



October 19, 2011

MSCC to Receive \$425,047 to Streamline, Strengthen Programs

Mid-South Community College, through its membership in the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, will receive \$425,047 from the U.S. Department of Labor to restructure workforce programs, strengthen technology-enabled learning and support, and offer more alternative delivery courses.

The funding, part of an overall \$14.79 million award from the Labor Department to Arkansas two-year institutions, will also include additional dollars for consultants and coaches.

“This grant will help us add some pieces and programs that we all agree are very important to student success,” said MSCC President Dr. Glen Fenter. “It’s going to allow us to do some common-sense things for our students and give them more opportunities for success.”

“With this award and the grant from the Department of Education, we have a chance in the next three or four years to really make some significant changes in the most important part of what we’re doing, and that is how we help people learn.”

The Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (PACE) Initiative is a collaborative effort among community and technical colleges to reduce remediation and increase degree production.

The project’s goal is to boost certificate and degree completions by 15 percent over the next three years by restructuring more than 100 degree programs. In addition, top education and government officials have set clearly defined goals to change remedial education, increase retention, and double the number of degree holders in the state by 2025.

“By redesigning classes and schedules to help working students balance jobs and college, we hope to significantly boost student success and dramatically increase the

number of college graduates in the state,” said Shane Broadway, interim director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. “These dollars will enable our two-year colleges, employers and other economic development partners to create a workforce that is prepared for careers in high-wage, high-skills fields such as advanced manufacturing and health care.”

Participating institutions will work to create a better education-training connection between schools and industry, strengthen technology-enabled learning and student support services, and provide students and workers with more flexible class scheduling options.

“Some of our traditional educational models are not especially effective in promoting academic advancement, so it is incumbent upon us to look for better ways to reach our students,” Dr. Fenter said. “Obviously, if we can speed up the educational process and make learning more relevant to the career paths our students have selected, we can have a positive impact on retention and completion.”

Specific strategies for redesigning associate degree and certificate programs across the state include improving developmental education and overhauling student advisement to increase job placement. Arkansas campuses have been traditionally under-resourced when it comes to technology and complementary professional development necessary to help advisors provide students with information on career choice, program options, and roadmaps to the future.

“We will be looking at ways to help our students develop academic and career plans through proactive and intrusive advising,” said Dr. Barbara Baxter, MSCC Executive Vice President. “We will also consider the implementation of new advising technologies to make sure that students cannot enroll in courses that they don’t need to complete their degree plan.”

Advanced manufacturing and healthcare are the primary targeted growth sectors statewide. At MSCC, the Medical Assisting program has been selected for enhancements designed to streamline students’ progression toward degree completion.

For information about educational and training opportunities at MSCC, visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway in West Memphis, email admissions@midsouthcc.edu, call (870) 733-6728, or see the college’s website at www.midsouthcc.edu.