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II. NEED FOR THE PROJECT

a. NEED FOR THE SERVICES

“The two-year college often represents Black men's first experience with postsecondary education, and for many, their last opportunity for obtaining a degree beyond a high-school diploma.” (*Black Issues in Higher Education*, Bush and Bush, 2005). The California Community Colleges State Chancellor’s Office reports that African American men are the lowest performing sub-group in the percentage of degrees earned persistence rates and average cumulative grade point average.

Nationally, the decline of African American males participating in higher education is a growing concern among educators. “It is a well-established fact that institutions of higher education in the U.S. do not successfully recruit, retain, and graduate young African-American and Caribbean men” as stated in the “Chancellor’s Initiative on the Black Male in Education”, (CUNY, Sept. 2005). This same fact holds true at Merritt College, where a low and disproportionate percentage of young black males are enrolled and retained. More importantly, African American males are not graduating and transferring within a three-year period.

Merritt College serves primarily the residents of Oakland, California. As of 2006, 24 percent of Oakland’s population was under age 18 and there were 96,000 students in the K-12 pipeline in the Oakland Unified School District, who will need access to post-secondary educational opportunities and employment in the near future. Oakland is an urban area with a growing and increasingly diverse population, high crime, high unemployment, and low educational attainment rates. These factors provide the context for the issues affecting African American males and other low income college students who enroll at Merritt College. The majority of the students come from many feeder high schools with California Academic

Performance Indicator (API) ratings of 1 or 2, in comparison to more affluent high schools with API ratings of 9 and 10. According to *Losing Our Future: How Minority Youth Are Being Left Behind by the Graduation Rate Crisis*, a 2004 study by the Harvard University Civil Rights Project, nationwide urban school districts characterized by high poverty, districts located in central cities, and districts with high percentages of minority students are more likely than their suburban counterparts to have low graduation rates.

Many Merritt College students are the first in their family to go to college. Over 64 percent are first generation college students and 54 percent are low-income. Most are part-time students juggling competing commitments of work and sometimes family. Forty percent of students enrolled at Merritt College are African American, and of those 48 percent are classified as low income as shown in Table 1 below. African American males make up approximately one-third of the African American student population at Merritt as shown in Table 2 below.

TABLE 1: Merritt College African American Low Income Students						
Type of Student	African American Males		African American Females		African American College Total	
Low-Income	455	43%	1028	50%	1483	48%
Source: Peralta Office of Institutional Research						

TABLE 2: Fall 2007 Merritt College African American Student Enrollment			
African American Males	African American Females	African American Total	College Total
1059	2056	3115	7500
Source: Peralta Office of Institutional Research			

First Generation

A large proportion of the target population faces the added challenge of being the first in their family to attend college. Admissions, financial aid, and community data reported by the

Peralta Office of Institutional Research cites the following: 1) 33 percent of Merritt's students come from families in which one of their parents did not earn a high school diploma; 2) 26 percent come from families in which neither parent has attended college; and, 3) 91 percent come from families in which neither parent graduated from college. Many students from the target population face an educational disadvantage from the start, as research shows that mother and father degree attainment is often a predictor of success in the first year of college.

b. Focus on serving the needs of disadvantaged individuals

Increasingly High Number of African American Students in Basic Skills Courses

In Fall 2006, 66.7 percent of the students enrolled in basic skills English courses were African Americans which was up almost 3 percent from the previous year. In fact, over the past few years, African American students have comprised an overwhelming majority of students enrolled in basic skills English and Math at Merritt, out numbering all other ethnic groups.

Basic Skills	Fall 2005			Fall 2006		
	Total College	African American		Total College	African American	
ESL	768	37	4.8%	851	34	3.9%
English	553	353	63.8%	517	345	66.7%
Mathematics	847	524	61.9%	840	519	61.8%

Source: Merritt College Equity for All Scorecard Report 2006

Furthermore, African American students who completed basic skills English and Math performed poorly in the next college level course. Only 59 percent of African American students successfully completed college or transfer level English courses, after having enrolled in Basic Skills English and only 37 successfully completed college or transfer level Math after enrolling in Basic Skills Mathematics.

Retention and Graduation

Considering the myriad of academic problems facing the target population, both prior to entering Merritt and during their time at the college, it is not surprising to see that retention and persistence through graduation are low. Upon entrance to college, African American males have self-esteem issues, academic preparation issues, resource issues, and experience other barriers to reaching a goal of successful degree completion. The proposed Maximum Achievement Project (MAP) will address these issues and barriers based on best practices cited in the literature by creating a climate for student development and a high level of academic and social integration of students that leads to high student retention (Tinto, 1987; Tinto, 1993).

Merritt's African American male student annual retention rate is 46 percent. The three-year graduation rate for students who entered Merritt as freshman in 2002 (i.e. graduation by 2006) is shown in Table 4. After three years of study, only 3.9 percent of the African American male students graduated compared to 9.4 percent of all students.

TABLE 4: African American Male Degree Attainment in Three Years		
	2006	Last Five Year Average
All Students	9.4%	10.7%
African American Males	3.9%	6.6%
Source: Peralta Office of Institutional Research		

