

2014-2015 Innovation of the Year Application

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College	Project title		
Glendale	GCCReads!		
Team members – List the team members involved in this project, including yourself. Provide name, job title, email for each. One person per line.			
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A team photograph including all members must accompany this application. Photograph must be 5"x7" and 300dpi or larger. Create a caption for this photograph Identifying team members (using full names) in order of appearance from left to right.			
GCCReads Facilitators: Dede Elrobeh, Cindy Ortega, Renee Smith			
Executive summary (50 words or less)			
GCCReads was crafted to address the social and educational needs of developmental reading students in an effort to increase their persistence and success rates. The GCCReads team formed a faculty and student book club with complimentary activities in order to encourage voluntary reading and campus engagement			

Innovations should include information that addresses all of the criterion below and is in alignment with the [Maricopa Vision, Mission, and Value Statements](#).

Quality: It is evident that the innovation increases "quality" in the course, program, office, or institution.
Currently, a critical strategic initiative for many community colleges is meeting the needs of underprepared students. GCCReads focused on providing participating developmental students with the means to make strong academic and personal connections with one another via shared reading experiences. Weekly book reading and discussion meetings were held where Honors Students earned Service Learning credit by serving as mentors to Developmental Reading students (mentees). Survey data from respondents indicated students came to GCCReads in order to improve specific reading skills such as: comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling. Additionally, a number of GCCReads participants self-identified as English language learners who enrolled in GCCReads in order to improve their English language comprehension and speaking abilities. Students who participated in the first semester of GCCReads expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program, and a majority of students who took the post-survey indicated an increase in both the amount of time spent on leisure reading as well as positive feelings about the library and its resources. GCCReads increases quality at GCC by building reading competence in developmental students, providing opportunities for service learning, and creating meaningful connections for students
Efficiency: There is evidence that the innovation contributes to a more efficient way of doing things.
With the current climate in academia focusing on student success endeavors, we are faced with the challenge of making connections with students beyond the classroom. Due to the nature of their interactions with students, Reading instructors and librarians are uniquely suited to help students succeed by forming supportive relationships that extend outside of the classroom and library. GCCReads activities were facilitated by faculty and staff who dedicated portions of their time to facilitate face-to-face activities that encouraged students to: read, attend discussion meetings, participate in campus-wide events such as a national author book talk, and form mutually supportive relationships with other students. All this was accomplished by taking advantage of existing GCC

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campus resources, such as the library classroom, the leisure reading room and group meeting spaces in the Center for Teaching, Learning and Engagement. Thus, GCCReads is efficient in meeting the dual needs of increasing reading competence outside of the classroom and building connections beyond the academic environment

Cost effectiveness: There is evidence that the innovation adds a value to the institution while at the same time containing or reducing costs.

The overall goal of GCCReads was to increase academic preparedness and persistence through the fostering of leisure reading and campus engagement among developmental students. One way to meet that goal was to capitalize on students' motivation to read. Funding for GCCReads was the result of an MCLI Learning Grant for 2014–2015. Over 50% of the grant funds awarded went towards purchasing leisure reading books for student participants, marketing materials, and printing costs. GCCReads drew on the complementary talents of librarians and Reading instructors to hold book discussion meetings and facilitate campus-wide events that promoted and celebrated leisure reading. Further, recruitment of Honors students to act as mentors to the developmental reading students served to increase developmental students' comfort with the project and was a no-cost hallmark of GCCReads' appeal. GCCReads adds value to the entire GCC community by securing outside funding, re-purposing existing spaces, and capitalizing on the many talents of participating students, faculty and staff

Replication: The innovation selected can be replicated in other institutions with a minimum of difficulty.

GCCReads can be readily replicated in other Maricopa institutions. The three main requirements are: 1. A campus environment that encourages collaboration across disciplines and departments, i.e. librarians and instructors; Honors students and dev ed students; faculty and staff, etc.; 2. A location conducive to group meetings, one which is centrally located on campus and allows for small groups to read out loud and discuss non-academic reading material in a safe, welcoming environment; 3. A limited amount of funds to: · buy leisure reading materials students are able read outside of their regular coursework; · compensate faculty and staff to plan and facilitate meetings and events outside of their normal hours of accountability

Creativity: The innovation should be as original as possible or the adaptation should be creative.

GCCReads was borne out of the desire to meet the needs of developmental reading students, a GCC priority, when the campus library repurposed an under-utilized space to become a comfortable spot where students could take a break from academic endeavors and read leisure material. Once the space was refurbished, GCC librarians began to focus on finding ways to encourage student leisure reading. One idea was to create a reading blog housed on the GCC library homepage, and it soon became clear that a blog might be the catalyst for a grant funded program. The resulting grant proposed a cooperative endeavor between developmental reading and library faculty, one in which a student and faculty book club would be formed with complementary activities and the intention of encouraging voluntary reading and campus engagement, factors that lead to greater student success and retention. In addition to providing free leisure reading books to students, GCCReads facilitated student participation in other campus wide events such as an author visit by Marisel Herrera, author of Puerto Rican Goldilocks and the Director of Arizona State University's First Year Success Center. An exciting aspect of GCCReads was the mentor component which emerged as a key feature of the program. Honors students from Phi Theta Kappa and a GCC honors level course were given a volunteer opportunity to provide reading modeling and support to GCCReads' underprepared students. In exchange, the honors students used the experience to meet club and course service requirements as well as gain experience that could be used on a resume. Many of these volunteers planned to go into education and appreciated the chance to coach their peers. Together, mentors and mentees took the entry and exit reading survey, attended book discussion meetings, blogged, and participated in multiple GCCReads events. GCCReads afforded student the opportunity to share their expanding

