In the most recent round of funding, PCCC became one of 13 colleges and universities nationwide to receive a Title V Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Individual Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This grant, in the amount of $2.87 million over a five-year period, will be instrumental in helping the College to implement its Achieving the Dream (ATD) College Success Initiative. According to President Steven Rose, “The Title V grant is a tremendous opportunity for the College to help our students successfully complete their college-level courses and to ultimately earn a college degree or credential that prepares them for success in the workplace or at a four-year college or university.” Mr. Greg Fallon, who successfully managed the College’s nationally recognized Title V Writing Initiative, will again serve as the project director for the new grant.

Having earned its third Title V grant in the past 15 years, the College’s new Title V grant will focus on the success of college-level students. Based on extensive planning and analysis through ATD, the College identified a group of 10 gateway courses, typically highly-enrolled 100-level college courses, that students experience difficulty in passing. These courses include English 101, English 102, Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Psychology, Introduction to Sociology, History of Western Civilization, College Math I, Basic Statistics, College Algebra, and Anatomy and Physiology. The current pass rates for these gateway courses range from 59 percent in English 101 to 78 percent in College Math I. Each semester, approximately 1800 students will not pass these courses. Of this group, 45 percent of students will retake the course while many others will leave the college altogether. The new Title V project is designed to curb the exodus of students from PCCC and keep them on a path towards program completion.
To achieve this goal, the College will redesign these courses to make them more engaging and will provide students with extensive support services. In particular, faculty will experiment with new teaching and learning strategies that have proven effective in similar educational settings. Among its significant components, the Title V project will establish an Academic Advancement Center, a dedicated space on campus where students enrolled in the gateway courses can go to get the support that they require, including access to individual and group tutorial support, academic advising, and help with college success strategies such as time management, note taking, and study skills. Such services will greatly enhance existing supports already in place.

Local Students See College Bound/GEAR UP as the Pathway to Opportunity

Victor Marte is a sophomore at Passaic County Technical Institute and second-year student in the PCCC College Bound/GEAR UP program who dreams of one day joining the FBI. For many students such as Victor, the first step toward achieving their life dreams begins with College Bound/GEAR UP. Students benefit from a wide range of academic and support services including intensive college preparatory instruction, academic advising, personal and group counseling, test preparation, and cultural activities. The program is so successful in helping students like Victor to graduate from high school and enroll in postsecondary education that it is considered a model college readiness program by the state, with nearly 100 percent of graduates successfully enrolling in college. A total of 292 Paterson school students, grades 7-12, participate in the Program’s afterschool, Saturday Academy, and Summer Academy components annually.

The academic rigor is what separates College Bound/Gear UP from similar after school programs. According to Victor, “I’m missing out on some things in my regular classes. Here they reinforce the algebra. I love English II with Ms. Stewart. I love writing. It helps me de-stress and frees my imagination.” Coupled with his academic skills, Victor has a strong desire to succeed. “I have that energy and desire to go to college,” he says. “College Bound gives me that energy.”

Perkins Dollars Vital in Keeping PCCC Programs Up-to-Date

Each year, the College receives federal Perkins funding to support its Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. Among its allowable uses, this money can be used to purchase new equipment, employ key staff in CTE programs, provide students with support services, and establish new programs. On the PCCC campus, highly technical programs such as Radiography have benefited from Perkins support for many years. According to Professor Eileen Malone, Chair of the Radiography Department, “We’ve never had a piece of equipment here that was not Perkins-funded. It’s what has allowed us to be state-of-the-art.”

The impact of Perkins funding can be seen and felt most dramatically in the Radiography laboratory. The Radiography lab contains advanced instruments for reading and storing large X-ray files. The computer that stores these images is called a PAC, or Picture Archiving Communications System. An imaging plate is inserted into a Computerized Radiography Reader which creates a digital image that allows it to be read on the PAC. This is the same equipment used by professionals in the field. “The equipment here is better than at some of the hospitals where we do our
Students work on writing and critical thinking skills, said Rogeiris Balbi, a Radiography student who takes mock X-rays in the lab. The lab also utilizes a medical mannequin embedded with a skeleton which can be X-rayed endlessly without any thought to radiation exposure.

