UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA
AT LAFAYETTE

STEP COMMITTEE

Technology Fee Application

Smarthinking Renewal Grant
Title

Bette Harris and Caro Henauw
Name (Submitter)

Academic Success Center
Organization

__________________________________
Signature of Dean or Administrative Head
(REQUIRED)
Abstract

The Learning Center has provided students throughout campus access to tutoring services and study skills classes since 1974. In the mid 1990s, The Learning Center relocated from DeClouet Hall to Lee Hall and in 1999 computing facilities were updated and added. Since 1999, an average of 6,000 students each semester has used The Learning Center’s tutoring services and its computer lab. In the spring of 2004, an online tutoring service was added to the gamut and over the ensuing six years an average of over 11,000 students each semester has utilized one or more of the services offered at The Learning Center. In order to continue to offer online tutoring as part of The Learning Center’s array of valuable student services and to meet the Southern Regional Board’s (SRB) requirements for distance learning students, this grant seeks to renew the online services provided through Smarthinking and the computer lab.

Purpose of Grant

The purpose of this grant is to renew Smarthinking, the University’s online tutoring service, as well as to fulfill the SRB’s requirements for distance learning students. The University began enrolling distance learning students in fall 2010 and will increase its number of online degree-programs and online and hybrid courses in the near future.

Students in all degree programs and colleges benefit from online tutoring available through Smarthinking. Subjects include: Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Math, Physics, Spanish, and essay writing required for any subject. By renewing our Smarthinking partnership, The Learning Center will be able to continue to offer academic support and assistance to all students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Students are able to use Smarthinking from their own homes by logging onto ULink. Therefore, renewal of Smarthinking, the University’s online tutoring service, is requested.

Counselors at the Academic Success Center and all professional faculty and staff will continue to recommend and/or require specific tutorial programs for students’ academic needs. Additionally, as the University continues to implement distance learning programs and enroll more distance learning students, online tutoring will be increasingly necessary to accommodate their needs. These programs will be attainable through The Learning Center and Smarthinking.
A. Impact on Student Body

This renewal will impact students in the following ways:

1. **Renewing Smarthinking will provide over 16,000 undergraduate students with 24-hour access to online tutorial assistance.** This assistance is provided from any computer with internet access through logging onto ULink. Smarthinking availability is imperative because The Learning Center’s budget is limited and therefore is not able to provide face-to-face tutoring services for all the necessary classes at our University.

2. **Smarthinking will also provide online tutoring to distance learning students as mandated by the SRB for the implementation of distance learning courses.**

3. Renewing the equipment/supplies funds will enhance student learning and academic support by providing resources and assistance in the computer lab.

The usage of Smarthinking to the student body is reflected by the data collected on UL Lafayette student use, shown in the charts below.

**Figure 1**

![Graph showing Smarthinking usage hours from 2005-2006 to 2009-2010](image)

**SP05 - SU10 SMARTHINKING Hours used by UL Students**

As shown in Figure 1, Smarthinking student usage has increased each year it was offered until 2008 (when reduced funding limited the number of hours). Usage increased 7.10% from 2004-2005, however, student use sky-rocketed from 2005-2006 with a 60.15% increase. Then, from 2006-2007, there was another
18.80% usage increase. **Overall, from its inception in 2004 until 2008, Smarthinking student usage increased by 104.87%**. The amount of time spent utilizing Smarthinking more than doubled over the course of four years, until 2008. In 2008, STEP-grant funds for Smarthinking decreased by about half. As such, The Learning Center was only able to purchase and offer 1,095 Smarthinking students usage hours between April 1, 2008 and February 2009 when the hours ran out, explaining the subsequent decrease compared to the 2007-2008 academic year. Since then, the recapturing of Smarthinking student usage has been slow. In an effort to inform students that this valuable resource is up and running once again, we continue to advertise extensively at the beginning and throughout each semester. The ultimate benefit of Smarthinking online tutoring is that more students, including distance learning students, have access to academic support.

