The National Center for Academic Transformation

APPLICATION GUIDELINES
Tennessee Board of Regents
Developmental Studies Redesign Initiative

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) invites participation in a new systemwide initiative to redesign its remedial and developmental math and English curriculum using technology-supported active-learning strategies. The goal is to achieve improvements in learning outcomes as well as reductions in instructional costs. The initiative expects to award a total of $240,000 in grants to participating institutions to support their redesign efforts.

The goals of the initiative are to:

- Increase the quality of learning and assessment that leverage new and emerging technologies against the best of traditional classroom instruction.
- Increase remedial and developmental course completion rates and placement rates into college-level coursework.
- Demonstrate improvements in student learning outcomes through rigorous assessment
- Streamline the amount of time that students--traditional and non-traditional aged--devote to remedial and/or developmental studies, thus creating significant costs savings for individual students.
- Create significant costs savings for institutions that can be reallocated to sustain the redesign of developmental studies and to fund future operations.
- Expand access to and success in postsecondary education for disadvantaged minority and low-SES students by removing barriers to progress.
- Develop models that are scalable for delivery in diverse settings including 12th grade dual enrollment, mini-term environments such as summer sessions and online delivery.
- Develop the internal capacity of TBR faculty and staff to continue the redesign process

The TBR, in partnership with the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT), will build on the successful models and lessons learned from NCAT's national course redesign programs to create a course redesign initiative within the TBR focused on remedial and developmental courses. Specifically, campuses will be invited to redesign a course sequence, from the basic course through the first-year credit-bearing course, in mathematics, reading, writing or English (combined reading and writing.)

The high level of success achieved in NCAT's course redesign programs can be attributed to selecting participants who were ready to succeed, teaching them the planning methodology and actively supporting them as they developed their redesign plans. Faculty and administrators involved in NCAT's course redesign programs have repeatedly indicated that understanding the planning methodology is the key to the success of their redesigns. And once learned, the methodology is easily transferable to

other courses and disciplines. In the Developmental Studies Redesign Initiative, we will replicate this process by engaging with NCAT to provide prospective participants with a variety of planning resources through a series of workshops and consultations. Prospective participants will be supported directly by NCAT staff throughout the process.

Following an orientation workshop on February 2, 2007, described in the Call to Participate, the initiative will employ a seven-stage application process:

Stage One: Establishing Institutional Teams

Institutions will establish *institutional teams* to undertake redesigns of course sequences in remedial and developmental mathematics, reading, writing or English (combining reading and writing.) These teams should include the following people:

- *Faculty Experts*. Course redesign requires that faculty experts explicitly identify desired learning outcomes and agree on course content. TBR remedial and developmental courses are typically taught in multiple sections by different instructors. To ensure course consistency, these faculty experts must work together on the redesign, resolving any differences in how modularized courses will be offered, and collaboratively plan the most effective way to accomplish the redesign goals.

- *Administrators*. Because these redesigns impact multiple sections, large numbers of students as well as academic policies and practices, it is important to involve academic administrators on the team. The level of these administrators will depend on the organization and size of the institution. For some it will be the Provost/Academic Vice President or designee; for others it will be a dean or department chair. These team members play an important role when institutional issues such as changes in scheduling or the use of classroom space arise. If unexpected implementation issues arise in the process of redesign implementation, administrators can help the team resolve them quickly and effectively across institutional offices.

- *Technology Professionals*. These team members provide expertise so that the redesign goals are accomplished in ways that make the technology as easy for students to use as possible. Technology professionals contribute ideas about how to increase interaction with content as well as with other students. They also suggest design approaches to ensure that the technology does not limit students' learning options.

- *Assessment Experts*. NCAT will suggest straightforward methods to enable student learning in the redesigned course sequences to be compared to that of the traditional course sequences. It is, however, useful to include someone who is knowledgeable about assessment and research design on the team, particularly if the institution seeks to measure additional facets of the redesign such as performance in downstream courses or student satisfaction, to name a few. This expertise may be found in departments of education or psychology or in offices of institutional research.

Stage Two: Identifying the Course Sequence

At each institution, some DSP courses may be more ready than others to be the focus of a large-scale redesign effort. Because of prior experiences with technology-mediated teaching and learning, and because of numerous attitudinal factors, some faculty members may be more ready to engage in large-scale redesign efforts to achieve the initiative's goals.

Those interested in participating in the redesign initiative will be asked to think carefully about which course sequences are good candidates for redesign at their institution and to respond to the following Course Readiness Criteria:

Completing the readiness criteria also enables each institution to assess collectively its strengths and weaknesses, gaining an understanding of what it needs to do to address gaps in its preparation early in the process. No institution perfectly meets all of the readiness criteria; every institution will discover things it needs to work on in order to carry out a successful course redesign. The readiness criteria are designed to help you select the course sequence with the highest chance of success. Answering each as honestly as possible—and providing data to support your answers—will lead to the most positive outcome for your institution.

