Strengthening the CORE (Center on Responsive Education):
Program Improvement for Paraprofessionals Working with Deaf Students,
with Students with Special Needs, and those with Limited English Proficiency
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Abstract for CFDA 84.325N, Focus Area B

The Center on Responsive Education – CORE – consists of four education programs that prepare paraprofessionals in: 1) Special Education; 2) Deaf Education; and 3) English Language Learning; and 4) Educational Interpreters to be educationally, culturally, and linguistically responsive to student needs, regardless of disability or language background. Strengthening the CORE is a program improvement project that will develop within the College’s new ecology of learning for CORE students. Learning experiences for 160 students total will be expanded and enriched in: a) classrooms and practicum sites; b) the new CORE Learning and Teaching Lab; c) other campus learning spaces; d) the community; e) cyberspace; and f) study abroad. Project Goals are to: 1) redesign CORE curricula to reflect best practices in Special Education and Second Language Teaching; 2) restructure CORE Field Experiences to prepare educationally, culturally, and linguistically responsive paraprofessionals in a variety of settings; 3) create a CORE Learning and Teaching Lab to prepare Responsive Paraprofessionals; 4) redesign CORE marketing and recruitment methods to increase enrollment and expand opportunities for underrepresented student populations; 5) revamp student success strategies to increase program completion; 6) Establish an administrative and funding structure for CORE programs and faculty. 7) Evaluate the effectiveness of CORE’s new ecology of engaged learning within a three-tactical plan for improvement. Strengthening the CORE will produce four measurable outcomes, including: 1) an integrated curriculum within the College’s new ecology of learning; 2) a progression of varied field experiences situated within the ecology; 3) increased enrollment, retention, persistence, and completion rates in all CORE programs, resulting in 4) the employment of paraprofessionals who are prepared to employ best practices and work with a diverse group of students with special needs, including those who are English language learners.