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Sac State wins federal opportunity grant

Sacramento State's Department of Ethnic Studies and the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies have received a \$1.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to bolster recruitment, retention and graduation rates among Asian American and Pacific Islander students.

The five-year grant, "Where Opportunity Comes Full Circle" (Full Circle Project), is designed to increase Asian American and Pacific Islander student recruitment, retention and graduation rates by at least 10 percent; encourage those students' involvement in a student leadership program; expand and enhance service learning opportunities via Sac State's nationally recognized 65th Street Corridor Community Collaboration Project; and synthesize data-gathering of Sacramento State students and those throughout the California State University system.

Through strong academic advising, engagement and mentoring, the Full Circle Project will help create a stable path to college success that other students can follow.

Marcellene Watson-Derbigny, associate vice president of Student Retention and Academic Success, says this grant "will enable the Ethnic Studies Department, Student Organizations and Leadership, and the Educational Opportunity Program to forge a greater partnership to increase the retention and graduation rates of Asian Pacific Islander students."

Timothy Fong, chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies and the project's principal investigator, credits Sac State's Cooper-Woodson College Enhancement Program (CWC) for providing the conceptual and organizational framework for the new

grant. CWC, based on the principles of scholarship, leadership and service, started in 1990. It is an association of faculty, staff, students and community members who are committed to providing support services that promote academic success and increase graduation rates.

A second model for this new grant is the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), a unique educational effort that helps students from migrant and seasonal farmworker backgrounds succeed at Sacramento State. CAMP facilitates the transition from high school to college via support services to develop the skills needed to deal with the rigorous demands of college.

U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer says, "I congratulate the Sacramento State Department of Ethnic Studies on this award and applaud their ongoing work to improve retention and graduation rates for the University's Asian American and Native Pacific Islander students."

"I am so pleased that Sacramento State will be receiving federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education for their impressive project to foster retention among Asian American and Pacific Islander students," states Rep. Doris Matsui. "Sacramento has always been a diverse city, and Professor Fong's project is an innovative approach to further ensure integration of a diverse student body at Sac State."

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State's Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

– Alan Miller
amiller@csus.edu

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