway courses that impede rather than speed progress, 3) difficulty actualizing student-centered, proactive supports, and 4) limited real-time data capability to inform student support, instruction, and institutional planning. Seven areas of activity were planned to strengthen Franklin’s service capabilities in these areas. They are: 1) revising developmental education placement tests, 2) revising developmental education curriculum, 3) revising curriculum for the 12 gateway courses with the highest volume of students and rates of failure, 4) initiation of an intrusive advising process employing the patterns described in Bettinger and Baker (2011), 5) implementing a software-supported early alert process in student advising, 6) creating data analysis and visualization software to inform institutional activity, and 7) extensive professional development to support all the changes proposed for institutional programming and processes.

The placement test, developmental education, and gateway course revisions will be completed by a select team of specialists from the International Institute for Innovative Instruction in collaboration with instructional faculty. The changes planned for DE involve modalities supported by the literature: combining classes (Sheldon & Durdella, 2009), accelerating classes (Hern, 2012; Hodara & Smith-Jaggars, 2011), making developmental content a co-requisite in curricular math classes (Complete College America, 2012), and competency-based, self-paced courses (American Educational Research Association, 2016). Gateway course revision will follow patterns advocated by Gardner and Barefoot (2005) and Froyd et al (2013). The student advising mechanism, intrusive advising/coaching, is patterned after Bettinger and Baker (2011) where statistically significant increases in student retention and graduation rates resulted. These efforts will be supported and supplemented with early alert software and the creation of software capable of reading and mapping student, instructional, and institutional data, providing valuable information at granular levels to facilitate proactive and very specific assistance for students.

It is anticipated that the changes made within developmental education will produce results similar to those noted in the literature, allowing hundreds more student to complete DE requirements each year. It is also anticipated that the combination of intrusive advising/coaching, early alert, and real-time data software will produce results like found by Bettinger and Baker increasing persistence and graduation rates for all categories of students. All new placement tests, curricular revisions, advising patterns, and software will be institutionalized at the end of the project.

# P031F170043 - Kilgore College, TX

***Background/Service Area*:** Kilgore College (KC), a publicly funded two-year community college located 120 miles east of Dallas, TX, provides postsecondary educational opportunities to students within a rural area in northeast Texas. Total population of the service area is 224,369 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). KC’s 5-county primary service area is a vast, disadvantaged region characterized by low income and low educational attainment levels. Residents in the service area have lower incomes than overall TX residents and U.S. residents—between 10 percent and 15 percent lower. Poverty levels in the counties served exceed the national poverty level of 15.5 percent (with the exception of one). No county in the service area meets or exceeds the national rate of 29.8 percent or state rate of 27.6 percent for attainment of a bachelor’s degree; two counties have rates below 15 percent.

***Institutional Problems*:** Some KC students commute up to 80 miles or more roundtrip to attend classes. In addition, 52 percent of students work, which creates significant challenges when pursuing a college education. However, in Fall 2016 only 10 percent of courses were online courses. Also, no discipline-specific academic program is available as a fully (100 percent) online option. Moreover, courses currently offered online are static and do not always include elements of engagement that have been shown to increase student success, retention, and completion. Additional shortcomings include: (a) access to online academic and other student support services is extremely limited and what is available is rudimentary; (b) the current technology infrastructure is insufficient and inadequate to support expanded online curricula and services; and (c) substantial gaps exist among KC’s faculty related to capacity for developing and delivering effective online courses.

***Proposed Solutions*:** KC’s institutional problems will be strategically addressed through the proposed project (**$2,998,352 request** over five years), which includes the following elements: We will **develop/redesign online courses** (Gen. Education, Computer Networking, Criminal Justice) to increase curricular offerings for students in need of accessible, flexible course options. Computer Networking and Criminal Justice AAS programs will be made available as 100percent online options, the first discipline-specific programs to be available fully online at KC.

We will **develop comprehensive online support services** to increase student success (tutoring, advising, orientation, online readiness assessment). This includes developing and piloting proactive advising strategies supported by evidence of effectiveness, the impact of which will be assessed through a quasi-experimental evaluation study. Online support services will ensure that all KC students have 24/7 access to the support they need to be successful.

