



The Experimental Sites Examiner

Front Page

SUMMER INTERN

Say Hello to Brian!



The Student Financial Assistance (SFA) Internship program has 47 summer interns. Performance Accountability and Improvement is pleased to have Brian L. Ford as our summer intern. He will be working closely with the Experimental Sites Initiative.

And now, here's Brian

Hello! I am a native of Washington, DC and a senior at the University of Delaware majoring in Political Science. I am the fifth child of six children and a first generation college student.

The last three summers I have worked on Capitol Hill in a congressional office and I worked at an academic day camp called Project 2000 Inc.'s Summer Haven Program.

I am active at my school, participating in the University of Delaware Blue Hens Ambassadors, gospel choir and Warrior for Christ. Along with extra-curricular activities, I am also active in my community with volunteer work at the DC Food Bank, soup kitchen and college counseling for young prospective college students. My career goals are to go into public service. I've always wanted to go into public service every since I met the governor of Arkansas when I was in the sixth grade. I want to be a big impact in America by developing policies that would make the American public's lives less stressful and remove barriers. Also, I want to become a role model to young minorities from urban cities. I want to be an example to young people that a young black man from one of the roughest neighborhoods of the inner city of DC, can get out and be successful in the world.

I am looking forward to my work on the Experimental Sites Initiative. I recognize students can play a role in improving student aid delivery.

SUCCESS STORY!

Ability-To-Benefit Experiment Helps Put America Through School

The Department of Education, Student Financial Assistance, can truly boast of an initiative that is making a difference in the lives of a small group of community college students in California. The initiative, known as the Experimental Sites Initiative, allows select institutions to modify prescriptive requirements by testing different ways of administering student financial aid in specific areas. In other words, our partners are helping us reform requirements. It is our hope that the results of the experiments will help the Department in its continuing efforts to improve Title IV program administration.

Three years ago twenty institutions, under the California Consortium of Community Colleges, submitted a proposal and were approved as an Ability-to-Benefit (ATB) Experimental Site. They are evaluating the impact of providing financial aid to students who lack a high school diploma and have not passed an ATB test, **but** have completed at least six college credits in core courses with a "C" or better average. Financial aid staffs view this experiment as an inspiration, an incentive, a viable alternative, and one more option. Over the past two years, institutions have supplied data that indicates this small group of students perform at least as well as or better than their peers not under the experiment in terms of grade point average and course completion rates.

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UPDATE CORNER

Extension of Experiments

The current experiments will be extended until the next reauthorization is complete. This extension gives us the opportunity to gather and analyze performance data that will inform our regulatory activities and the next HEA reauthorization process.

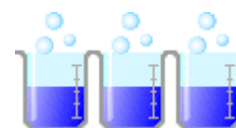
X-Sites Extension Letter

Letters notifying schools of the availability of an extension of the current experiments until the next HEA reauthorization were mailed in April 2001. Participants must return the signed letter by June 30, 2001. All requirements in the original Program Participation Agreement (PPA) amendment for Experimental Sites remain in effect, including the submission of an annual report on results. Remember this letter serves as your X-Sites PPA and is separate from your QA PPA.

Experimental Sites Notice in Federal Register

On June 5, 2001, a notice inviting institutions to submit proposals for Experimental Sites was published in the Federal Register. The Department is seeking proposals in new areas that will further enhance our knowledge base as we prepare for the next reauthorization.

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The **Experimental Sites EXAMINER**

“Success Story” (continued)

In their 1998-99 Experimental Sites Annual Report, Toni DuBois, Director of Financial Aid Programs and Veterans Affairs at Long Beach City College, included a story that highlights one student's access to postsecondary education as follows:

Mr. Jose Camero is 38 years old. He is married and the father of two children. The following statement is from an autobiography he wrote as part of the application process. At the end of the Spring 2000 semester, Mr. Camero had successfully completed and earned 23.5 units with a cumulative grade point average of 3.45.

“As a young boy growing up in the city of Carson at the age of thirteen years old, I had a Mentor by the name of Mr. Armando Orozco. My Mentor taught me how to lay down ceramic floor tile and build bathroom closets. Because of my mentor I got interested in wood works. So wood shop was with me throughout junior high school. You might say that carpentry has always been my calling. I just never answered. I'm answering now! I'm currently enrolled at Long Beach City College. I'm working on my major for Construction Carpentry. The good Lord has been good to me and I have a great instructor by the name of Mr. Robert Hook, an intelligent gentleman. My goal is to complete my education at Long Beach City College then hold in my hands the certificate that I have worked so hard for.

I will be the first in my family to do this. I also encourage my kids to do as I do and do not leave it for tomorrow because tomorrow may never come. I have had lots of obstacles thrown at me since I started my schooling. At the present time I'm unemployed. I have turned down about four or five jobs because they have asked me to drop my schooling and come to work for them. But I'm not willing to do that; I would rather look somewhere else. I have set my standards. I need to complete my goals and dreams. Not too long ago I started working for a company fueling jets at LAX using Jet-A. I did that for two weeks until I was asked to change my schedule and that would mean drop my schooling, so I quit. My schooling comes first.”

The financial aid staff at Long Beach City College is enthusiastic about the opportunities afforded to students through this initiative. They applaud the Department's approval of an experiment designed for the relatively small number of students and recommend this provision become a permanent part of Title IV regulation, available as an option to students at all institutions.

“UPDATE CORNER” (continued)

Report Format

An effort to refine the reporting requirements began in February 2001. Six of your colleagues, led by Francine Reeves, developed a report format for nine of the thirteen experiments. The automated template and instructions were recently posted on the x-sites listserv and QA website. Beginning with the October 1, 2001 annual report, participants will use the improved report format for consistent data collection and analysis. Please let us know if you did not receive this latest information. Thanks to the Report Format Workgroup and Francine Reeves for a job well done!

A First

The Performance Accountability and Improvement Staff is planning the first conference that will convene both Experimental Sites and Quality Assurance school partners. There will be interest sessions geared toward both groups. The joint conference will be in 2002. Stay tuned for more information.

X-Sites Stories

Don't forget the note that was posted on the listserv June 13th calling for "heartwarming" stories affecting the students/staff that you can share with us. We are featuring an **ATB** story in this issue of the Experimental Sites Examiner. Please submit a story you would like to share by July 13th to me at:

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