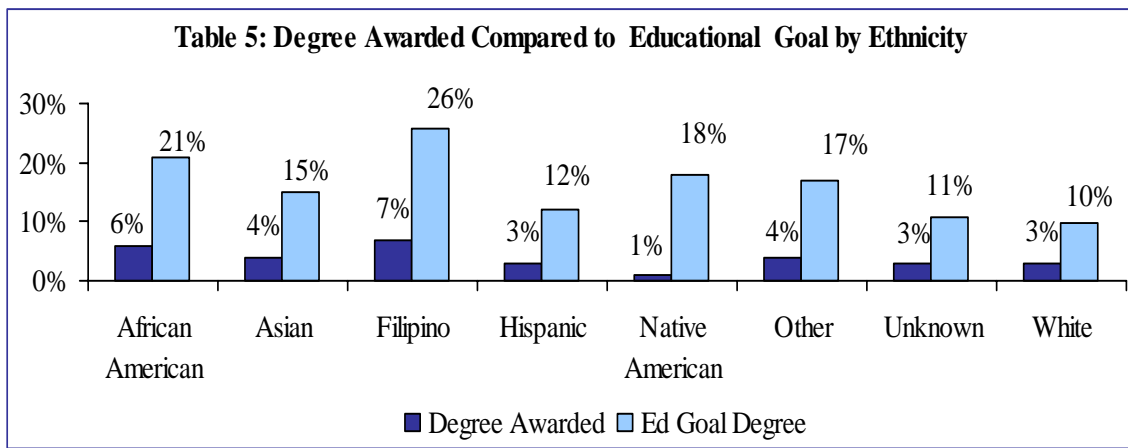
Unacceptable High Ratio of Students to Counselor/Advisors

In a recent Merritt College Student Satisfaction Survey (Spring 2007), a small percentage of the students reported that they have regular contact with counselors. Even for those students receiving support services through a program such as the Educational Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS), the student to counselor ratio is still often high.

Merritt’s high counselor to student ratio has an adverse affect on all students, but a great affect on the success, retention and graduation rates of African American males. Studies cite strong academic planning based on each student’s weaknesses, strengths, and goals as an essential element in the success of African American males. Moreover, the counseling/advising relationships needs to go beyond course selection and to facilitate exploration of the breadth of the curriculum, experiences of college life, focus on a major concentration, and prepare students for life after graduation (Abghari, 2007).

Degree and Certificate Completion Compared to Educational Goals:

Table 5 shows the percent of students who attained a degree compared to the percent of students with the same goal by ethnicity in (Peralta Data Mart, 2006). Twenty-one percent of African Americans students had an educational goal of Associates Degree, but only 6% earned a degree underscoring the need for targeted counseling/advisement.



These data further underscores the need for targeted counseling/advisement as a strategy that will help in the retention and graduation of African American male students.

c. Specific gaps in services and infrastructure

Lack of Personal Development

In Hennessey's (1990) investigation of student service programs he found that successful programs pay attention to the social, emotional and personal development of learners and recommends that model programs integrate learning, personal development strategies, and services. In addition, studies consistently show that programs, in which faculty members are concerned with students' emotions and attitudes about their work, are more successful than those were faculty concentrate on only teaching the subject (Boylan 2002).

In a study of successful African American male students (Harris, 1996), three key elements and characteristics were identified. First, they articulate a personal concept of success. Second, they are adept at networking and understand the value of human connections. In other words, "...to be successful in higher education the ability to "get connected" is an essential skill". Third, they possess a keen sense of balance (i.e. study, work, and play).

Colleges that make students more involved, seemingly, more effectively influence learning and student development (Astin, 1984). Moreover, limited access to a counselor/advisor with whom a student may discuss personal matters promotes alienation among students coming from a wide-range of educational experiences. In turn, a lack of personal contact among students and members of the campus community often results in the students leaving the institution.

Lack of Professional Mentors from Their Community or Ethnic Group

Students in the target population often lack mentors who can serve as role models, offer assistance in school, and provide a network of contacts to support their academic and professional development. Faculty mentors who have worked with a student on a research project can also speak to the student's ability and motivation for a four-year school in the form of

strong letters of recommendation. The support of a professional and faculty mentor is even more important in the current climate. According to a recent article in *The American Prospect*, students from the target population are now competing with other applicants who have the finances and resources to market themselves very effectively. Students with a higher income are able to hire professional consultants who take them through the entire process of applying to either undergraduate or graduate school, helping them to earn high-test scores, craft the perfect personal essay, give the best interview, and network with the right individuals. Without access to these resources African American males and other low-income students often cannot compete at the same level as these more fortunate, well-coached students (*The American Prospect*, October 7, 2002).

II. QUALITY OF THE PROGRAM DESIGN

- a. Goals, objectives, and outcomes are specified and measurable**
- b. Address the needs of the target population**

The Maximum Achievement Project (MAP) team will build on the educational, practical experiences, expertise of faculty, counselors, and student services personnel in an exciting partnership effort. The project's framework is based on several overlapping bodies of effective best practices cited in the literature. The MAP is designed to meet the needs of African American males and other low income, first-generation college, and high-risk students with a strong focus on student retention and outcomes. The four components of the project include: 1) Intake and Assessment; 2) Learning Community Cohorts; 3) Targeted Student Support Services; and, 4) Faculty Development.

An assessment of academic, learning styles, career, and study skills will be required for all MAP students and serve as a foundation for: 1) individualized counseling/advising

relationships; 2) instruction in learning community cohorts; 3) targeted student support services; 4) structured mentoring and internship programs; 5) academic enrichment and co-curricular activities; and, 6) faculty professional development to transform traditional teaching and learning pedagogy, and to promote an examination of cultural beliefs and academic values.

The project goal is to **increase the three-year graduation rate of African American males and other low income students in the MAP program from 6.6 percent to 10 percent.**

Six specific and measurable MAP project objectives appropriate to the needs of the target population are as follows:

OBJECTIVE 1: To identify, enroll and serve a total of 200 African American males and other low income college students in the MAP—100 students during each academic year of the project.

OBJECTIVE 2: To identify, enroll and serve a total of 200 African American males and other low income college students in the MAP Winter Intersession and Summer Bridge Programs -- 100 students during each year of the project.

SPECIFIC/MEASURABLE: Specific outreach activities will be conducted by the MAP team on an on-going basis to disseminate information on the program and to identify, enroll, and to achieve the required number of participants. The MAP team and external evaluator will set a schedule for enrolling program participants, benchmark progress according to a specified timeline, and make adjustments in outreach activities as needed. Documentation of outreach activities will be maintained and participant files will be used to measure enrollment outcomes.

ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS: These objectives address the needs of the target population because the project will serve a target population of community college students who are less likely than other male groups of students to seek help to resolve their academic problems, especially low-income first-generation students. This objective is attainable through a well organized and executed outreach plan of activities and a variety of materials

designed to identify students—including presentations to internal constituencies and the community, a closely monitored referral system of students from faculty, staff and campus program offices, and self-referrals. Specialized outreach, particularly to new students will be conducted in identifying participants for the Winter Intersession and Summer Bridge Programs.

OBJECTIVE 3: To provide 100 percent of MAP students with comprehensive assessment including academic, learning styles, career, and study skills to support classroom learning and adequate academic and support services.

SPECIFIC/MEASURABLE: Four types of assessments will be administered to all MAP participants—academic, learning styles, career, and study skills. Student assessment plans will allow the project to assess the project’s success in addressing the needs of the individual participants. The outcomes of these assessments will also be used to establish an effective and individualized, educational, personal development, and career plan for each student. More importantly, MAP students will be appropriately placed into courses based on their skill levels. In addition, academic assessment results will be used to establish baseline data as student progress is monitored and as the project is evaluated for effectiveness, and goal achievement.

ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS: This objective addresses the needs of African American males and other low-income, first-generation college students because many of these students enter college with a variety of academic and personal needs. According to Gardiner (2006), producing dramatic gains in student learning and educational goal achievement is determined by how well we guide our students’ development. In a study of African American male students at a California Community College, Hampton (1999) concluded that “...that clear goals are a key part of the success of Black male students who do well in college” (Hampton, 1999). Hampton goes on to say that “...those who know what they want to achieve in college, including having a well-defined major, do much better than those who enroll in undeclared

majors and have ill-defined ideas about their academic goals. Student assessment results will also serve as a guide in the counselor/advisor/student relationship, as students receive adequate academic support, and increase use of more effective classroom instructional strategies.

OBJECTIVE 4: To increase the successful course completion rate to 90 percent for MAP students enrolled in learning communities cohorts with students earning a grade of “C” or better.

SPECIFIC/MEASURABLE: MAP participant progress toward successful course completion will be closely monitored. Academic and support services will be provided at multiple points of contact to project participants who will allow for identification of possible issues and the identification of success and retention strategies. The project participant’s successful grades (A, B, C, and Credit only) and course completion rates will serve as a quantitative measure for the outcomes for this objective.

ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS: This objective addresses the need by requiring 90 percent of the project participants to successfully complete their courses each semester with a “C” or better while making timely progress towards their degree, certificate and/or transfer. The objective is attainable because of the comprehensive academic and student services support that will be provided to project participants. The Learning Community curricular approach will address course content and the participants’ remedial needs in English and Math. Numerous research studies have revealed that this approach is of great benefit in improving the learning outcomes of students. *“We are no longer content with merely providing instruction. We will judge ourselves henceforth on the quality of student learning we produce”* (O’Banion, 1998). MAP learning communities will document learning and serve as a framework in how to create learning outcomes, learning options, and more learning-centered activities.

OBJECTIVE 5: To provide individual counseling/advising to MAP students for the completion of a Student Educational Plan (SEP) for 100% of project participants and necessary support for timely, successful, and academic progress toward their educational and career goals.

SPECIFIC/MEASURABLE: Counseling/Advising records will document the type, frequency and outcome of these services to MAP students. On-going student follow-up and service evaluation measures will measure the effectiveness and quality of the services delivered and their effectiveness with the project participants. Regular progress reports will be made to improve counseling/advising services and timelines for the completion of SEPs will be set each semester.

ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS: This objective addresses the need because it requires more frequent and on-going contact between staff and students in the project than what normally occurs at the college. An important factor to increased retention and student success is increased student engagement in counseling and advising specifically tailored to meet the needs of the target population (Gladwell, 2000). MAP will provide comprehensive academic and career counseling to project participants at a more effective ratio of 2 FTE to 200 versus the general college ratio of 1 FTE to 1,241. The project's counseling ratio will allow the counselor to become more knowledgeable of each participant's needs and contribute to the student's development. In addition, one-on-one meetings with students, counselors will work directly with faculty in classes, Counselor insights will be shared with other MAP staff to improve and align project activities to student academic, personal, and career goals.

Objective 6: To increase the annual retention rate of African American males and other low income college students enrolled in the MAP program from 46 percent to 65 percent by the end of the project.

SPECIFIC/MEASURABLE: The increase in the annual target retention rate of MAP African American males and other low income students from 46 percent to of 65 percent is clear, specific, and measurable. Participant progress in achieving this goal will be measured each year by analyzing student data including the number of students who began in a given academic year, compared to those who completed the year, and returned the following year.

ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS: This objective addresses the overarching goal of the MAP which is to **increase the retention, transfer, and graduation of African American males, and other low income, first generation students at Merritt College.** This objective is attainable because it addresses the comprehensive needs of the project participants through the delivery of an array of academic, personal, and support services. The project services will be delivered in a continuous and intrusive manner.

III. QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES

- a. Services are appropriate to the needs of the recipients**
- b. Proposed project reflect research and effective practice**

The Maximum Achievement Project is designed to provide a comprehensive program of instruction and support services for African American males, and other low-income students to increase retention and graduation rates compared to the general student body. Each year a cohort of students will be selected to participate in a structured program of study, providing a myriad of comprehensive support services for students. The project's has four components: 1) In-take and Assessment; 2) Learning Community Cohorts; (3) Targeted Student Support Services; and, (4) Faculty Development. The project will serve as a campus *home base* for these targeted students.

(A) ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT**1. Identify African American Males and other low-income students**

MAP staff will conduct trainings for the Admission, Financial Aid Offices and other staff to orient them to the project's objectives and their role in identifying potential students. The project staff will also conduct orientations to inform faculty members (especially those that teach "high risk" classes) of the goals and objectives of the project and how to refer individuals to the project. Staff will follow up with participants attending the orientations to answer any questions, further encourage the identification of potential participants.

