

CTL grants assist faculty

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Published: Thursday, July 8, 2004

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The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) recently announced the approval of 41 grants totaling almost \$420,000 to various faculty boards and institutions in the system.

Three faculty teams at SCSU were awarded various grants totaling almost \$27,000.

According to the CTL Web site, the grants were awarded to teams that have proposed changes in their departments to improve and promote active learning methods. Funds for the grants are supplied by The Bush Foundation and the Office of the Chancellor.

Director of Information and Planning Mary Soroko and College Assessment Director Brad Sleeper from the G.R. Herberger College of Business (HCOB) were awarded \$5,000 to evaluate the effectiveness of the core business courses offered at SCSU and to assess student performance.

Soroko said the grant funds will pay faculty members to use a software program called e-Lumen that assists them in gathering data on student progress.

"What the software is going to allow us to do is document student progress better than what a letter grade would do," Soroko said.

Students registered for Accounting 191 and 192, Business Law 235, BCIS 242, Management 301, Marketing 320 and others will be among the first at SCSU to experience this alternative assessment program.

Soroko and Sleeper will be working alongside business professors Rajesh Gulati, Michele Mumm, Richard Paulson, Carol Gaumnitz and Cheryl Mitteness in the assessment process.

"We're going to pilot the software in the fall," Soroko said. "This is really a cutting edge product because most colleges aren't using this kind of data collection."

Assistant Professor Ming Chien Lo and Associate Professor Phillip Grossman of the economics department were awarded \$8,680 to promote active learning in their department.

The largest grant of \$12,800 was presented to Professor Lakshmaiah Sreerama and Assistant Professor Mohammad Mahroof-Tahir of the Chemistry Department. Mahroof-Tahir said the grant monies will be used to develop an interdisciplinary research experience for undergraduates in chemistry, biology, environmental and technological studies.

Each faculty team was required to create a proposal for the grants and submit them to CLT by Jan. 22. To be eligible for the grant, proposals must detail what the department or faculty team will be doing to enhance active learning and how much each phase in their design would cost.

Each proposal was first reviewed by each department's dean and other college administration before submitted for review by the MnSCU CLT Grant Review Committee.

Grant recipients must complete reports on the outcome of the implemented proposals and return them to the CLT by June 1, 2005.