

NEWS RELEASE

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Million dollar grant awarded to Glen Oaks will support student success

CENTREVILLE---Glen Oaks Community College has been awarded a five-year U.S. Department of Education TRIO Student Support Services grant providing \$219,699 per year. Glen Oaks will assist at least 140 qualifying low income, first-generation college students per year.

Dr. Dennis McCarthy, Dean of Students and Community Services, said the \$1.1 million education grant runs from 2010 through 2015 and includes adding three full-time management staff and one half-time secretary. Offices for the Student Success program will be located in the current Student Services office area.

“This is truly an exciting grant Glen Oaks has been awarded. The grant provides extensive student support to eligible students and enhances the likelihood that they will have a successful college experience. Qualified participants are those pursuing a four-year bachelor’s degree and attending Glen Oaks Community College for the first two years of a four-year program. Students primarily served are those who meet low income eligibility rules for family income and who are from families where neither parent has a bachelor’s degree. The program is not restricted to young adults; persons of all ages may inquire about their eligibility,” said Dr. McCarthy.

Dr. Gary Wheeler, President of Glen Oaks Community College, added, “On average, more than 81 percent of enrolled students (not including dual enrolled students) at Glen Oaks are first-generation college students. Just 12.7 percent of area residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Nearly 75 percent of enrolled students have documented disabilities and one in eight enrolled students are from families meeting the federal definition of ‘impoverished’.”

Dr. Wheeler said more than 80 percent of students who fall into these areas are also placed into developmental education courses. “Many do not persist from one year to the next. Students with these characteristics are likely to be considered ‘at risk’ for not completing college for either a certificate or a degree. This Student Support Services grant program is intended to address the challenges related to these need issues. This will greatly help 140 or more students who are first-generation college goers, from low income families, and students with documented disabilities,” he said.

The Student Support Services program and staff is expected to be fully operational later this fall semester. “Current students attending Glen Oaks Community College this fall may inquire in Student Services and fill out an application about midway through the semester to see if they qualify to become a part of this assistance program.

The SSS program is designed to help students in a number of ways. Career advising is part of the program, so students develop a specific plan for their courses, when they will enroll in those classes, and to what four-year college they will transfer the courses. Research shows that students tend to succeed if goals are established and regularly report on their progress to program leaders. Strong student support is important to success, so students often have many planned contacts outside of the classroom with learning professionals and fellow students. The program will help students link with professionals who can help them navigate through the many steps to graduation.

Supplemental instruction is another major factor in student success, so “Glen Oaks will identify courses students often find difficult. Added sessions outside of the class will help the students better understand course material. Fellow peer students will help them with this understanding. For some classes, study groups may be utilized and in others one-on-one tutoring may be offered. Students might come together to attend workshops on a variety of subjects like time management and exam taking methods.” said Dr. McCarthy.

A summer "Bridge Program" will be first offered in 2011 exposing incoming students to career exploration, college success factors and help them to develop a personal Education Development Plan (EDP). "A college success course will also let program students know the skills needed to enhance their learning. They will learn about the skills necessary and habits of successful students," Dr. McCarthy said.

Dr. Wheeler said goals of the SSS program are to increase the persistence from fall to fall within the program participants by 4.5 percent; increase the academic performance of the SSS program participants by 5 percent; and increase the graduation and transfer rate of the SSS participants by 11 percent.

"This is a beneficial program we have wanted at Glen Oaks for some time. The college will apply the research on learning and what makes a difference in student success to benefit all participants," concluded Dr. McCarthy.