Unquestionably, Perkins funding has directly improved the quality of education at PCCC and better prepared students for rewarding careers in technical fields.

**Highly Successful Writing Initiative Garners National Attention**

Backed by a $2.5 million U.S. Department of Education Title V Strengthening Hispanic-Serving Institutions grant, PCCC has transformed student writing on campus, earning national recognition along the way. The recently completed Title V Writing Initiative resulted in the development of 20 distinct Writing Intensive (WI) courses, the creation of a high-functioning Writing Center located in the College’s Learning Resources Center, and significant improvements in student pass rates on the College Writing Exam. In recognition of its accomplishments, the Title V Writing Initiative was recently selected as an Exemplary Program in the category of Fostering Student Success with the 2012 Diana Hacker TYCA (Two-Year College Association) Award for Outstanding Program in English for Two-Year Colleges and Teachers. The award, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English, is given annually to exemplary programs that enhance students’ language learning, helping them to achieve their college, career and personal goals. Congratulations to PCCC and the Title V team on this tremendous honor!

**DARC Program Gives Adult Students Second Chance to Earn Credentials**

For the past three years, with funding from the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, the College sought out former students who never completed their degree programs, re-enrolled them at PCCC, and provided them with the personal attention needed to finish what they started. The program, known as DARC or Disengaged Adults Returning to College, targeted students who had completed at least 50 percent of their degree requirements, left the college in good academic standing, and had been enrolled within the past 10 years. Operating out of the College’s Center for Student Success, DARC had great outcomes, enrolling approximately 150 students over a three-year period and retaining nearly 100% of all students enrolled.

According to Center for Student Success Director Darleen McGrath-Florance, “The key to helping students to persist and be successful is individualized attention in defining goals, monitoring progress, and providing advocacy in representing the student’s needs.” The program used grant funding to hire a program counselor who served as a single point of contact for DARC students and helped to ease their transition back into higher education and offer them the support needed to succeed. The College’s experience with DARC has resulted in new, more effective approaches for working with adult students. The strategies will continue to benefit PCCC’s non-traditional adult student population beyond grant funding.
Minority male students are underrepresented on campus, and succeed at lower levels than their female and non-minority male counterparts. To address this, the College is seeking funds to improve the academic achievement of minority males. One component of this initiative is to expand the College Bound/GEAR UP Male Scholars program which currently serves 9th grade students. The proposed project would expand services to include 7th and 8th grade students in an effort to address middle and high school retention and completion rates. In addition, a peer mentoring program would be developed and the College Bound program’s highly successfully ISP (Individual Student Plan) would be redesigned to reflect the specific needs of urban minority males.

Funding Opportunities

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) invites two-year colleges to apply in a special Challenge Grant competition to develop models of excellence that enhance the role of the humanities on their campuses. The goals of this initiative are to: enable two-year colleges to strengthen programs in the humanities, especially the study of the world’s many cultures and civilizations; support model humanities curricula at two-year colleges that may be replicated at other institutions; and encourage two-year colleges to broaden the base of financial support for the humanities.

Funding: $500,000  
Deadline: February 20, 2013  
Website: http://www.neh.gov/grants/challenge/challenge-grants-two-year-colleges

The National Science Foundation (NSF) invites two-year colleges to apply to the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program. The program’s focus is to improve science and engineering technician education through partnerships created by employers and academic institutions. The ATE program supports activities such as curriculum development, professional development, and career pathways (secondary schools to two-year colleges to four-year institutions). The program also seeks to support technological education programs for prospective teachers. A new category, “Small Grants for Institutions New to ATE,” provides funding for colleges that did not receive an ATE award within the past ten years.

Funding: $25,000 - $300,000 per year, for three years OR up to $200,000 over three years for special category “Small Grants for Institutions New to ATE”  
Deadline: October 17, 2013 (full proposal; no preliminary proposal required)  
Website: www.nsf.gov/ate

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