Proposal #1: Reading Across the Curriculum

(Why) Students typically view the work in their courses, particularly in core courses, in isolation, separate from the content in other disciplines, from their future careers, and from their off-campus lives. When they do not see how their courses are interrelated, students fail to appreciate how what they learn in one discipline affects their ability to learn in another. Attempting to overcome this problem, some teachers of English and history courses at Del Mar have assigned common readings in their paired courses. These instructors show students how literature, including fiction, reflects culture, politics and even events that shape the history of an era, and as a result provide students a clearer understanding of and appreciation for both disciplines. Expanding this approach will give several thousand students the chance to participate in what is an unfortunately rare experience on college campuses: a communal, intellectual discussion of an important topic. Students will also benefit from the different perspectives brought to this topic by the instructors in different classes.

(Purpose) The purpose of this program is to help students recognize the connections among the courses that they are taking.

(Scope) The proposed common book program would include students in all core curriculum courses, and those in other courses whose instructors choose to participate.

(Goals) At the end of each semester, students would have a clearer understanding of the topic of the assigned book and demonstrate their ability to connect it to the subject of each core course they are currently enrolled in.
Proposal #2: Math Across the Curriculum

(Why)
Most students come to DMC unprepared to take freshman math courses and unconvinced about the relevance of math to their career plans. Their weaknesses include a lack of skills and a lack of awareness of the necessity of math skills in a variety of workplaces. A campus-wide cooperative emphasis on mathematics would support the curriculum of the Math Department and help students master the math requirements of science, business, and technical courses. For example, some departments might develop assignments that emphasize math problems in careers in their disciplines. Another department could teach reading strategies that help students with word problems. Other departments could discuss the historical effects of mathematical discoveries or the economic effects of a math-educated workforce in the international market.

(Purpose)
The purpose of this program is to give students more opportunities to use their math skills and to learn how necessary those skills are beyond their math classes.

(Scope)
This plan includes students in all credit courses across the College curriculum, and students in other courses at the discretion of the instructor. Instructors of these courses will develop effective, creative ways to teach math concepts which are relevant to their classes.

(Goals)
At the end of two years of this coordinated approach, students will show evidence of stronger math skills in both their math and program courses.
Proposal #3: Supplemental Instruction

(Why)
Certain courses traditionally present a challenge to a large number of students, courses like math, chemistry, physics, history, and accounting. Supplemental instruction refers to a variety of methods that help students succeed in those courses through out-of-class activities. Typically, students are invited, or required, to attend study sessions led by a trained facilitator rather than by a teacher. Students learn from each other what they haven’t learned in class. Effective supplemental instruction requires well-trained, highly-motivated group leaders and the support of classroom teachers, but colleges which have developed and supported such programs have reported great success in course pass rates and higher student grades.

(Purpose)
This proposal will develop supplemental instruction methods for a small number of courses in order to improve students’ success in those courses.

(Scope)
Students in selected courses with traditionally low success rates.

(Goals)
At the end of the development phase, this program will help students pass these courses at a higher rate and with higher grades.
Proposal #4: Student-Generated Portfolios

(Why)
Regional and state accrediting agencies have begun to place much greater emphasis on measurement of student learning, seeking evidence of what students have learned in individual courses and what they have learned by the end of their degree program. Portfolios are used in many institutions to show students’ progress through the use of actual coursework, across several semesters, rather than through the score on a single standardized test. The requirements of the portfolio could include evidence of mastery of content, practices, or abilities as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and/or by the programs of study.

(Purpose)
The purpose of this proposal is to develop realistic and manageable guidelines for portfolios created by students and evaluated by faculty and staff.

(Scope)
Students enrolled in A.A. or A.S. programs for which the College’s core curriculum is required.

(Goals)
This program will give the College a uniform way to measure student success in individual courses and at the completion of the degree program. A well-designed portfolio requirement will also give students a creative, flexible way to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.