DSU Awarded $100,000 Walmart Foundation Grant

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Delaware State University has been selected by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) to receive a Walmart Minority Student Success Award – a $100,000 grant to help build on DSU's demonstrated successes in enrolling, retaining, and graduating first-generation college students. The $100,000 grant is being made possible by a $4.2 million grant to IHEP from the Walmart Foundation.

The University was selected as one of only 30 minority-serving institutions (MSIs) —Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Predominantly Black Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities—through a highly competitive application process to strengthen efforts to support first-generation students.

DSU will be attending the annual IHEP Summer Academy where they'll be joined by representatives from 14 other minority serving institutions to establish action plans to increase capacity, share ideas to better serve first-generation college students and develop partnerships with other colleges and universities.

"Delaware State University is honored to be selected as one of just several outstanding higher education institutions nationwide to receive the Walmart Minority Student Success Award," said DSU President Harry Lee Williams. "Thanks in large part to this award, we will be able to enhance and expand our work with first-generation students."

The funding will be used at DSU to provide high impact academic activities in the general education curriculum of first-year students. The project will be coordinated by a team of faculty members in the University's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences as well as academic enrichment administrators – Dr. Myrna Nurse, assistant professor of English, Dr. Niklas Robinson, assistant professor of history and political science, Frances Rogers, acting director of Academic Enrichment, and Phyllis Collins, executive director of Academic Enrichment.

"We are delighted and excited that DSU has received this funding," said Dr. Marshall Stevenson, dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. "This will allow the University to provide added academic assistance to ensure that our students have every opportunity to succeed in accordance with the mission of the institution."

"The institutions in our 2010 Minority Student Success cohort broaden and deepen the pool of MSIs committed to ensuring the success of the first-generation student success both at their campuses and beyond," said Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) President Michelle Asha Cooper, Ph.D. "We are pleased to be working with them on programs that are sure to serve as models to all of higher education."

"At Walmart, we understand that education is critical to the lives and well-being of all Americans. We're proud to support giving that enables the success of first-generation college students," said Margaret McKenna, president of the Walmart Foundation.

The Walmart Foundation grants support the existing work of MSIs to strengthen first-generation student success programs, with a special focus on classroom practices and the role faculty play in their students' academic success. Approximately 41% of students enrolled at MSIs are first-generation, compared to 30% of students at Predominantly White Institutions. The overrepresentation of first-generation students at MSIs makes them ideal to help improve retention and persistence gaps for this student population.

The other 2010 winners include: Adams State College (Colo.), Bloomfield College (N.J.), Bowie State University (Md.), Coppin State University (Md.), El Camino College (Ca,), Fort Belknap College (Mont.), Hampton University (Va.), Leech Lake Tribal College (Minn.), New Jersey City University (N.J.), United Tribes Technical College (N.D.), University of Houston- Downtown (Texas), University of New Mexico (N.M.), Valencia Community College (Fla.), and Winston-Salem State University (N.C.).

For more information about the initiative and grantees, visit the IHEP Web site at www.ihep.org/walmartminoritystudents.cfm. [1]

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