- What impact would redesigning the course sequence have on the curriculum, on students and on the institution—i.e., why do you want to redesign these courses?

Is there an academic problem in this course sequence such as high failure rates? Does the course sequence face a resource problem such as how to meet increased enrollment demand with no commensurate increase in resources? How would the course sequence benefit from modularizing its content and structure?

- What is the level of departmental support for the redesign project?

A collective commitment is a key factor for the success and the sustainability of redesign projects. Are the faculty ready to collaborate? Have they engaged in joint conversations about the need for change? Are decisions about curriculum in the department made collectively--in other words, beyond the individual faculty member level? Will the department agree to let a sub-set of the faculty try a new approach?

- Are the participating faculty members able and willing to incorporate existing curricular materials in order to focus work on redesign issues rather than materials creation?

Ideally, one wants the faculty to have a "head start" in the redesign process if possible. Is the discipline one with a comparatively large existing body of technology-based curricular materials and/or assessment instruments? Are the faculty willing to use these materials if they meet learning objectives? Will they employ an appropriate blend of using these materials and created "home-grown" materials in a non-dogmatic fashion? Are they willing to partner with other content providers such as commercial software producers or other institutions that have developed technology-based materials?

- Do the course faculty members have an understanding of and some experience with integrating elements of computer-based instruction into existing courses to support active learning?

Some faculty may have a great deal of enthusiasm for large-scale redesign but little prior experience in this area. It is difficult to complete a successful project by starting from scratch. Having experience with integrating smaller IT elements into courses helps to prepare for large-scale redesign efforts. What evidence can you provide to demonstrate faculty experience with integrating computing into existing courses?

- Have the course sequence's expected learning outcomes and a system for measuring their achievement been identified?

Successful large-scale redesign efforts begin by identifying the intended learning outcomes and developing alternative methods other than lecture/presentation for achieving them. Have those responsible for the course sequence identified its expected/intended learning outcomes in detail? Does your campus have assessment processes in place—e.g., the ability to collect data? the availability of baseline data? the establishment of long-term measures? Is there a system for measuring the achievement of these outcomes at both the individual student level and the course level?

- Do the project participants have the requisite skills to conduct a large-scale project?

Do each of the participants have the requisite skills (i.e., are they competent to do the job) and are they prepared to partner with others when necessary? What evidence do you have that the participants possess the required skills? Does the potential project have strong leadership? Is there evidence that the faculty and staff involved are ready to move a project forward in a timely manner?

- Do the faculty members involved have an understanding of learning theory?

Sound pedagogy is the key to successful redesign projects. When sound pedagogy leads, technology becomes an enabler for good practice rather than the driver. Do the faculty provide a wide range of options for achieving required learning outcomes? Have the faculty systematically thought about and investigated alternative methods for empowering students to learn? Do the faculty seek to use technology to transform the teaching and learning environment rather than merely automating existing instructional practice?

- Is your campus committed to a partnership among faculty, IT staff and administrators in both planning and execution of the redesign?

Substantive changes cannot rely on faculty initiative alone because they are systemic and involve changes in such areas as policy (class meeting times, contact-hour requirements, governance approvals); budgeting (planning and processes that support innovation); systems (registration systems, classroom assignments); and, infrastructure (equipment purchase and deployment.) Who will you involve in your redesign project—i.e., who will constitute the redesign team? Have you conducted other projects that demonstrate a partnering approach?

Institutions will be asked to send a brief narrative addressing each of the course readiness criteria (about one page each) as they apply to the selected course sequence, focusing on evidence that demonstrates the way in which they meet each criterion.

Institutional responses to the Course Readiness Criteria should not exceed eight pages and should be submitted electronically to Treva Berryman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, at treva.berryman@tbr.edu.

Deadline for submission: March 19, 2007.

Stage Three: **Planning for Redesign**

Based on their responses to the Course Readiness Criteria, institutional teams will be invited to participate in a second one-day workshop, "Developing the Proposal," conducted by the National Center for Academic Transformation on April 13, 2007.

This workshop will provide an in-depth understanding of the redesign process with emphasis on selecting an appropriate redesign model, determining how the redesign model will embody key pedagogical principles, planning for cost savings, assessing student learning outcomes, and developing a budget for the redesign project. Participants will learn how to use NCAT's Course Planning Tool, a spreadsheet-based tool that enables teams to analyze the activities and costs of both the traditional course and the redesigned course in such a way as to improve student learning while reducing instructional costs.

Workshop participants will be the core team members who will implement the redesign project. The workshop will also give participants an opportunity to share ideas, to obtain feedback from program staff, and to assess the quality of their proposal ideas in relation to others.

Stage Four: Developing Final Project Plans

Institutions that participate in the April workshop will be invited to submit a final project plan. Staff from NCAT will provide individualized assistance as prospective participants prepare their plans. Institutions will be encouraged to submit drafts of their plans for review and feedback before the final submission.