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literacy skills and love of reading with young readers by hosting Wee Reads, an event where GCC students (both mentors and mentees) paired up with the campus Head Start preschoolers and read to them. Wee Reads was a creative event that showcased GCC students' talents, recognized their increasing literacy skills, and brought the faculty and staff of the campus together. GCCReads successes were due in large part to the flexible structure of the program, one in which students took on leadership roles in designing creative, dynamic meetings and signature events while working on increasing their reading skills

Timeliness: The innovation should not be more than five years old in the institution, but it must have been around long enough to be tested so that it meets most of the criteria.

GCCReads had its genesis in the fall semester of 2013 with the redesign of a library space into the Leisure Reading Room. In the spring semester of 2014, librarians teamed up with reading faculty to apply for an MCLI grant which was funded later that semester. The GCCReads faculty leads, comprised of Cindy Ortega (reading faculty), Renee Smith and Dede Elrobeh (both library faculty) commenced planning the implementation of the program during early summer of 2014. The first semester of GCCReads officially began during the fall semester of 2014. As of this writing, GCCReads has finished its first semester, with over 145 students having taken part in some amount of reading and literacy activities. Now, six weeks into the spring semester of 2015, GCCReads continues with a cohort of students that includes returning readers and students new to the program. This second semester iteration of GCCReads will end in April, 2015. Data from the pre and post surveys of the spring semester cohort will be collected, analyzed, and shared following the end of the semester. GCCReads is a timely program in that it addresses the need to increase students' reading skills in an easily-adaptable, low-stakes format

Learning: The results of the innovation have been shared with others for the benefit of students throughout Maricopa.

GCCReads sought to increase academic preparedness and persistence through the fostering of leisure reading and campus engagement among developmental reading students. To meet these objectives, students participating in the program read selected (leisure) books, posted to the leisure reading blog, and participated in group events. Students earned extra credit in their reading courses relative to the amount and frequency of their involvement. Practicing the strategies of reflection and discussion have been shown to increase students' reading comprehension as well as the motivation to read. An important feature of GCCReads was the desire to merge students' enthusiasm for reading with service learning and outreach to the community. Early in the program, the idea of sharing the joys of literacy with emerging readers began to take shape, and culminated in a GCCReads-sponsored Read Aloud event, affectionately named "Wee Reads." During Wee Reads, GCCReads mentors and mentees paired up with GCC's Head Start preschoolers to read stories and make arts 'n' crafts that represented characters in the stories read to the preschoolers. Response to Wee Reads was overwhelmingly positive; students who helped plan the event and especially those who read to the preschoolers commented on how much they enjoyed the shared reading. A GCCReads event that merged community service and literacy was a book drive that benefitted homeless children and teens. The campaign to market the book drive, "50 Books for 50 Years" married the book drive to the college's 50th anniversary and was exceeded by 400 books. As in the Read Aloud, the book drive was a resounding success in large part due to the efforts of the student participants' interest in sharing literacy with the campus and greater Phoenix community. These early success in GCCReads have not gone unnoticed. Faculty from disciplines outside of developmental reading have inquired about having their students participate in the program. The GCC Developmental Education committee has incorporated GCCReads into its plan and GCCReads' faculty leads were invited to present early findings at a GIFT exchange (Great Ideas for Teaching). Additionally, GCCReads faculty were asked to submit an article to the academic library journal, *Against the Grain*, outlining the goals, processes and outcomes of

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GCCReads' first semester; publication is scheduled for April, 2015. By partnering with multiple stakeholders on campus, from first-year developmental students to the office of Academic Affairs, GCCReads has evolved into a program that is garnering attention not only on its home campus, but throughout Maricopa as well.

Collaboration: The innovation successfully demonstrates collaboration, teamwork, and cooperation to ensure continuous process improvement efforts on behalf of students throughout Maricopa.

While GCCReads began as a proposal of a collaborative effort between the college's Library and Reading faculty, it also increased interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration by involving other GCC faculty and staff, as well as encouraging the formation of connections between two disparate student groups: developmental education students and Honors students. Examples of the collaborative spirit of GCCReads can be found in all aspects of the program:

- Participants: GCCReads participants came from all sections of the student body: developmental reading students to honors students;
- Facilitators: GCCReads began as a collaborative effort between librarians and reading faculty; it soon grew to encompass faculty and staff from multiple departments at GCC, including: Social Sciences, World Languages, Honor's and Academic Affairs.
- Special events: GCCReads events were successful due in large part to the assistance provided by non-academic departments such as: Media; IT; Marketing; the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Engagement, College Advancement, Administration, and the campus Bookstore;
- Assessment: the office of Strategy, Planning, and Engagement provided invaluable assistance during the design and implementation of the GCCReads pre and post survey instruments.

GCCReads was a collaborative program that spoke to multiple stakeholders in the GCC community. While it started out as an endeavor to increase reading skills in developmental students, it quickly grew into so much more, thanks in large part to the generous contributions of time and effort from GCC's students, faculty and staff