2. Assessment

Project participants' academic records and standardized test results plus additional assessments will determine development and learning skill levels. The personal skills assessment battery includes learning styles, career interest, and study skills inventories, which also focus on listening and oral presentation skills. Based on students' needs, some of the following instruments may be administered: 1) Learning and Study Skills Inventory (LASSI); 2) Learning Styles Survey; 3) Career Choice Assessment; and, 4) Comprehensive Student Inventory (CSI).

3. College Bridge Program

The MAP College Winter Intersession and Summer Bridge Program is based on Tinto's (1975) theoretical synthesis of research on dropouts from higher education and is designed to increase a student's integration and counterbalance initial disadvantages of college high-risk, minority group, and low-income students. Intersession and College Bridge Programs are not remedial programs, but are designed to address many issues that affect a student's decision to stay in college, by building a network of support and making the campus a familiar place before the semester begins. The goals of the program are academic and social integration and transition

to college. The MAP Intersession and College Bridge Programs will be three-week programs offered during the winter inter-session and in the summer that allows selected first-time students to experience the college environment prior to entering the regular term. Students will bridge the gap in transitioning to college through academic coursework, enrichment activities, and experience opportunities to build relationships and network with students, faculty, and staff. Instruction and tutoring are integral parts of the Intersession and College Bridge Programs. A recent study by the *Policy Center on the First Year of College* (2007) revealed that comprehensive, coordinated, and flexible approaches to the new student experience with structures to guide and align all aspects of the new student experience provide a coherent experience for new students. MAP activities will include assessment, prep Mathematics and English, orientation to college course requirements, become familiar with campus resources, develop study skills, and gain exposure to strategies for success.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

“Why is there so much interest in learning communities? ...because learning communities fit with what research tells us about learning, and ...because learning communities work” (Cross, 1998). MAP learning communities will build upon collaborative learning approaches with an emphasis on writing and critical thinking, interdisciplinary studies, and classroom based assessment. Students are encouraged to become responsible learners, to work in real world situations, and to develop a personal voice. MAP will use *Structured Thematic Learning Communities* of linked courses that will be developed in the faculty development component. The Learning Communities model is firmly grounded in each individual student’s power to transform his or her environment. Learning communities also allow the college to address the complexities of higher education with the diversity of student

needs, abilities, and desires. MAP learning communities are a purposeful attempt to create a challenging yet nurturing academic environment. The MAP learning communities will fundamentally restructure course curriculum for the target population and how some courses are taught. The MAP learning communities will also link courses, faculty and students from different disciplines so that students experience greater coherence in their studies, and flexibility in course schedules. Targeted tutoring and learning assistance will be a critical part of the learning communities.

1. Supplemental Instructional

The MAP will use the Supplemental Instructional methodology (SI) as the academic support service for courses offered in learning communities. The SI methodology relies upon a skills-based instructional approach, rather than content (subject) based instruction that is taught in the college courses. By using this methodology, the students will not feel as though the class work is being repeated – once in class then again by the academic support services. Careful coordination with faculty will take place to ensure that MAP Supplemental Instruction complements coursework and focuses on the skills needed to be successful with the content. In addition to addressing assignment-specific problems, the participants will work with tutors who will follow-up, reinforce and support proper study and research skills, test-taking strategies, critical thinking, and problem solving.

The desired outcomes of Supplemental Instructional will be: a) to supplement instruction with skills development to assure student success in their coursework; b) to encourage students to use study skills and to become active, self-directed learners; and c) to assist students in their personal development, self confidence, and motivation.

C. STUDENT SERVICES

1. Counselor as “Success Coach”

The transition to college is a major life change. For the first time, students will have to make decisions about their futures and confront their real academic ability in relationship to the demands of college courses. Each student will be assigned to a “Success Coach” to help them throughout the MAP experience and to work towards their educational and career goals. The coach will facilitate regular one-on-one meetings with students and maintain consistent contact and communications via telephone calls, e-mail, and text messaging. The Success Coach will support students as they adjust to college life, offer input on courses of study, assist in the registration process, discuss assignments and concerns and work with MAP participants to set and achieve project and personal short and long-term goals.

2. Student Personal Development

In contrast to the traditional view that formal academic content must be transmitted to students exclusively through classroom and laboratory activities, the MAP will integrate out-of-class experiences with informal co-curricular activities in order to enhance the students’ holistic development. The MAP has identified specific personal developmental objectives to increase the likelihood that the participants will be successful in their post secondary education with motivation, commitment and confidence.

A growing consensus upon educators suggests that a quality educational experience includes both formal learning *and* personal development. Developmental themes have been established for the students’ personal development and will be serve as a common thread for project activities. MAP will focus on personal development themes such as: academic, cultural, emotional, family, intellectual, moral, physical, purpose and social interpersonal.

In addition, the MAP will sponsor a series of workshops, called the *Learning the*

Academy, which will introduce the students to the role and purpose of higher education and how it operates. Below are examples of the services and their related themes:

LEARNING ACADEMY WORKSHOPS	THEME
Course Selection and College Graduation	The role courses play in a college education
Academic Success and Your Career	Opening doors to your future; selling the real you
Test Preparation	Success in taking standardized tests
Multi-Cultural Awareness	How do I fit into the college environment?
Transfer – Four-Year College Applications	College selection and transfer admission processes
Financial Aid and Scholarships	Planning for the cost of college and how to earn \$\$
Leadership and Student Recognition	Celebrating a family’s academic success.

Taxonomy adapted from Wilson & Miller, NASPA Journal, Vol. 32, No. 1

3. Peer and Professional Mentoring

Retention scholars have lamented for quite sometime that an African American male student’s fit or “niche” in the college environment has a direct impact on his staying powering until graduation. To address this challenge educators are increasingly using non-cognitive strategies such as mentoring (Wilson, 2000). Peer and professional mentoring relationships will be established for MAP participants. Mentoring will help MAP students to succeed by assisting students in acquiring the confidence, resources, and skills they need to reach their potential. The goal is for a structured and trusting relationships to bring “at risk” students together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing competence and character (Rhodes, 2002).

