1. *What is the mission of the project?*

The College Scholars Program (CSP) is a select community of undergraduate learners and teachers. Its mission is to empower students for lives of leadership, community values, independent thinking, and self-direction. The program is dedicated to the habits of academic excellence and to thinking across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Its focus goes beyond the classroom and seminar table to larger world concerns, through academic group study, community service underpinned by scholarly analysis, and the development of leadership skills. The program’s ambitious mission is no less than to produce graduates who will change the world in positive ways.

Many of the College Scholars Program’s specific projects have a campus-wide impact, including the student civic groups that have formed through the leadership and commitment of CSP students, along with the CSP speaker series, which brings to CWRU’s campus some of the most distinguished thinkers of our time.

2. *What are your specific goals and objectives?*

This past year was the third year the program was directed by Jonathan Sadowsky, who holds the Dr. Theodore J. Castele Associate Professorship of Medical History in the Department of History. The goals and objectives of the program have remained consistent. Our objectives are:

1) Offer an outstanding academic program for a select group of highly motivated students, who want to develop leadership skills, and put them to use for social and civic engagement.
2) Attract a group of students to the program who are diverse in their interests and backgrounds.
3) Staff the program with outstanding teachers.

The program is now undergoing some changes in its format. These changes respond to the impending implementation of SAGES as the general education requirement for the all Case undergraduates, combined with the program’s observations of its internal challenges. The primary change is converting the program to a 2-year program, which will be considered an enrichment track within SAGES. The change has been proposed to the
curriculum committee of the college, and is expected to be in force for the current entering rising sophomore class.

3. *Describe briefly your progress to date in achieving these goals.*

**Overview.**

We have now had six graduating classes. The majority of the graduates of the program are still attending graduate/professional schools so it is early to establish the impact of the program participants on their communities. Many CSP graduates continue to report that their participation in the program was the most positive experience they had at CWRU.

**Program Evaluation and Impact.**

Program retention continues to be variable among the classes—although for some classes it remains very strong. This year, 12 students completed senior projects, a historically high number. The most commonly-cited reason students drop the program is that it takes up too many credit hours, interfering with their ability to complete their other academic obligations; many students who felt they were profiting from the program have dropped it because of this. This is one of the reasons we are proposing to reduce the number of credit hours.

**Academic Activities, 2004-2005**

The twelve senior projects this year continued the program’s traditions of 1) permitting greater scope for creative work than usually possible in disciplinary major programs, and 2) striving to create bridges between academic learning and civic activism and service. They included Jaclyn Grentzer’s show of local Latino artists, Anna Brady’s work interviewing immigrants in the Cleveland area, Veronica Norman’s work on dilemmas of public school funding, Trevor Pour’s photographs of the Cleveland area, and Ashraf Sabe’s ongoing work with Case for Unicef.

Juniors in the CSP program pursued four topics for student-directed interdisciplinary study. This year’s topics were:

- Dante's *Inferno*
- “Histories of the Future,” a unit on the imagination of the humanity’s future
- Cross-cultural study of marriage and the family
- The “Scholars House” publication.

This last item was, in the director’s opinion, one of the great achievements in the history of the program. It was an eclectic collection of writing, almost all of it by
CSP students (including some alumni). Students did all of the copy editing and layout as well. The project took an enormous amount of work, and the final project was well-worth the effort.

**Speakers.** The program is grateful for the support of the Provost’s Office, which allowed it to continue its important speaker series. The series brings to CWRU major public figures who benefit the entire campus and the Cleveland community, and provides the program itself with both intellectual stimulation and role models for engaged moral, civic, and scholarly leadership.

The speakers for 2004-2005 which CSP had sole responsibility for were 1) writer and radio commentator Sarah Vowell, who was brought in to connect with “The Race at Case,” and who has recently begun a stint as guest op-ed columnist for the New York Times, 2) author Harlan Ellison, whose lecture drew an impressively large crowd—much of it from off-campus—on the night of bad Cleveland snowstorm, and 3) historian Stephanie Coontz, whose talk on the history of marriage drew on her recently-published book from Viking.

4. **What is unique about this project?**

The College Scholars Program is unique in several respects:

1) Working together in a cohort of students for three years permits learning experiences and collaborative projects that are unusual in ordinary academic programs.

2) The heavy emphasis on student-directed learning gives students a greater opportunity to develop leadership abilities than other academic programs.

3) Although service and community-based learning approaches are used in some courses outside of the program, CSP is the only program that aims to make them integral.

4) The CSP speaker series is the only series on campus oriented towards undergraduates, and is distinctive in bringing in nationally known public intellectuals whose provocative ideas are of interest to a wide audience.

5) CSP is marked by unusually close mentoring ties of faculty to students.

5. **What modifications have occurred to project activities, focus, staffing, management or finances?**

The current director, Jonathan Sadowsky, was on an externally-funded research leave this Fall. Christopher Cullis, of the Department of Biology, who taught in the program in its early years, agreed to re-join the faculty this year, and served as interim director for the fall. Cullis is on sabbatical this fall, and has
therefore left the program again; he will be replaced by Deepak Sarma of the Religion Department.

6. Have you learned anything to date that may change your expected outcomes?

To conclude, the College Scholars Program continues to be an innovative, and transformative program. It has had several missions, and has achieved success in all of them. Its appeal is limited to a select, but elite, group of students, and it has had an impact on college life that is greater than the number of students enrolled might at first suggest. Retention and student satisfaction with the program have been growing continually in recent years. In its interdisciplinarity and focus on community service, it is already embodying priorities the university has recently identified for future growth. The students who apply are among those the university is most interested in attracting and retaining; for example, every year, nearly all the Adelbert Squire Scholars apply. By offering small, interdisciplinary seminars, the new SAGES program builds on the experience of the College Scholars Program. Yet CSP retains many distinct features that SAGES lacks: the emphasis on community service, the emphasis on leadership, and a curriculum that is substantially shaped by the students themselves.