



NEWS

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El Camino College Special Resource Center Gains Nationwide Recognition for its Outstanding Programs

The El Camino College Special Resource Center was recently recognized for its groundbreaking work in serving students with disabilities.

The Special Resource Center is halfway through a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration that supports interpreter education. The project calls for a highly active national group of six post-secondary institutions, charged with the task of increasing the number of trained interpreters. More specifically, the grant asks for a determination of effective programs in interpreter education and promoting and implementing those programs at both the policy level and within institutions.

El Camino College has partnered with Western Oregon University to run the Western Region Interpreter Education Center (WRIEC), dedicated to quality education and professional development opportunities for interpreters at all skill levels.

In conjunction with the National Interpreter Education Center and the other Regional Interpreter Education Centers, WRIEC serves as an educational resource center for interpreters, consumers, rehabilitation personnel, interpreter educators, and interpreter referral personnel.

El Camino College is the only community college participating in this federal grant project, with the report stating, "We knew we gave you a hard order to fill but you have far exceeded our expectations."

In addition to the accolades for the WRIEC, El Camino College project manager Pauline Annarino was elected to her third term as president of the American Association of Grant Professionals (AAGP). At that time, the Grant Professionals Certification Institute (GPCI), also unveiled the Pauline Annarino Founding President Award, an outstanding volunteer achievement award to be presented each year by the presiding president of GPCI. Most recently, GPCI presented her with an appreciation award for "Extraordinary Vision and Leadership."

The El Camino College SRC has also received two grants from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) for service learning projects during the past three years.

“Project Reach: Service Inclusion for Community College Students” is a three-year (AACC) program designed to develop service learning opportunities for students with disabilities so they can explore potential careers, build employment skills and enhance personal development.

This grant has offered a myriad of activities but most notably a faculty-driven mentorship program where faculty are implementing service learning components into their courses. So far more than 20 faculty have participated in the program, with students donating thousands of hours to the project.

Another grant enabled the establishment of a Regional Service Learning Workshop where El Camino College hosted faculty from local colleges this past spring. The college partnered with six area agencies that offered a community service activity as part of the day in areas of youth services, environment, disability and senior services. Conference planning was in collaboration with site coordinators from both the colleges and community agencies. The conference started with a service learning overview, followed by community service for two hours at one of the sites.

The afternoon was filled with reflection exercises, interdisciplinary connections; implementing service learning in the classroom, and next steps where the faculty from each of the institutions gathered to discuss how they will continue to work together to implement service learning and identify resources and supports.