1. **Proposal Title:** Pilot Project for Success Groups for Challenging Courses

2. **Initiators:** John Whitman, Director of Student Center for Academic Achievement (SCAA), Alison Richardson, Director of Student Academic Services, Diana Balgas, Executive Director of Retention Services

3. **Cost:** $22,000

   Beginning Fall 2010, we propose to provide seventeen Success Groups for ten different challenging courses: BIOL 2010 [1], 2020 [1], 2025 [2- Hayward, 1- Concord], ECON 3551 [2], FIN 3300 [2], MATH 900 [2], 950 [2] 1130 [1], 1304 [1] and STAT 1000 [2]. Although MATH 900 and 950 are not currently planned for the Fall 2010 schedule, we include them in the proposal, as well as the request for funding for an additional four sections in order to provide flexibility in the project’s response to any schedule changes that may occur between now and the fall. The sessions will begin the second week of the quarter and run for one hour each week. The project cost includes the compensation for tutors ($12.00/hr.), tutor training, and includes the project administration, publicity, and outreach to departments and faculty. The personnel, administration, and marketing costs are estimated $13,000. Additionally, $6,000 is requested to purchase curriculum support software (based on dept. recommendations) to supplement the project; an additional $2,000 to provide project assessment and logistical support (cost and analysis of attitudinal survey data); and $1,000 for training costs (materials, publications, refreshments, etc). The project cost is based on running an equivalent number of Success Groups each quarter of the 2010-2011 academic year.

4. **Description:**

   Beginning in the Fall 2010 quarter, the CSUEB Student Center for Academic Achievement (SCAA) will pilot Success Groups for Challenging Courses for classes that students often find demanding, resulting in a lack of success that may disrupt student persistence and progress to degree. These weekly, student-led study sessions will be modeled after Supplemental Instruction-type programs and provide additional support for classroom instruction and reinforce study skills strategies for the specific subject area. The success group leaders will be students who have previously successfully completed the course and have been recommended by a faculty member. Departments and faculty will be made aware of the availability at the start of each quarter and will be asked to actively refer students to the sessions. The student group leaders will participate in a preliminary training session on the dynamics and tactics of group tutoring and associated concepts of supplemental instruction, and the faculty will be invited to an information session at start of each term.

   The project will include partnering with cross-campus programs and offices, including student government (ASI), residential life, the SCAA, and the respective colleges to best determine optimal locations and times for the sessions. Student participation will be strongly encouraged not only for students who are struggling, but also those who wish to improve their grades and performance. Students enrolled in EOP (Educational Opportunity Program) or RSP
(Renaissance Scholars Program) programs will be required to attend the Success Group sessions, depending on ongoing assessments of their course progress. Pre and post subject attitudinal surveys will be administered to Success Group participants, and resulting course performance and GPAs will be compared to a non-participatory control groups for each course. Sustained funding requests may be made following analysis of the pilot program results.

5. **Expected outcomes/target audience:** **Outcomes:** students who attend the Success Groups four or more times during the quarter will have a measurably higher average course grade and course completion rate than students in the control group. Also, it is expected that participants will display a positive shift as measured in the pre and post attitude assessment. **Target audience:** tentatively identified as students enrolled in sections of BIOL 2010, 2020, 2025, ECON 3551, FIN 3300, MATH 900, 950, 1130, 1304 and STAT 1000 and/or other courses identified as historically challenging.

6. **Strategic impact/benefits:** Local anecdotal review suggests that certain courses may present deterrents to student success, persistence, program completion, and eventually impact graduation rates. The additional subject assistance as well as the introduction of study skills for the discipline and the assessment of student learning attitudes provided by the Success Groups will contribute to improved performance and course completion rates which could eventually contribute to higher graduation rates.

7. **Timeline:** Identification of “challenging” courses to participate in pilot: July, 2010; Success Group leaders (tutors) identification and training: August 2010; faculty/department outreach: September, 2010; Success Group pilot implementation: second week of each term, beginning Fall quarter, 2010; pilot results evaluation: following posting of course grades at end of each quarter.

8. **Potential barriers to success:** The main barrier to success could be attendance. We will need to find ways to provide incentives to encourage student participation. This can be done in various ways, including regular reminders from faculty of the availability of the service, and could even include some form of grade-related inducement in the form of extra credit awarded for attendance, or even having faculty make a discretionary decision to make attendance required, based on some evaluative standard (e.g. non-passing grades on quizzes, exams, etc.). A second barrier could be a lack of consistent faculty awareness of the project and the need for their regular referrals and encouragement. This will be addressed with direct meetings with the faculty and departments participating in the pilot, and through regular communications reminding faculty of the program and encouraging them to share the information with their students. Some final concerns include the access to the related data (e.g. participants’ course grades and gpa) needed for project assessment, and the eventual sustainability of the initiative if the pilot is successful.