



## **CI receives 1.1 Million Dollar Grant for Student Support Services**

Camarillo, CA Sept. 1, 2010 - CSU Channel Islands (CI) has been selected to receive a 1.1 million dollar, five-year Federal TRIO Student Support Service grant. This year's federal process was especially competitive given the overall economic climate in higher education, increased pursuit of federal grant dollars and minimal federal funding increases for TRIO programs.

Federal TRIO Programs began with Upward Bound, which emerged from the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964. Talent Search, a second outreach program created under the Higher Education Act, was begun in 1965. Student Support Services, originally known as Special Services for Disadvantaged Students, was authorized by the Higher Education Amendments in 1968 and became the third program in TRIO. Today, there are a total of eight TRIO programs.

The goal of CI's Student Support Services (SSS) program is to increase retention and graduation rates of low-income, first-generation college students by providing academic, financial and guidance assistance. It serves to ease the transition from high school to a successful post-secondary school experience. The students selected for SSS have demonstrated the desire, commitment and potential to pursue a baccalaureate degree.

SSS instills a sense of identification and involvement with the university, helping each participant invest in a safe and engaging academic experience. CI meets the stringent program requirements which mandate that 56% of its students meet the eligibility criteria for TRIO programs.

Damien Peña, Interim Dean of Students, remarked that of the 56% of the student body who could use this kind of support, the school will serve 160 students for the 2010-2015 funding cycle. "This is our second TRIO program grant and this fall we will be applying for three additional TRIO grants. This funding is so important and answers a call from the community to provide resources for this underrepresented student population." He surmised what it would mean to the community if all of these students could get this kind of assistance.

For the past four years CI's first federal TRIO program, Educational Talent Search Program (ETS), has increased retention and graduation rates of 600 first-generation, low-income middle and secondary school students in the local community, prompting more of these students to enroll in post secondary education.

SSS provides its program participants with a wide array of resources and services like time and stress management, study skills, goal setting, and access to academic and career counseling, to name a few. It provides a structured first-year experience that includes a

six-day summer bridge component and intensive monitoring of each student's progress and successes.

Peña was emphatic about the importance of these programs. "I myself was a low-income, first-generation student. Born and raised in Oxnard, I was lucky enough to continue my education after high school and was in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) a state funded program, which made a big difference in my academic success." Last year Peña won the Latino Leadership Award from the Concilio del Condado de Ventura. "I've stayed close to my roots and I believe in these students and by giving as many as possible the opportunities to have a successful university education - we all benefit."

For further information regarding the grant or CI's Student Support Services program, please contact Damien Peña, Interim Dean of Students at [damien.pena@csuci.edu](mailto:damien.pena@csuci.edu) or 805-437-3218.

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*CI Mission Statement*

*Placing students at the center of the educational experience, California State University Channel Islands provides undergraduate and graduate education that facilitates learning within and across disciplines through integrative approaches, emphasizes experiential and service learning, and graduates students with multicultural and international perspectives.*