4. Internships

A paid internship program will be implemented in the second year of the MAP. A National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) study found that twenty two percent of new hires come from employers' own internship programs. In today's tight labor market, offering such programs is a significant way to provide real world experiences to academic theory with

practical application in the work place. The MAP internship program will provide assignments with challenging projects and tasks. Students will receive college credit for internships.

(D) FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

The faculty development component is a centerpiece and essential to the successful outcomes for the MAP and its project participants. The MAP support faculty development to encourage faculty to identify barriers and select effective teaching methods to improve student learning outcomes. Faculty are the prime facilitators of student learning, but many faculty lack formal training in instructional research or design. The traditional lecture method may fail in reaching all students, particularly with the increasing diversity of students, their educational experiences, and the tremendous range of skill levels that faculty face in the classroom.

Research clearly demonstrates that a more student-centered, active-learning approach to teaching achieves superior skill development and better understanding of more complex levels of learning (Cross and Angelo, 2001; Tinto, 2005). Further, the evidence is strong that providing training especially to those teaching developmental courses increases pass rates and retention (Cassazza & Silverman, 1996; Boylan, Bliss & Bonham, 1997; Boylan, Sutton & Anderson, 2003).

To meet these changing demands of various instructional modes, faculty members must first be able to analyze student needs; second, create new classroom techniques within overall curriculum development to meet these student needs; and third, evaluate the effectiveness of the new classroom techniques. Because a variety of societal, college-wide and program level factors contribute to the poor performance of many students in college courses, research, including research targeted at the department and classroom levels, is needed to inform the faculty about specific obstacles to learning as well as to guide curriculum review and development.

The MAP, and its, faculty will host an annual conference with national research addressing the academic and other needs of African American males and other low-income students. This research-oriented approach is consistent with Merritt College's increasing institutional focus on data-driven, outcome-based planning and decision-making.

Special mention must be included here to address the high percentage of part-time faculty at Merritt College. Adjunct faculty will be actively involved in appropriate Faculty Development in teaching and learning activities in order to ensure that these individuals are able to implement the changes and services planned by the college. Furthermore, the college is committed to a concept of "train the trainers" whereby full-time faculty will be developed as trainers and mentors to ensure ongoing professional development and institutionalization of the programs and services described in this proposal.

IV. QUALITY OF PROJECT PERSONNEL:

The MAP staff will consist of a Project Director, Administrative Assistant, Assessment Specialist, and Counselors who will serve as Success Coaches, a Peer Mentor Coach, and Assessment Specialist. Faculty will serve as a Curriculum Specialist, an Internship Coordinator, and Instructors for Learning Communities. Other personnel will include Student Tutors and Peer Mentors. Peralta is an equal opportunity employer. Every effort is made to encourage applications for employment from persons traditionally underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. All personnel must demonstrate an understanding of and sensitivity to and respect of diverse academic, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students. The minimum qualifications for the Project Director and other key project personnel are as follows:

a. Project Director Qualifications - Training and Experience

1) Master's degree required, with a min of five years of experience at the college level; 2) Minimum of three years of college administrative and teaching experience; 3) Ability to provide leadership, manage staff across departments, program management/development; 4); Experience in developing; maintaining, and monitoring budgets 5) Grants management experience desired; 6) Strong interpersonal skills and excellent oral and written communication skills.

b. Other Key Project Personnel: Qualifications - Training and Experience

Counselor (*Assessment Specialist, Success Coach and Peer Mentor Coach*) -: (1) Master's degree in counseling, psychology, or related field; with a minimum of two years counseling experience; (2) Ability to provide career counseling, academic advisement, and psychosocial services; (3) Ability to work well with at-risk students from diverse backgrounds; (5) Prior experience working with learning communities, desired.

Curriculum Specialist: (1) Master's Degree, with a minimum of two years of developmental instruction and learning community experience at the college level; desired (2) Experience in developing specialized instruction preferred; (3) Excellent interpersonal and organizational skills; (4) Strong verbal and written communication skills; (5) Ability to work cooperatively with a culturally diverse faculty and staff and at-risk students.

Faculty: (*Learning Community Faculty and Internship Coordinator*): (1) Master's Degree in appropriate field or discipline from an accredited institution; OR THE EQUIVALENT OR Earned Bachelor's Degree in any of the above from an accredited institution

Assessment Specialist: (1) Bachelor's Degree in any field strongly emphasizing coursework in research methods and statistics; Master's preferred; (2) Experience in conducting institutional/educational research preferred; (3) Familiarity with data collection and analysis, including database organization management;(4) Excellent organizational skills; (5) Strong verbal and written communication skills; (6) Ability to work cooperatively with a culturally diverse faculty and staff and at-risk students.

Administrative Assistant: (1) High school diploma and formal training in office procedures and bookkeeping; (2) Three years of full-time secretarial experience with one year at an educational setting; (3) Excellent word processing and communication skills; (4) Ability to work and communicate with students, parents, and members of the college community.

Peer Mentors and Supplemental Instruction Tutors: (1) Currently a student in good standing at an accredited college with at least a 3.0 GPA, and referral from faculty in related discipline (2) Ability to work well with a culturally diverse faculty and staff and low-income students.

V. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

- a. Budget is adequate to support the proposed project

Budget Narrative 2008-2010	Year I	Year II
1. PERSONNEL		
A. Full Time Staff		
Project Director	\$108,396	\$113,816
Curriculum Specialist	\$21,207	\$22,267
Counselors	\$39,780	\$41,769
Assessment Specialist	\$19,890	\$20,885
Administrative Assistant	\$29,580	\$30,763
B. Part Time Staff		
Instructors – Learning Community Courses	\$35,425	\$36,841
Internship Coordinator	\$26,413	\$27,734
Student SI Tutors	\$19,786	\$19,786
Student Peer Mentors	\$65,952	\$69,250
Sub -Total Personnel	\$386,319	\$404,985
2. FRINGE BENEFITS		
Full time Staff (% of salaries)	\$45,743	\$48,030
Part time Staff (% of salaries)	\$14,982	\$15,581
Sub-Total Benefits	\$60,725	\$63,611
3. TRAVEL		
National and Regional Conferences (Project Director)	\$4,000	\$4,000
Educational Meetings/Conferences	\$5,000	\$5,000
Local Staff and Student Travel	\$4,000	\$4,000
Sub-Total Travel	\$13,000	\$13,000
4. EQUIPMENT		
5. SUPPLIES		
Assessment Materials	\$2,400	\$2,400
Office Supplies (\$ monthly)	\$1,800	\$1,800
Computers (Two desktops/ One laptop)	\$5,000	0
Printer	\$2,000	0
Postage	\$1,500	\$1,500
Communications (office phones and cell phone toll charges)	\$2,400	\$2,400
Copying & Printing (Stationary, flyers, brochures, newsletters)	\$10,000	\$10,000
Educational Materials and Supplies	\$9,000	\$9,000
Sub-Total Supplies	\$34,100	\$27,100
6. CONTRACTUAL - External Program Evaluation/CB Assess.	\$31,000	\$31,000
7. CONSTRUCTION	0	0
8. OTHER – Winter and Summer Bridge- Black Male Conference	\$32,600	\$32,600
Subtotal Other	\$32,600	\$32,600
9. TOTAL COSTS	\$557,744	\$572,296

b. Costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives and design

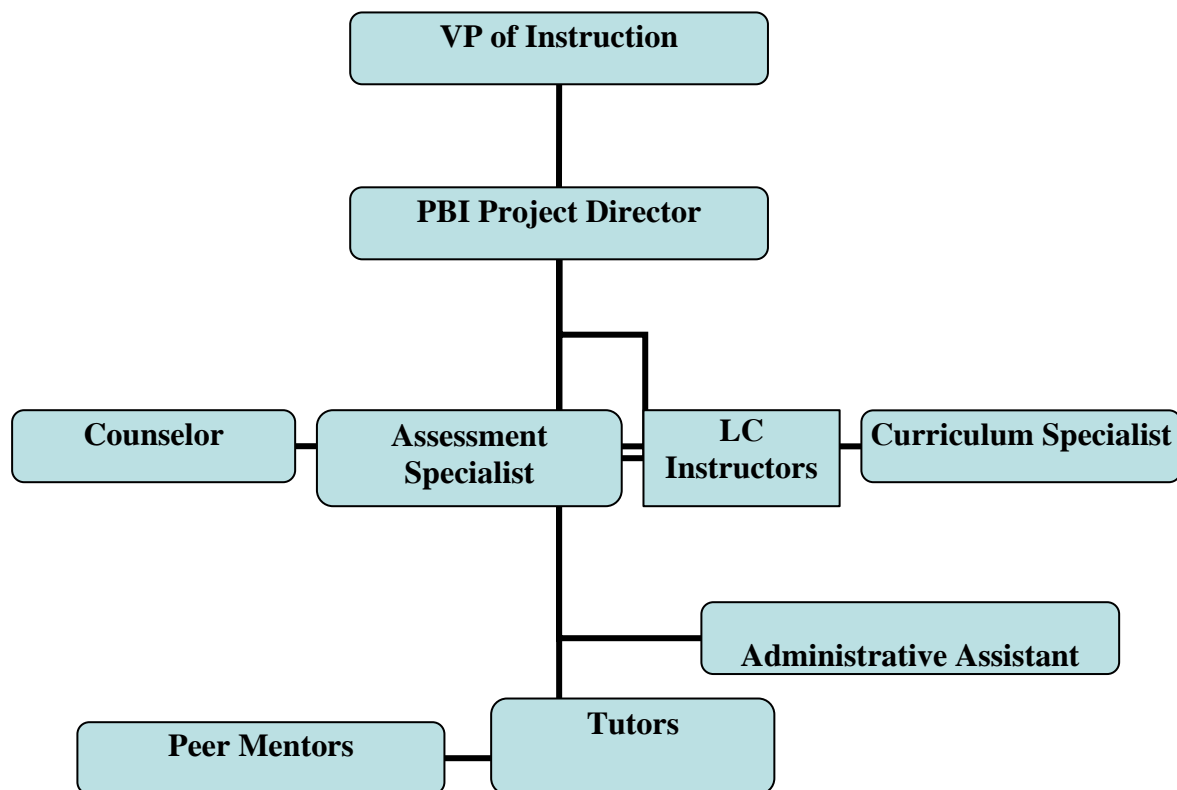
The project budget was carefully constructed within the federal regulations to adequately support the project, and make effective use of resources provided by the applicant and the other offices at the college in order to successfully attain the goals and purpose of MAP. The costs of project services are reasonable in relation to the costs of similar services provided at the college. Project staff salaries are within the range for comparable positions in the college salary schedule to reflect academic attainment, experience, and length of service to the college. Benefits are based on current state, federal and college policy, cost rates and the union agreements for the positions. Health and dental benefits are made available to personnel to assist the project in attracting and retaining quality personnel. Supplies and services costs are based on college procurement procedures and include discounts where appropriate. The amounts in both categories are necessary to carry out the proposed project. The items and services would not be available without MAP funds, and project activities would not be adequately funded. Travel is to promote professional development and to the ability of staff and to improve the ability of the staff in providing effective and efficient services to the participants. Various types of travel are available to staff, as is consistent with U.S. Department of Education and college travel policies.

