

The STEM Student Success Center opened last month on the Moreno Valley Campus of Riverside Community College to provide students interested in careers in science and technology with the resources they need to succeed.

The center is part of Project Success designed to encourage more Hispanic and low-income students to pursue studies in the so-called STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

The campus received a two-year, \$2.3 million grant under the federal College Cost Recovery and Access Act to develop Project Success.

The Moreno Valley campus qualified for the grant because it is designated by the federal government as an Hispanic Serving Institution meaning it serves more than 25 percent Hispanics. It is the most diverse campus in the district with a student population that is 42 percent Hispanic and 18 percent black.

“We have to invest money to attract students to these fields where there is a disproportionate absence of minorities especially in Inland region,” said Wolde-ab Isaac, Dean of the Health Sciences Program.

The 2,000-square-foot center is designed to serve a group of 30 students who were chosen last summer to attend an intensive, week-long, residential program on the University of California, Riverside, campus. However, services are available to any student studying in those fields.

Maureen Chavez, Title V director, said even though the center just opened, the students have already formed a STEM club and they are developing a web site.

Students in the program receive computer software, textbooks, mentoring, counseling, tutoring and supplemental lectures.

Biology instructor Felipe Galicia, who is the campus liaison with UCR, said a counselor from UCR comes to the center once a week to talk to the students and to visit classes. UCR received a separate STEM grant to increase the numbers of minority transfer students who major in the STEM fields.

He said if the students opt to transfer to UC Riverside, the services and support will follow them there.

Isaac said the campus has asked UCR to help provide supplemental instruction, guest speakers and tutoring.

“We are trying to demystify the science and technology fields,” Isaac said.

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