NEWS RELEASE

May 22, 2014

RCC receives National Science Foundation grant

Rogue Community College recently won a $337,000 National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education (NSF-ATE) grant.

The three-year grant will fund development of a contextualized math course, which will use problems posed in industry-related careers and in RCC career and technical education (CTE) programs. The project hopes to increase student math skills so they are better prepared for post-secondary education and technical careers. Math 67 will explore algebraic relationships, engage student interest, and deepen mathematical understanding.

“Students are not making these real life connections in their traditional math courses and, if they pass at all, emerge unable to put any of their education to use,” said Serena St. Clair, RCC Pathways coordinator. “The curriculum will be rich with genuine applications that will improve the pass rate and accelerate CTE student completion of required math courses while increasing their grasp on the purposes and products of algebra.”

The project is based on Math 63, previous NSF-funded course in RCC’s algebra sequence. Math 63 is an applied technical math course that substitutes for Math 60 and covers Algebra I, geometry, and right-angle trigonometry. Math 63 also is contextualized, meaning is uses problems confronted in manufacturing, welding, electronics, construction, automotive, and diesel technology.

“We found that when requisite mathematical skills in industry dictate the curriculum, students will more quickly and successfully complete courses with improved readiness for CTE coursework,” St. Clair said. She and Doug Gardner, chair of the RCC Math Department, developed the Math 63 curriculum. Data from the past three years shows a 20 percent higher pass rate for students who take Math 63 as compared to those who take a regular Math 60 class, according to St. Clair and Gardner.

RCC will encourage other high schools and community colleges to adopt the new Math 67 curriculum, offering it at no charge and inviting math instructors to attend a summer math institute.

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