VI. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

a. Management plan to achieve the objectives

The Merritt College Vice President for Instruction will have ultimate authority and responsibility for the overall project with all aspects of institutional operation in accordance with policies of the Board of Trustees of Peralta Community College District and integrated into the administrative structure of the institution. The institution recognizes that strong leadership and administration are essential to the success of the project. The Vice President for Instruction will directly

supervise the MAP Project Director who will have overall responsibility for implementing the project. The Project Director has been granted full administrative authority by the College President to: 1) lead the day-to-day management; 2) ensure the quality of the project; 3) oversee the successful integration of grant activities into existing College practices; 4) exercise administrative control to ensure accomplishment of objectives; 5) monitor and reconcile budget using monthly business reports; and, 6) serve as the primary liaison for the project to all college and community constituencies. Below is MAP's organizational chart.



Maximum Achievement Project	MANAGEMENT PLAN OF ACTION Milestones for Accomplishing Project Tasks
PRE-GRANT PERIOD	
August 2008 to September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate information regarding the MAP to college constituencies via the college’s shared governance committees • Initiate outreach activities to identify potential project participants • Initiate processes to set-up project office and website • Prepare grant job announcements in accordance with District and College policies and procedures • Create new Learning Communities for Spring 2009 course schedule • Create Spring 2009 course schedule—MAP Winter Intersession
ANNUAL PROJECT TASKS	
October to December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Maximum Achievement Project (MAP) Office (YR I only) • Hire, orient, and train MAP project team, as appropriate (YR I only) • Hire external evaluator to implement data element and analysis procedures, identify benchmarks to assess progress in achieving goals and objectives, and timeline for formative and summative evaluation of performance measures • Conduct training sessions for Admissions, Financial Aid, and Counseling staff and faculty orientation sessions to inform college community of grant goals, objectives, and referral of students • Implement outreach strategies to identify African American male and other high risk students • Assess project participants (i.e. placement tests, learning styles inventories, career interests, and study skills inventories, etc.) • Initiate hiring process to identify peer mentors • Identify project advisory committee members (YR I only) • Coordinate faculty professional development in learning communities, supplemental instruction; assess other training needs
January to May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop professional mentor and internship program (YR I only) • Conduct MAP Winter Intersession College Bridge Program • Assess project participants (i.e. placement tests, learning styles inventories, career interests, and study skills inventories, etc.) • Continue outreach strategies to identify African American male and other high risk students • MAP participants maintain regular “Success Coach” and Counselor Contacts to benchmark student progress and develop a Student Educational Plan (SEP) to meet degree and/or transfer requirements • Facilitate Learning Academy workshop series • Conduct supplemental instruction based tutoring for participants • Conduct MAP Advisory Committee meeting • Train peer mentors and initiate peer mentor program for participants • Implement professional mentor and internship program • Facilitate on-going assessment, evaluation, and changes as needed

- External evaluator conducts on-site visit and prepares written report
- Complete required six month performance report
- Disseminate project outcomes and needs to collage community
- Coordinate on-going faculty and staff development
- May to September • Conduct MAP Summer Bridge Program
- Assess project participants (i.e. placement tests, learning styles inventories, career interests, and study skills inventories, etc.)
- MAP participants maintain regular “Success Coach” and Counselor contacts to benchmark progress and to develop an individual Student Educational Plan (SEP) to meet degree and/or transfer requirements
- Continue outreach strategies to identify African American male and other high risk students
- Conduct MAP Advisory Committee meeting
- Coordinate cohort internships and professional mentor program

b. Procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement

Internal monitoring and reporting systems will ensure sound continuous quality improvement, fiscal management, efficient project operations leading to the achievement of objectives, and avoid the supplanting of institutional funds with federal funds. In addition, a MAP advisory committee will be established to provide support, feedback, direction, and ongoing assessment. Feedback from student support planning groups and the Academic Senate and Classified Senates will be used to coordinate project components.

c. Mechanisms for ensuring high-quality services

Key Elements of Mechanisms to Ensure High Quality Services and Continuous Quality Improvement			
Personnel	Purpose	Method	Frequency
MAP Advisory Team	Provide support, direction, and monitoring of the overall project	Meeting	Once a semester
MAP Team	To review accomplishments, concerns, ensure quick mid-stream corrections, report progress, and internal or Federal policy changes	Meeting	Bi-weekly
Project Director	To communicate progress and accomplishments	Newsletter and Website	Quarterly
Project Director	To maintain strong linkages with college administration	President's Cabinets Meeting	Monthly
MAP Team	To share the exemplary pilot projects, new practices, and improvements.	Presentations/ Newsletter	Ongoing
Project Director and MAP Team	Communication and integration of projects best practices	Report to college community	Bi-Annually
Project Director and MAP Team	Use required performance reports to benchmark progress and adjust strategies to meet project objectives	Performance Reports	As required

VII. QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION

Merritt College recognizes the critical role that the Maximum Achievement Project will play in the development of its long-term capacity in providing access and the increased student success of African American males and other low income first generation students. In order to ensure the efficacy of MAP services and the sound utilization of the significant investment of federal and college resources it represents, the college will institute strong internal and external evaluation activities for the two-year scope of this project. These evaluation activities will assist in maintaining a high degree of quality in ensuring that the multi-faceted and complex tasks involved are carried out in a coordinated, effective and efficient manner.

a. Methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible and appropriate to the goals

Measurable objectives have been identified for each component of the project. To ensure that objectives are accurately measured and the resultant findings are valid, the Research and Planning Office (RPO), Project Director, and independent external evaluator will collaborate to ensure that the appropriate methods and data collection procedures are applied. The external evaluator will ultimately validate the evaluation design.

b. Methods provide feedback and assessment of progress

Evaluation Strategies: Merritt will use two evaluation strategies: formative and summative. The formative evaluation will assess initial and ongoing project activities, support continuous quality improvement, and respond to what is learned from unanticipated insights and experiences so that changes are made immediately. Formative evaluation will be ongoing and culminate with mid year and annual performance reports. The formative evaluation will be key in providing process performance measures that ensure that the program is continuously improving and progressing toward its goal. The annual summative evaluation will document and analyze the program's progress toward its overarching goal. The year end performance report and its recommendations will be provided to sustain continuing implementation of the project.

c. Methods will produce quantitative and qualitative data

The formative and summative evaluation strategies will utilize a variety of data elements and data collection procedures. To ensure a broad and effective assessment, Merritt will use a mixed method approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data elements to measure student academic performance, changes in instructional approaches and methods, interventionist counseling strategies, and faculty development activities. According to Potts (2006), an evaluation plan with a mixed method approach ensures a rich, comprehensive description of

processes and outcomes, provides credibility, and allows evaluation of diverse project objectives.

