

## Active Grants

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grant	amount/status
Title III	closing September 30, 2015
NSF	\$50,000 carryover to AY 2015-16
SSS	\$219,021 per year, for five years

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## Grant Proposals

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National Endowment for the Humanities (pending)

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## Descriptions of the Four Grants and Proposals

### *Formal Release for NSF – Plastics Grant*

***Creating Plastics Technology Career Pathways in Rural Michigan*** is advancing plastics technology and plastics workforce development throughout Michigan. The project links Mid Michigan Community College with community and industry leaders, the Clare-Gladwin Regional Educational Service District and Ferris State University to ensure that students are progressing incrementally toward academic credentials and sustainable employment. The project's strategies are addressing gaps in current education and training programs by: 1) formalizing an industrial alliance to provide curriculum assistance, career awareness, and workforce experience; 2) developing a non-credit training credential, an academic certificate, and an associate's degree with seamless transferability into a bachelor's degree in plastics engineering technology, and 3) recruiting and retaining students into a ladder program that provides an array of hands-on and work experience options as well as the integration of both developmental and entrepreneurial instruction into the curriculum. This innovative approach is addressing issues surrounding the state's manufacturing industries: overt competition among companies for qualified employees, an aging workforce, a shortage of applicants and incumbents with necessary skills, and a pervasive stigma about manufacturing careers. This project is serving as a model to other rural industries, demonstrating that progress can be made through collaborative, proactive strategies. The project is also enhancing the capacity of educational systems at all levels, comprehensively approaching workforce needs, broadening participation by under-represented women, and building entrepreneurs who are reinvigorating the region's economy.

## Mid Michigan Community College Student Support Services Program: Abstract

Located in rural central Michigan, Mid Michigan Community College (MMCC) annually serves nearly 4,500 students from a wide geographical region characterized by generational poverty and its related social ills. Steadfastly adhering to its open admission philosophy, the College has not shied away from dealing with the under-preparedness of a large portion of its students. Concerned that too few students were successfully attaining degrees or transferring to pursue further education, the College convened over 160 faculty, staff, students and community members to strategically plan for improved student outcomes. The insightful discussions led to an ambitious plan that called for a cultural change in which MMCC would create barrier-free pathways to—and through—the College to credential completion for all students. Identified as a major factor in executing the strategic plan, a federally funded TRIO/Student Support Services (SSS) program will provide intensive support to those who need it most: low income students, first generation students, and students with disabilities. Data clearly indicate that these students experience many challenges: financing their educations; progressing beyond remedial courses; completing “gateway” courses fundamental to college majors; remaining in good academic standing; feeling a sense of belonging, and more. As designed by a Planning Team, the SSS program provides a spectrum of required and permissible services based on best practices in the field. The program also incorporates interventions in response to the U.S. Department of Education’s Competitive Preference Priorities 1 (a) (b) and 2 (a) (b).

Efforts of the College’s SSS program focus on the concept of intrusive advising, supported by research at [https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger\\_baker\\_030711.pdf](https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger_baker_030711.pdf). “Success Coaches” (supported by a Career Coordinator and peer mentors) assess students’ needs; help them develop self-directed, actionable plans; and monitor their performance to quickly intervene if students’ plans go awry. Success Coaches maintain continuous contact with their students through individualized meetings, via electronic communications, and through a two-semester series of required “Navigation” seminars. The SSS program also affirms the incremental theory of intelligence by engaging program staff and other key constituents throughout the college in thoughtful dialogue about the power of stimulating students’ academic mindsets. Strategies are incorporated into the SSS Navigation seminars, workshops, and professional interactions with students that will help students develop a sense of belonging, find value in their studies, acquire self-efficacy, and believe that their abilities will increase with effort. The program offers cultural enrichment activities, career exploration opportunities, and university visits that will help students broaden their horizons and gain confidence on unfamiliar turf. The program utilizes a specific research-based intervention that shows promise in closing the social-class achievement gap to improve first-generation students’ academic performance and all students’ college transition (see <http://www.psychology.northwestern.edu/documents/destin-achievement.pdf>).

