

LCIRT Awarded Prestigious Federal Research Grant

By Dr. Brent E. Betit

The Landmark College Institute for Research and Training has been awarded yet another federal grant, this time through the National Science Foundation's Research in Disabilities Education program.

This award, Universal Design in College Algebra: Customizing Learning Resources for Two Year Students with Learning Disabilities ("UD Algebra"), provides LCIRT with approximately \$100,000 in funding to conduct an 18-month research and development project to evaluate public domain, web-based algebra resources. The project will examine the effectiveness of these resources as ancillary materials for struggling students in community college developmental mathematics classes.

The grant provides LCIRT funds to work with 3 community colleges (Berkshire

Community College and Holyoke Community College, both in Massachusetts, and Suffolk County Community College in Selden, New York), as well as at Landmark. The grant will enable LCIRT personnel to conduct usability evaluations in our Universal Design lab, and to work with Landmark College students to improve the design of the software so that it is more usable and accessible for students with LD. We will then develop a training guide to support community college faculty members in incorporating the software as a part of their mathematics curriculum.

There are many notable aspects to this grant. It will provide exciting opportunities for our students to use their skills, talents, and experience to improve education for struggling students enrolled in community colleges throughout the nation. All Landmark College students will be invited to participate in usability evaluations and grant funds will be available to compensate students for their time. It will provide LCIRT with a superb opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of its approach and its capabilities to the greater academic community. It is a research grant - the first ever awarded to Landmark College - and therefore provides enhanced credibility and stature to the Institute and College.

Staff in the Grants and Sponsored Projects department – led by Kelly Fadden – and within LCIRT – led by Dr. Steve Fadden – deserve great credit for this and other recent grant successes. Through activities like these, LCIRT realizes a key intention of the College, to “extend its mission across the nation and throughout the world.”