The chart below lists the types of data elements, sources , and analysis procedures.

Data Elements and Sources: Mixed Method Approach	
Quantitative	Qualitative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student performance data (retention, course completion, graduation) ▪ Standardized pre/post tests results ▪ Local and nationally normed surveys (CCSSE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus groups ▪ Faculty and Counselor anecdotal records
Data Collection and Analysis Procedures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze institutional data according to established baseline data and use control and treatment groups, where appropriate. Use advanced statistical techniques to determine statistical significance. Longitudinal data will be used in tracking students ▪ Use valid and reliable instruments and appropriate measurements to determine satisfaction, functionality, usage, usability, and content quality of programs and services ▪ Use standardized test results/national data to make statistical population comparisons 	

Validation of Activities through External Evaluation:

Merritt College has identified an independent external evaluator to work with the RPO and MAP Director to implement a two-year evaluation plan.

Background and Qualifications of External Evaluator
<p>Clarke & Associates, an educational consulting firm, will serve as the external evaluator and assist the college in the development, implementation, and on-going program evaluation. The principal of Clarke & Associates has broad experience in state and federal programs. Mr. Clarke has over thirty years of experience in education, managing and supervising student services, education opportunity and equity programs at the community college, state and research university levels. Mr. Clarke has presented numerous workshops on assessment and evaluation to school and college programs nationwide.</p>
Responsibilities of External Evaluator
<p>An external evaluator will provide credible, third-party observation of program impact. The external evaluator will assist with the development of a multi-year evaluation plan and perform two on-site visits per year: a <u>mid-year formative evaluation visit</u>; and, a year-end <u>summative evaluation</u> visit. Evaluation will inform the colleges required performance reports. The external evaluator will review data for all components, analyze progress toward project goals and objectives, and make recommendations for adjustments and revision.</p>

Below is the detailed evaluation strategy that describes the program areas linked to the objectives with corresponding data analysis plan.

DETAILED EVALUATION PLAN				
Maximum Achievement Project Program Goal: <i>To increase the 3-year graduation of participants from 6.6% to 10%</i>				
Intake and Assessment Component				
<p>Objective 1: By Fall (08&09) identify, enroll and serve a total of 200 African American males and other low income college students in the MAP—100 students during each academic year of the project.</p> <p>Objective 2: By December (08&09) and June (09&10) identify, enroll and serve a total of 200 African American males and other low income college students in the MAP Winter Intersession and Summer Bridge -- 100 students during each year of the project. <i>Baseline:</i> Established with First Term Data</p>				
Data Elements	Data Collection Methods/ Procedures	Timeline Data Analysis/ Progress Monitored	Report & Outcome Availability	Responsible Person(s)
Intake Surveys	Intake survey will be administered to all students each semester	<u>Formative:</u> Effective outreach strategies will be identified and inform future outreach to students.	Distribute Intake Survey data to MAP Team at end of semester	Project Director Assessment Spect External Evaluator
Objective 3: Every semester provide comprehensive assessment including academic, learning styles, career and study skills to 100% of the MAP students to support classroom learning and student support services.				
Data Elements	Data Collection Methods/Procedures	Timeline Data Analysis/ Progress Monitored	Report & Outcome Availability	Responsible Person(s)
1. MAP student assessment data 2. End of semester Exit Survey.	1. Assessment data (aggregated and distributed) 2. Anonymous survey administered to all	1. <u>Formative:</u> Assessment data used to inform instruction and support services 2. Data from the exit survey will be used to inform services and instruction. <u>Summative:</u> Annual report of the assessment function	Report of survey findings will be submitted to the advisory council at the end of each semester	Project Director Faculty Counselors Assessment Specialist
Learning Communities (LC)				
Objective 4: Every semester increase the successful course completion rate of MAP students enrolled in Learning Communities (LC) cohorts to 90% with students earning a grade of “C” or better				
Data Elements	Data Collection Methods/Procedures	Timeline Data Analysis/ Progress Monitored	Report & Outcome Availability	Responsible Person(s)

LC grade reports and student academic performance data	Pre test given to LC students (treatment) and students in parallel courses (control). Post test given at the end of the semester to both groups. to measure the program effect	<u>Formative:</u> Analysis of pre test data <u>Summative:</u> Longitudinal study of LC students and control group to determine long term impact of the program.	External evaluator will validate study design and data analysis. Results will be distributed to faculty and college constituencies each semester.	External Evaluator RPO Project Director Assessment Specialist MAP Team
Targeted Support Services				
Objective 5: Every semester provide individual counseling/advising to MAP students, which will result in a Student Educational Plan (SEP) completed for 100% of project participants to support them in making successful and timely academic progress toward their educational and career goals				
Data Elements	Data Collection Methods/Procedures	Timeline Data Analysis/ Progress Monitored	Report & Outcome Availability	Responsible Person(s)
SEP	Regularly review SEP	Midterm., SEP reviewed to identify incomplete SEPs	By the end of the semester	Counselors Project Director
Objective 6: To increase the annual retention rate of African American males and other low income college students enrolled in the MAP program from 46% to 65% by the end of the project.				
Data Elements	Data Collection Methods/Procedures	Timeline Data Analysis/ Progress Monitored	Report & Outcome Availability	Responsible Person(s)
Student data	Longitudinal Study	The duration of the project	Annual and End of Project Reports	External Evaluator RPO, Proj. Dir

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