Results oriented, the SSS program emphasizes student learning outcomes that align with faculty’s approach to curriculum development. By focusing on what students can do, MMCC proposes a truly transformational program in which resilient and empowered students access abundant resources to overcome their weaknesses and build their academic strengths. A comprehensive evaluation plan will enable SSS program professionals and their Advisory Committee to measure progress, make mid-course corrections as needed, and share the program’s best practices with the educational community. Thus, the SSS program will promote all students’ persistence and credential attainment at MMCC and beyond.

## ABSTRACT

The Talent Search Program sponsored by Mid Michigan Community College (MMCC) will enroll and serve 500 low-income and potential first-generation college students in grades 6-12 in Gladwin and Clare Counties, Michigan. Participating target school systems within the Regional Education Service District (RESA), are all within a 23-mile radius of the MMCC main campus in Harrison, and include: Beaverton, Clare, Farwell, Gladwin, and Harrison.

The MMCC Talent Search program will provide access to high quality tutoring and direct individual and small group instruction to improve academic achievement. Services also will include: career exploration and counseling; preparation for college entrance exams; identification of “best-fit” college opportunities and assistance in completing admission applications; information regarding the wide range of available financial aid and assistance in applying for grants and loans; and cultural and collegiate experiences to help rural Central Michigan children and teens begin to envision themselves as college graduates. Integrated strategies will increase the financial literacy of students and parents to foster clear understandings of the rights and responsibilities of financial aid participation and of solid financial planning methods. Through workshops and continual communication, parents and families of participating students will be informed of, and engaged in, the academic progress of their children. MMCC Talent Search will coordinate these efforts with initiatives already underway by the College, the five area school systems, and by the state to increase the college-readiness and college-going rates of Michigan youth. This collaborative effort, in which Talent Search plays a pivotal role, will enable area students to overcome a chronic history of economic disadvantages (Clare and Gladwin are the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> most impoverished counties in Michigan.) As importantly, we will begin to change the industrial mindset that, for decades, has allowed Central Michigan residents to see postsecondary education as unnecessary to their lives. The intended outcomes of the MMCC Talent Search Program are to significantly and permanently increase: 1) persistence of middle and high school students from one grade to the next; 2) graduation from high school; 3) college enrollment; and 4) college degree completion. Because all students in the high school graduating class of Spring 2011 forward will be required to complete the Michigan *Merit Based Curriculum*, attaining the regular diploma in Michigan will equate to fulfillment of a “rigorous” high school program of study. MMCC Talent Search also will work to identify and assist students with potential for postsecondary work who are no longer enrolled in formal education.

MMCC has been a community partner to area school systems since opening its doors in 1968. The College currently enrolls over 5,000 students in certificate, associate’s degree, and academic transfer programs. The College has a history of service to first-generation and low-income students, students with disabilities, and other students who are traditionally under-represented in higher education. MMCC also has an excellent working relationship with other community colleges and with universities throughout the state, which will facilitate networking for continuation of Talent Search student intervention and follow-up.

The MMCC Talent Search Program will effectively combine the requested federal support of \$230,000 with tangible College support of over \$74,000 per year, and significant in-kind commitments by the local schools and community partners to deliver a cost-effective, well run program.

## **Mid Michigan Community College**

### **Beyond the Canon at the Community College: Keeping the Generative, Vibrant Humanities while Explaining General Education Assessment Outcomes and Proficiencies to Others**

#### **Summary**

Due to changes in the educational landscape, the role of the humanities needs to be reconsidered, particularly for community colleges who have been traditionally focused on vocational education. New perspectives on the humanities need to be shared and discussed among humanities faculty due to significant changes, and clearer communication and collaboration needs to be foregrounded with non-humanities faculty and students. This proposed institute among community college faculty will: 1.) introduce new perspectives from scholars, 2.) facilitate ways to communicate the role of the humanities to others and create artifacts using diverse modalities to do so, and 3.) provide space for faculty to analyze the artifacts and the learning outcomes within them and the ways they connect to the outcomes of a college degree.