**Figure 2**

As shown in Figure 2, the subjects most heavily used by UL students are Mathematics & Statistics, Chemistry, Physics, and essays/papers for proofreading. If a student does not have time to go to the Writing Center on campus, this is a unique way to save time by having the ability to submit a paper online and receive a response in less than 24 hours. As previously noted, the decrease in sessions from 2008-2009 was not the result of a decrease in interest, but because of a decrease in funding compared to years prior (and subsequently having run out of Smarthinking hours for several months). Student usage of Smarthinking is increasing once again now that students are learning that this valuable resource is available again.
Finally, *Smarthinking* can be used by students in different ways. These include the above mentioned submission of essays and papers, the submission of questions, or through live tutoring sessions. Figure 3 illustrates that live tutoring sessions is the most popular usage of *Smarthinking*. *Smarthinking* live tutoring sessions provide students with an opportunity for help outside of on-campus tutoring hours. Students who work during the day and/or take 18 credits or more may not be able to come in for assistance during daytime hours of operation (8am-4:30pm). *Smarthinking* allows those students as well as distance learning students to get the help they need at night and on weekends as well as help with certain upper-level classes for which on-campus tutoring may not be offered at all.

**Figure 3**

![Bar chart showing session types](image)

**FA05-SU10 SMARTTHINKING Session Types used by UL students**

**B. Projected Lifetime of Enhancement**

The renewal of funds for Smarthinking will enable the continuation of academic support of the highest level including assistance in the computer lab for one year. This renewal will provide students with continued academic assistance and support; will help students understand and complete assignments and earn better grades, all of which will ultimately result in successfully graduating from UL Lafayette.
C. Persons responsible for Project

a. Implementation: Caro Henauw, Coordinator of The Learning Center, Academic Success Center; Bette Harris, Director, Academic Success Center; and qualified Graduate Assistant.

b. Installation: Caro Henauw, Coordinator of The Learning Center, Academic Success Center, and qualified Graduate Assistant.

c. Maintenance: Caro Henauw, Coordinator of The Learning Center, Academic Success Center, and qualified Graduate Assistant.

d. Operation: Caro Henauw, Coordinator of The Learning Center, Academic Success Center; qualified Graduate Assistant; and funded Lab Assistants.

e. Training: Caro Henauw, Coordinator of The Learning Center, Academic Success Center; qualified Graduate Assistant; and funded Lab Assistants.

* The Office of Information Systems is also used for reference and support when necessary.

Qualifications

Bette Harris serves as the Director of the Academic Success Center. She has been with the university for 22 years. She received her Masters of Business Administration from the University of Tennessee. Having many previous STEP grants funded, one being the Online Student Information System, she has been instrumental in providing technology services to UL Lafayette students.

Caro Henauw is currently the Coordinator of The Learning Center in the Academic Success Center. She has worked in Higher Education for 1 year. Caro’s degrees include a Bachelor of General Studies in Applied Science and a Master of Science in Communication, both from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.
### D. Budget Category Items

In order for students to continue using *Smarthinking*, licensing renewal is needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Tutoring Service</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost/Unit</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qty</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>Smarthinking Hours</td>
<td>Online Tutoring service for students</td>
<td>1,500 hrs x $30 per hr = $45,000 Annual Fee = $3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Software Total: $48,000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplies</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost/Unit</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qty</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer Supplies</td>
<td>Paper, Toner</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Supplies Total: $1,500**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost/Unit</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qty</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lab Assistants</td>
<td>MIS, CMPS, or related field undergraduate or graduate student - day-to-day student assistance for Smarthinking.</td>
<td>$7.25/hour 20hr/wk 48 wks/yr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personnel Total: $27,840**
**Budget Proposal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Implementation</th>
<th>1 year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Equipment</strong></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Smarthinking</strong></td>
<td>$48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Supplies</strong></td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Maintenance</strong></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Personnel</strong></td>
<td>$27,840</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** $77,340

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**Previously Funded STEP Grants**

In 2004, STEP funding for *Smarthinking* created **tlcLand**, an ideal computer lab and training facility for students, faculty, and staff use. Funding was also approved for **tlcLand extension**, which brought additional computers for student use, and an online calendar. The 2004 grant which included funding for *Smarthinking* online tutoring was a three-year grant (lasting until 2007). Since then, funding for *Smarthinking* has been renewed each year through STEP (2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010).

In 1999, Bette Harris, the Director of Junior Division, wrote the STEP grant which, when funded, created the original Lee Hall STEP lab. Since 1999, the Learning Center has been involved with many STEP grants for purposes such as PLATO, funding a ‘smart classroom’, computer labs, as well as *Smarthinking*. 