



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF LEGISLATION AND CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS

Reference Grant Award Number: #P031C160053  
CALIFORNIA

THE UNIVERSITY CORPORATION has been selected to receive funding under the HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS PROGRAM (STEM) PROGRAM (84.031C). This grant will be in the amount of \$1,199,483.00 for the first budget period (10/01/2016 through 09/30/2017). It is anticipated that the grant will be for a total of 5 year(s). Please see the attached abstract for a brief description of the activities that will be funded under this grant.

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**Purpose of the Program HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS PROGRAM (STEM)**

The purpose of the Hispanic-Serving Institutions STEM Program is to develop and carry out activities to improve and expand the institution's capacity to serve Hispanic and other low-income students.

## Project Abstract: Bridging the Gap: Enhancing [AIMS<sup>2</sup>](#) for Student Success

This collaborative project is led by the College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS) at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), in partnership with five community colleges: Glendale Community College (GCC), College of the Canyons (COC), Pierce College, Moorpark College, and LA Mission College (LAMC). It builds on the highly successful and nationally recognized USDE supported [AIMS<sup>2</sup>](#) program in the college that has served approximately 200 students during the past five years. However, challenges remain in improving overall graduation rates for all Hispanic and low income students given their increasing enrollments across the college's programs. Our proposed community college partners are among the top ten institutions that transferred Hispanic students to the college and represented over 50% of the transfer students in fall 2014. With the new grant, we will increase the numbers of students served to over 500, bridge the achievement gaps, improve transfer success, and increase overall graduation rates for all Hispanic and low-income students in CECS and across CSUN's STEM programs.

Across the partner institutions, we expect to improve student retention and performance in math courses beginning with the freshman calculus course. The team expects to improve the graduation rates in CECS for all students and eliminate the gap between URM's and others. Students enrolled in the [AIMS<sup>2</sup>](#) cohorts will continue to have access to special mentoring and advisement by faculty, tutoring and peer mentoring, social activities, field trips and opportunities to take part in undergraduate research projects. The proposed quasi-experimental evaluation design is expected to produce evidence of effectiveness that will document changes in students who participate in the project.<sup>1</sup> It features a pre-/post-test survey research procedure with matched samples (intervention and comparison groups) that will include baseline equivalence on background characteristics (p.10)<sup>2</sup>. The study will use two widely used survey instruments and institutional data to test the outcome measures and will be administered at project entry and exit for each cohort across sites. The project's performance and outcome measures direct the evaluation study, which will demonstrate favorable gains in the intervention group—consistent with the procedures and findings of two studies reviewed by the What Works Clearinghouse<sup>34</sup>

Against the backdrop of the literature on Latino/a and low-income students<sup>5</sup>, we have developed project activities to support measurable outcomes, as seen in our logic model, which will be assessed by a rigorous approach that includes a mixed-methods design with survey, institutional, and semi-structured personal interview data. The proposed project has the potential to significantly improve graduation rates and close the achievement gaps for Hispanic and low-income students, expand undergraduate research projects to mentor students, and enhance faculty collaboration between two year and four year institutions to improve student success.

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersma, W., & Jurs, S. G. (2009). *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction*. Boston: Pearson.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. (2014). *What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook*.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. (2013). *WWC review of the report: The impact of dual enrollment on college degree attainment: Do low-SES students benefit?* Retrieved from <http://whatworks.ed.gov>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. (2014). *WWC review of the report: Are tenure track professors better teachers*. Retrieved from <http://whatworks.ed.gov>

<sup>5</sup> Cole, D. (2010). The effects of student-faculty interactions on minority students' college grades: differences between aggregated and disaggregated data. *Journal of the Professoriate*, 3(2), 137-160.