Summer institute empowers students and their migrant-worker parents

Sacramento State’s American River Courtyard residence hall is home this week to 100 high school students and 40 of their parents for the state-funded Migrant Student Leadership Institute (MSLI).

The University’s College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) received a $250,000 grant from the California Department of Education’s Office of Migrant Education to host the institute, which extends the school year for students.

CAMP was founded in 1981 at Sac State to ease the transition from high school to college for the children of migrant and seasonal farm workers – and to help them succeed with a variety of support services.

The leadership institute is a part of Sacramento State’s “mission to recruit and educate dynamic and diverse students who will become California’s leaders in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields,” says CAMP’s director, Dr. Viridiana Diaz. “These disciplines are the backbone of our economy and require a highly educated and tech-savvy workforce.”

The institute lines up with the STEM initiative launched by California’s superintendent of public instruction, Tom Torlakson, to create an integrated program of study with specific goals, including:

- Provide a challenging and rigorous program of study focusing on the application of STEM subjects.
- Provide opportunities for student exploration of STEM-related fields and careers – especially for underrepresented populations.
- Prepare students for successful postsecondary employment and/or education.

“Most CAMP college graduates attribute their success to the support and influence of their families, particularly their parents,” says Diaz. “When students are attending college as the first in their family, the entire family also is ‘attending’ college for the first time.”
“The parents’ aspect of the Migrant Student Leadership Institute is designed to empower parents with the information and resources to bridge the knowledge gap between them and California’s system of higher learning,” she says.

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Office of Public Affairs at (916) 278-6156.
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