



Office of Public Affairs
Division of University Advancement

News Release

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Release No: 0809-021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 17, 2008

\$4.1 Million Grant to Cal Poly Pomona Smooths Bumps on the Road to a Degree in STEM Disciplines

POMONA, Calif. — October 17, 2008 — The U.S. Department of Education has provided Cal Poly Pomona with a \$4.1 million grant to help the university address the national shortage of professionals ready to enter the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

This funding was made available through the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, which has been said to provide the single largest increase in college aid since the GI bill, including \$200 million of support to Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). Congresswoman Grace Napolitano (D-38), formerly chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, in whose district the university is located, was a strong advocate of the CCRAA legislation and provided valuable encouragement and support for the campus's application. Cal Poly Pomona was one of only two universities in California to receive an individual award from the College Cost Reduction and Access Act.

The two-year grant will help Cal Poly Pomona build a STEM Pipeline to make the journey as smooth as possible for high school students to earn a degree and enter the workforce, particularly in the STEM disciplines. While the funding is intended to support Hispanic and low-income students in STEM disciplines, building the pipeline paves the way for all future students to enjoy new equipment, technology and streamlined processes.

"By approaching this problem from many angles, I think we can raise the number of students who are graduating, both those coming directly from high school and from community colleges, particularly Hispanic students in the STEM disciplines," said Dr. Claudia Pinter-Lucke, principal investigator of the grant and associate vice president of undergraduate studies. "We've been working to address these major issues. Especially in light of our current California economy, the much-needed support of this grant will help us make a difference even faster."

The multifaceted project has several approaches:

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- **Build a Formal STEM Faculty Learning Community.** Best practices in teaching and learning in the STEM disciplines will be the center of a learning community made up of STEM educators from Cal Poly Pomona, high schools and community colleges. Summer Institutes for Teachers, an annual conference and a new website will bring all of the entities together to share best practices in teaching and learning in the STEM disciplines.
- **Enhance STEM Counseling for Community College Students.** Counseling for transfer students in STEM areas needs to be specialized because STEM requirements tend to be sequential, making the path to graduation significantly different than for other majors. A new STEM counselor position will be created at Cal Poly Pomona. The counselor will develop a comprehensive approach to advising Riverside Community College (RCC) STEM students. A new feature in that approach is software to make an individualized study plan, including course work from the community college and Cal Poly Pomona.
- **Create a Seamless Transfer Process.** Because community colleges in the area are semester campuses and Cal Poly Pomona is a quarter campus, some courses cannot be transferred easily and students often find themselves repeating parts of courses. Cal Poly Pomona will work with community colleges to line up course requirements, and develop online modules as necessary to fill in any holes. Riverside Community College will be the first to participate in the program, with plans for expansion to other community colleges.
- **Prepare Students for the Baccalaureate.** The university will introduce engineering and other STEM fields to students at high schools and Riverside Community College. Through project-based, hands-on experiences, students can become familiar with and interested in the STEM disciplines early. As Riverside Community College students prepare to transfer to CPP, they will attend a Cal Poly Pomona faculty lecture series, which will include STEM topics as well as general orientation information.
- **Prepare Students for the Future.** The university will also better prepare future STEM professionals with technology upgrades, expanded tutoring services and an undergraduate research apprentice program.

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