Final proposals should include the following sections:

Abstract

Following a title page, write a one-page abstract. The abstract should conform to the following format:

- Paragraph 1 – summarize the current (traditional) course sequence including numbers of students enrolled.
- Paragraph 2 – summarize the academic problem that you are addressing.
- Paragraph 3 – summarize the planned course redesign.
- Paragraph 4 – summarize how the redesign will enhance quality.
- Paragraph 5 – summarize how you will assess the impact of course redesign on learning.

- Paragraph 6 – summarize how the redesign will produce cost savings and what you intend to do with the savings.

Application Narrative

- Select a redesign model and explain why you chose it and how you intend to embody the Five Principles of Successful Course Redesign within it.
- Describe how you will modularize the course to allow greater flexibility for students.
- Describe the learning materials you intend to use.
- Select and describe a cost reduction strategy. Explain why you chose it and what you will do with the savings.
- Include a brief timeline for your redesign project. You must plan to conduct an initial pilot during the spring 2008 term and revised versions of the pilot during the fall 2008 and spring 2009 term.
- Develop a project budget to support your redesign effort and a budget narrative that explains each category of expenditure.

Worksheets and Forms

- Complete an Assessment Form for the three pilots of your redesign project.
- Complete the Course Planning Tool (CPT). Provide a brief narrative that explains the entries in the CPT where necessary.
- Complete the Cost Savings Summary Form (CSS). Provide a brief narrative that explains the entries in the CSS where necessary.
- Complete the Course Structure Form (CSF). Provide a brief narrative that explains the entries in the CSF where necessary.

CPT drafts must be submitted electronically to Pat Bartscherer at patb@theNCAT.org by July 9, 2007, for preliminary review.

Plans should be submitted electronically to Treva Berryman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, at treva.berryman@tbr.edu.

Deadline for submission: *July 15, 2007*.

A program selection committee made up of TBR Academic Affairs staff in consultation with NCAT will review the final proposals. In addition to selecting projects that are likely to succeed and to have the highest impact, the TBR initiative will attempt to select projects in a variety of disciplines using varying approaches to the redesigned courses and from universities and community colleges in proportion to their number in the TBR system. The initiative expects to award a total of $240,000 in grants to participating institutions to support their redesign efforts.

Award decisions will be made by July 30, 2007 so that campuses can begin work in mid-summer.

Stage Five: Planning and Developing the Redesign

Institutional teams will be expected to engage in focused on-campus planning during the summer and fall of 2007. They will complete redesign preparations, finalize project teams, train faculty and staff, complete redesign activities, modify existing course materials when necessary, and incorporate additional content into course materials.

Stage Six: Conducting Phase I Redesign Pilots

During spring 2008, campuses will conduct pilot implementations of their course redesigns. Pilot implementations should involve a substantial percentage of students enrolled in the course sequence in order to test the efficacy of the redesign. Pilots do not have to involve all students and sections but should be designed such that they can scale to all sections if they are successful.

Teams will collect initial assessment data that compares student learning outcomes in the traditional course sequence with those in the redesigned format. Teams will be required to submit regular progress reports using a consistent format to allow comparison among schools. After the first round of campus pilots has been completed, NCAT will conduct a one-day, face-to-face workshop that will provide a forum for teams to share their experiences and learn from one another. Teams will receive feedback from the group as well as from NCAT staff.

Stage Seven: Conducting Phase II Redesign Pilots

During fall 2008 and spring 2009, teams will conduct additional rounds of campus pilots in which they will refine their original redesign plans, making any needed modifications and adjustments in the course materials and organization. They will also adapt their redesigns to the realigned curriculum that emerges from the work of the TBR task force. During each term, teams will collect data on comparative student learning outcomes and submit regular progress reports. At the conclusion of the third pilot term, teams will collect data on actual instructional costs. NCAT will then conduct a one-day, face-to-face workshop to provide a forum for teams to describe their experiences and to share their data regarding learning and retention outcomes, cost reduction and plans for sustainability.

TIMELINE

December 2006	Call to Participate
February 2, 2007	Workshop #1: Orientation to Course Redesign & Application Guidelines issued
March 19, 2007	Deadline for submitting Course Readiness Instrument
April 13, 2007	Workshop #2: Developing the Proposal
May – June 2007	Teams develop project proposals
July 15, 2007	Teams submit final proposed plans
July 30, 2007	Grants awarded
August – December 2007	Campus planning and development
Spring 2008	Campus Phase I Redesign Pilots
June 2008	Interim Campus Reports

June 2008	Workshop #3: Mid-Course Sharing
Summer 2008	Campus Revisions
Fall 2008, Spring 2009	Campus Phase II Redesign Pilots
June 2009	Final Campus Reports
June 2009	Workshop #4: Dissemination of Results

More information about the Developmental Studies Redesign Initiative can be found at http://www.thencat.org/States/TBR.htm. You may also contact Houston Davis, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at 615-366-3975/houston.davis@tbr.edu or Treva Berryman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, at 615-366-4442/treva.berryman@tbr.edu for more information about the workshop or the program in general.