We will **provide professional development to faculty** (20 per year) on effective online course development and instructional strategies, methodologies, and technology tools. To facilitate this process, a Faculty Innovation Center will be developed in year one and equipped with relevant state-of-the-art technology. Using new skills and competencies gained, KC faculty will develop and pilot 50 courses for online delivery over the five-year grant period.

We will **upgrade the technology infrastructure**, to include hardware upgrades and wireless network enhancements, to facilitate access and communication necessary to appropriately support students in persisting and successfully completing associate degree programs.

*Through this Title III application, Kilgore College is addressing the* ***Absolute Priority*** *(mandatory) and the* ***Competitive Preference Priority*** *(optional).*

# P031F170086 - Columbus State University, NY

Columbus State University (CSU) located in Columbus, Georgia proposes a five-year Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) to support low-income individuals that are classified as Learning Support (LS), that are on Probation or Exclusion (P/E), that are Transfer Students (TS) or are in danger of losing their eligibility to continue to receive federal and/or state financial aid (Unsatisfactory Academic Progress (UAP). This first CSU SIP will help the university become self-sufficient and expand its capacity to serve the described low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen CSU’s academic quality, institutional management and fiscal stability.

The primary aspects of the SIP is based upon critical aspects of a successful randomized assignment research design evaluation conducted in 2010 of an accelerated learning program for low-income students who required one or two developmental courses to build math, reading or writing skills conducted at three very large community colleges in New York City. The project evaluation conducted by the Manpower Development Research Corporation was titled: “Doubling graduation rates: “Three-year effects of CUNY’s accelerated study in associate programs (ASAP) for developmental educational students”. CSU was particularly interested in basing crucial services and interventions of its SIP on the ASAP because the study had key services and interventions embedded such as advising and tutoring which are crucial to the SIP. The ASAP study can be downloaded from: [http://www.mdrc.org/publication/doubling-graduation-rates.](http://www.mdrc.org/publication/doubling-graduation-rates)

The SIP develops a Learning Support Success Center which will house CSU students hired and trained to serve as academic coaches providing tutoring and mentoring in mathematics and/or English language skills to low-income LS students. At CSU LS students are required to take developmental education courses and the SIP provides LS students support to move through such remedial courses quickly and on to gateway and core courses. The CSU Academic Center of Excellence will support P/E, TS and UAP students by hiring and training CSU students to serve as academic coaches providing tutoring and mentoring to low-income students P/E, TS and UAP students. The CSU Academic Center of Excellence will also refer P/E, TS and UAP students to the CSU Counseling Center and CSU Career Center as necessary. In addition to the ASAP study the CSU Academic Center of Excellence will also base its P/E, TS and UAP interventions and assistance on Nancy K. Schlossberg’s (1995) Transition Theory which is based upon the postulation that college students are faced with transitions which can be anticipated, unanticipated and nonevents throughout an individual’s postsecondary education.

The objectives of the SIP are based upon the successful assistance of LS, P/E, TS and UAP students and the retention of such students will provide the revenue through tuition and fees to maintain the activities and interventions implemented by the SIP for LS, P/E/ TS and UAP students after SIP funding ends. Training programs developed with SIP funds will be made available for free download by other colleges and universities and the SIP team at CSU will develop a manual that details how the project could be replicated at other institutions. The SIP seeks $600,000 per year for a five-year project.

# P031F170067- Saginaw Valley State University, MI

Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU), located in Saginaw County at University Center, Michigan, is a four-year public institution of higher education serving the East Central Michigan’s 24-county region and is the only public four-year institution of higher education in the region. SVSU maintains five colleges: Arts and Behavioral Sciences (1,713 students), Business and Management (1,347 students), Education (951 students), Health and Human Services (3,031 students), and Science, Engineering and Technology (1,577 students) offering 90 programs of study that lead to one of ten baccalaureate degrees, or one of 15 graduate programs (14 master's degrees and one doctoral program). The 39-credit general education requirement draws on traditional liberal arts and sciences, providing students a broad range of intellectual inquiry and disciplinary knowledge in nine content areas: Literature, Arts, Numerical Understanding, Natural Sciences, Historical and Philosophical Ideas, Social Science Methodologies, Social Institutions, Communication, and International Perspectives. These programs have been developed to meet the needs of working professionals in our service region.

Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) is a regional university in east-central Michigan. Students come primarily from areas that comprise three populations: three counties immediately surrounding SVSU’s campus (Bay, Midland, and Saginaw Counties) that are urban, suburban, and rural, accounting for 40percent of enrollment; 11 counties that are rural and economically depressed that comprise 21percent of enrollment; and students from Genesee, Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties that are urban/suburban areas (22.6 percent of enrollment). In Fall 2016, SVSU had an enrollment of 9,165 students, of which 7,913 were undergraduate students, 720 graduate students, 44 doctoral students, and 488 specialist, teacher certification programs, or classified as non-degree (SVSU Institutional Research).

SVSU is both an institution of opportunity and choice. Fall 2016 semester, of the 7,913 undergraduates, 74 percent had demonstrated financial need and 92 percent were awarded some need-based financial aid (40 percent received federal grants), 12.9 percent are underrepresented populations, and approximately 1/3 are first-generation college students. The average SVSU undergraduate student is under the age of 22 (78 percent). The University faculty has grown to 293 full-time members and 497 adjunct members; most faculty (86 percent) have doctoral/terminal masters degrees. Many faculty members have received local, state, or national recognition for their work, including Fulbright Fellowships. Saginaw Valley State University enjoys a 24:1 student to faculty ratio.

***Title III proposed Activities.***

***Activity 1:*** Development and Improvement of Academic Programs. These activities will be measured to affect the academic progression and retention of students by: a) revising the developmental math education program and provide supplemental and embedded tutoring; b) develop Open Source digital repository of online educational materials and utilize instructional designer for courses making higher education less expensive and more accessible for students; c) expand the First-Year Experience for First Time in College (FTIC) students addressing academic, socio-psychological needs of underserved students; d) strengthen management through development of the SharePoint portal and student analytics software for targeted student notification and assistance all aimed at increasing student retention yearly.

***Activity 2:*** Funds and Administrative Management. SVSU will strengthen fiscal policy by building the Student Success Scholarship Endowment by $1.2 million to award scholarships from the endowment to students as a retention tool assisting with the financial burden of higher education. This project addresses the **Absolute Priority: Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness** and the **Competitive Preference Priority**.

# P031F170084 - Madison Area Technical College, WI

Madison Area Technical College (Madison College) is a large, comprehensive, two-year public college located in south central Wisconsin, spanning a District covering all or part of twelve counties. The college has four metro campuses in Madison, as well as four regional campuses that provide instruction in the rural areas of the district. Degree-credit enrollment is currently around 22,000 students per year, generating approximately 8,900 FTEs. Non-degree enrollments average 6,000 students per year.

**Project Overview:** The overarching goal of Madison College’s proposed Title III SIP project is to establish a systematic process to assist students to confirm their career goals and educational plan, and support their efficient progression to degree-credit courses, credential completion and/or transfer. Key goals to build institutional capacity, supported by this project include:

Significantly increase developmental education completion, student persistence, graduation and transfer with proactive, individualized supports coherently delivered through enhanced technology, consistent advising and reimagined service delivery.

Build college capacity to guide and support students to understand options and confirm an educational plan, connecting data systems to deliver a holistic view of student progress, and enhancing and aligning an array of college advising and career services to help keep students on track and successful.

Increase enrollments through improved student persistence and progression to and through degree-credit courses and programs, through timely interventions for students at- risk of not succeeding or discontinuing for other reasons.

***Project Activities:***

**Developmental Education Acceleration:** Pilot and scale a co-requisite instructional model targeting students placing two levels below college-level English or Math, providing an accelerated pathway that reduces their time in remediation from two semesters to one.

**Implement ‘My Roadmap’:** Build and deploy online individualized educational planning and service delivery tool integrated with college data systems

**Advising Redesign**: Implement comprehensive, integrated advising model, leveraging technology and data to provide proactive individualized services; fully implement faculty advising at the college

**Integrated Career Services Model**: Strategically align career planning resources within an integrated service model tailored to address the varying needs of different student groups

**Professional Development:** Develop and deliver training for faculty and staff in consistent advising practices, student career choice advising, and the use of the My Roadmap tool

**Competitive Preference Priority:** This project addresses the CPP through redesigned developmental education sequences that accelerate student progression to degree-credit courses through a model which includes co-requisite course enrollments and intrusive advising support.